

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ17-000009

Senator Cameron, Doug asked on 01 March 2017, Proof Hansard page 7

Department's file notes, correspondence and minutes regarding meetings with ASQA

Question

Senator CAMERON: Dr Bruniges, I have asked ASQA for all file notes, correspondence and minutes relating to this issue. Could I ask you for the same from the department's perspective—

Dr Bruniges: Yes, I will take that on notice.

Senator CAMERON: regarding the engagement with ASQA?

Dr Bruniges: Yes. Senator, can I just clarify that period?

Senator CAMERON: When did you first become aware that there was a problem with VET FEE-HELP?

Senator Birmingham: Dr Bruniges has not been with us for that long.

Answer

The Department of Education and Training became concerned about the volume and nature of specific complaints relating to VET FEE-HELP in mid to late 2014.

The table below provides details of the formal correspondence/contact between the department and the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) about concerns with the VET FEE-HELP scheme in mid to late 2014. During this period, there was also ongoing informal contact with ASQA at the officer level.

Date	Communication to	Topic
24/6/2014	ASQA	Email and letter to ASQA concerning complaints and compliance issues related to VET FEE-HELP provider.
22/7/2014	ASQA	Email to ASQA concerning complaints and compliance issues related to VET FEE –HELP provider.
31/10/2014	ASQA	Departmental minute to Deputy Secretary which included reference to the work the department was doing with ASQA to identify administrative and legislative mechanisms to address sharp practices, and the process for referring complaints to ASQA.
10/11/2014	Minister for Education	Brief on VET FEE-HELP matters including details of round table conference with VET regulators (including ASQA) on 12 November 2014, and details of the department working closely with ASQA.
12/11/2014	VET FEE-HELP Cross-Government Roundtable	The department hosted a Roundtable to discuss concerns relating to VET FEE-HELP and to explore how a cross-agency response might be developed – ASQA attended.

Date	Communication to	Topic
08/12/2014	Minister for Education	Brief on outcomes of the VET agencies (including ASQA) and regulator roundtable discussion held 12 November 2014.
12/1/2015	ASQA	Teleconference with ASQA concerning complaints and compliance issues related to a VET FEE-HELP provider.