

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

**QUESTION ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016**

Outcome: Higher Education Research and International

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ15-000463

Senator Carr, Kim provided in writing

Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching - survey bias

Question

A piece in the Age blog The Third Degree discusses the shortcomings of surveys conducted by universities of student opinion about their units/courses/institutions. It makes a number of points:

- That response rates are often very low
- That those making responses tend to be students who have major problems or complaints about a unit, course or one or more academic staff members
- That students who received good grades were less likely to complete surveys.

(a) How will the Government's new information service, QILT – which will rely on information taken from these surveys – overcome these limitations and biases?

(b) How will the surveys it relies on differ from those currently undertaken by students and new graduates?

(c) How will QILT provide better guidance to students?

Answer

a) Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) will not rely on student surveys conducted by universities. The QILT surveys will be independently administered by the Social Research Centre, under contract to the department.

b) The QILT surveys will for the first time be administered on a consistent basis across all providers by a single, independent service provider. This will ensure consistent implementation of the instruments, providing reliable, timely and robust survey results. Independent administration also enables the use of sophisticated survey techniques, such as stratified sampling, which reduce bias and minimise survey burden.

c) Publication of results from the QILT surveys on a new website will provide students with the information they require when selecting a higher education provider, including peer experience, employment prospects and the views of employers.