

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018

Outcome: Higher Education Research and International

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ17-000714

Senator Carr, Kim provided in writing.

Also refer to previous hearing Question No. SQ17-000209

Review of Australia's Research Training System – Final Report

Question

In regards to the Review of Australia's Research Training System – Final Report, delivered by ACOLA:

- What progress has been made in implementing the recommendation to establish a cross-sector implementation working group? Have members of a group been appointed? Who are they? What are their terms of appointment? Has the working group met? If so, when and where?
- What progress has been made to implement the recommendation to "Make regulatory changes to facilitate HDR entry pathways"?
- What progress has been made to implement the recommendation to "implement Recommendation 4 from the Review of Research Policies and Funding to provide additional funding to incentivise industry–university collaboration, with a particular focus on initiatives that connect HDR candidates with industry-led research problems."?
- What progress has been made to implement the recommendation to "develop a national program to support industry placements for Research Doctorate candidates"?
- What progress has been made to implement the recommendation to "institute a longitudinal national data collection exercise to monitor course satisfaction, course completions and career outcomes for HDR training"?
- What progress has been made to implement the recommendation to "institute increased weighting for Indigenous HDR completions in the Research Block Grants formulae, and flexibility in scholarship guidelines to allow for higher value stipends and real wage fellowships to further encourage Indigenous participation in HDR training"?

Answer

Progress on each of the six recommendations from the ACOLA Review of Research Training is summarised below:

Recommendation 1: Establish cross-sectoral implementation working group

The sector-wide implementation working group has been established, with members appointed in early 2017. The membership of the working group is at **Attachment A**. There are no specific terms of appointment for working group members. The Group is developing an implementation plan which is anticipated will be provided to the Minister for Education and Training later this year. The working group had met three times as at 9 June 2017: on 22 February 2017, 12 April 2017 and 7 June 2017. All working group meetings have been held at Universities Australia's Canberra office.

Recommendation 2: Remove barriers to entry pathways and flexible scholarship support

Changes to research block grant funding arrangements, commencing from 1 January 2017, allow greater autonomy and flexibility in selecting students and managing research training funding to support scholarships and training pathways, including in relation to the duration and value of stipends for HDR students.

Recommendation 3: Additional funding to incentivise industry-university collaboration

The new research block grant arrangements also address Recommendation 4 from the *Review of Research Policy and Funding Arrangements* to provide additional funding to incentivise industry–university collaboration. The new arrangements rebalance funding incentives towards engagement with industry and other research end-users and include additional funding of \$50 million per annum, ongoing, to encourage such activity. The new streamlined arrangements also provide additional flexibility for universities to support students undertaking industry placements and other collaborative models. These changes are expected to enhance opportunities for HDR candidates' to work on industry-led research problems.

Recommendation 4: Implement a National PhD Industry placement program

Work is currently underway to implement the Government's policy commitment of \$28.2 million over four years from 2016–17 to expand the PhD internships program run by the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute (AMSI) to the national scale National Research Internships Program. These funds will support 1400 new internships for PhD researchers, with a focus on supporting women researchers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. The Conditions of Grant between the department and the University of Melbourne for the expansion of the AMSI Intern program was executed on 26 May 2017.

Recommendation 5: Longitudinal data on HDR student outcomes

The Department is implementing a range of initiatives to improve its research training data collections including monitoring of training outcomes, course satisfaction, completions and career outcomes for HDR training through the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching and the Higher Education Student Data Collection. In February 2017, the department commissioned the Australian Council for Educational Research to undertake a review of the Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (PREQ). The final report of the review of the PREQ is expected in the second half of 2017.

Recommendation 6: Weightings for Indigenous HDR completions and scholarship flexibility

The new research block grant arrangements better support Indigenous HDR student participation by doubling the weighting of Indigenous HDR completions in the Research Training Program funding formula and providing increased flexibility for universities in the scholarship support they can provide including the capacity to provide higher value stipends to Indigenous researchers.

Research Training Implementation Working Group

- Professor Robyn Owens (Chair)—Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), University of WA / Universities Australia DVC-R Executive Group Chair
- Professor Pat Buckley—Dean of Graduate Studies, University of South Australia
- Professor Jennifer Corbett—Distinguished Professor, Crawford School of Public Policy, College of Asia & the Pacific, Australian National University
- Professor Denise Cuthbert—Associate Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research Training and Development), RMIT University / Convenor, Australian Council of Graduate Research
- Mr Peter Derbyshire—President, Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations
- Professor Jim McCluskey—Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), University of Melbourne
- Mr John McGagh—Chief Digital Officer, Snowy Hydro
- Professor Geraldine McKenzie—Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), Southern Cross University / Universities Australia DVC-R Executive Group
- Professor Aileen Moreton-Robinson—Distinguished Professor and Dean, Indigenous Research and Engagement, Queensland University of Technology
- Professor David Morrison—Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation), Murdoch University / Universities Australia DVC-R Executive Group
- Professor Warren Payne—Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), Victoria University / Universities Australia DVC-R Executive Group
- Professor Geoff Prince—Director, Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute
- Professor Frances Shannon—Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), University of Canberra / Universities Australia DVC-R Executive Group
- Dr Peter Thomas—Director of Policy and Operations, Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes
- Ms Jane Urquhart—Head of Division, Science and Commercialisation Policy Division, Department of Industry, Innovation and Science
- Professor Glenn Wightwick—Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), University of Technology, Sydney / Universities Australia DVC-R Executive Group
- Ms Anne Younger—General Manager, Education Training and Training Services, Australian Industry Group.