

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 17 October 2016

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(SE16/102) - Student visa document fraud - Programme 2.3: Visas

Senator Carr, Kim (L&CA) written:

What are the number of instances in document fraud in the student visa programme by visa subclass and post over the last three financial years? How many instances of fraud involve education agents? What actions is the department taking to improve its detection of document fraud, and to deter further instances?

Answer:

What are the number of instances in document fraud in the student visa programme by visa subclass and post over the last three financial years?

Table 1: Instances of fraud in the student visa programme in the three programme years from 2013-14 to 2015-16 by subclass

Visa Subclass	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
570 Independent ELICOS Sector	205	127	115
571 Schools Sector	252	320	151
572 Vocational Education and Training Sector	884	992	1059
573 Higher Education Sector	1862	2311	1732
574 Postgraduate Research Sector	9	0	9
575 Non-Award Sector	4	0	1
576 Foreign Affairs or Defence Sector	0	0	0
580 Student Guardian	45	32	6
Total	3261	3782	3073

Source: Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2016 (BE10376)

Table 2: Instances of fraud in the student visa programme in the three programme years from 2013-14 to 2015-16 by top 12 processing posts

Processing Post	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
South Australian State Office	1712	2100	1598
Western Australian State Office	323	659	786
New Delhi	382	379	207
Parramatta Regional Office	11	162	146
Sydney City Office	109	110	58
Ho Chi Minh City	222	119	85
Pretoria	92	76	47
Manila	14	8	30
Melbourne Regional Office	116	74	22
Bangkok	5	16	20
Beijing	10	11	14
Santiago	13	14	15
Other	252	54	45
Total	3261	3782	3073

Source: Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2016 (BE10376)

Note: Document fraud is not reported separately to all instances of fraud recorded in systems. The majority of the instances of fraud identified above however do relate to document fraud.

Note: Fraud events are captured in multiple systems with the Department depending on processing location. The data presented below has been extracted from Immigration Records Information System (IRIS) which is the primary system for processing overseas visa applications and the Integrated Client Service Environment (ICSE) which is used primarily for visa processing onshore

How many instances of fraud involve education agents?

All visa applicants, including student visa applicants, are responsible for the accuracy of information and supporting documentation provided as part of their application even if they use a registered migration agent or an education agent. Therefore, detected fraud is recorded against applications and fraud involving education agents is not captured in the processing systems.

What actions is the Department taking to improve its detection of document fraud, and to deter further instances?

Public Interest Criterion (PIC 4020) provides a specific ground to refuse a visa application where an applicant has provided a bogus document or information that is false or misleading as part of their application.

The Regulations were amended in March 2014 to introduce an identity requirement into PIC 4020. The amendments strengthen the integrity of the Migration programme and deter identity fraud by introducing strict

consequences if a visa applicant fails to satisfy the delegate as to their identity.

If a visa is refused under PIC 4020 for providing bogus documents or information that is false or misleading, the applicant may be prevented from being granted a visa for a period of three years.

If the visa was refused because the applicant failed to satisfy the delegate as to their identity, they may not be granted a visa for a period of ten years.

The imposition of the exclusion period is a specific deterrent to ensure that an individual detected attempting fraud, or anyone who has that person as a member of his or her family unit, is subject to a penalty. It also sends a clear message to all potential visa applicants that Australia does not tolerate fraud against its migration programme.

Decision makers are provided with specialist support services including document examination analysis. The Department also provides training to staff to build their capability in detecting fraudulent documents.