

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio
Additional Estimates Hearing 2011-12
15 February 2012

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

TOPIC: Australian University Students Studying Overseas

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Mason

QUESTION No.: AI-195

1. How many domestic university students study off-shore as part of their educational experience, and how has this trend changed over the past decade?
2. How many of these occur in a non-English speaking setting?
3. What support is currently provided to such students, and are they eligible in any circumstances for income-contingent loans to assist with course fees incurred at such overseas universities (and if so what conditions attach to such support)?
4. Are there statistics available on the number of low-SES students who have benefited from this internationalised university experience as part of their studies?

ANSWER

1. How many students study off-shore?

The latest available data on higher education student numbers are for 2010, which show 6,227 domestic students studying overseas, increasing from only 788 students in 2002 when the Department first started collecting campus location information in the higher education student data collection.

2. How many of these occur in a non-English speaking setting?

The Department does not hold information on the setting in which courses are conducted at offshore locations.

3. Support to students studying off-shore

OS-HELP

The Government currently provides support through the OS-HELP program. OS-HELP provides financial assistance to eligible Commonwealth supported students to undertake part of their course of study overseas. OS-HELP may be used to cover expenses associated with the overseas study, such as airfares, accommodation and other travel or settling expenses for a 6 month period of study.

To be eligible for OS-HELP a student must:

- be an Australian citizen or the holder of a permanent humanitarian visa,
- not have previously received OS-HELP more than once,
- be enrolled in an undergraduate (or Honours) course of study,
- have already completed one EFTSL of study counting towards their degree,

- be a Commonwealth supported student,
- be enrolled in full-time study overseas, have such study count towards their domestic study,
- meet the Tax File Number requirements,
- submit an OS-HELP debt confirmation form,
- be selected by their provider to receive an OS-HELP loan,
- have not been granted an OS-HELP loan by another provider that would overlap another OS-HELP loan, have not completed their overseas study before applying for the loan.

Student Mobility Programs

The Department administers a number of programs to promote student mobility in Tertiary Education by providing subsidies to institutions for students participating in an approved international experience. These include the International Student Exchange Program, the Study Overseas Short Term Mobility Program and the VET Outbound Mobility Program.

In 2012 the total amount of funding provided by the Australian Government for these outbound mobility programs was \$12.9 million.

Australia Awards

Additionally, the Australia Awards achievement stream (Endeavour Awards) targets the best and brightest students, researchers and professional Australians to have an international study experience overseas. The Awards are available to outgoing Australian students.

In 2012 (2011/2012 financial year) the total amount of funding provided by the Australian Government for Endeavour Awards was \$35.5 million.

Other Initiatives

The Department has developed other initiatives to support students wanting to participate in international student mobility. These include;

- The Study Overseas Web Portal (<http://www.studyoverseas.gov.au/default.htm>) which is the Australian Government's key online tool for promoting the benefits of international student mobility to Australian students. The portal informs students of: potential destinations; financial assistance delivered by government agencies; travel and safety advice; past student experiences; and provides information to practitioners on student mobility including:
 - the ***VET Sector Outbound Mobility Toolkit***
 - a tool for Registered Training Organisations to establish and maintain study programs which contain an international component; and
 - the soon to be released ***Outbound Mobility Best Practice Guide for Australian Universities*** which promotes best practice across the sector.
- A network of International Liaison Officers (ILO) comprising of representatives from each Australian tertiary institution. This network is advised on scholarship programs, issues and developments which affect international student mobility. In 2011 DIISRTE hosted the inaugural ILO Forum to engage further with those on the coalface of student mobility in the tertiary education sector.

4. Low-SES Statistics

Of the 6,227 domestic students studying offshore, a total of 598 students were from a low-SES background.