

**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

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

**TOPIC:** Skills Shortages

**REFERENCE:** Written Question – Senator McKenzie

**QUESTION No.:** AI – 44

Do any of these programs include agricultural education? Could they?

**ANSWER**

HECS-HELP Benefits for mathematics and science graduates

To be eligible for the HECS-HELP Benefit for mathematics and science graduates, a person must have graduated from an undergraduate natural and physical sciences course of study after 1 July 2008, have a HELP debt and be employed in a mathematics or science related occupation, which can include agriculture.

A natural and physical sciences course is a course that is listed under the ‘natural and physical sciences’ (Broad Field 01) in the ABS Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED) 2001. ASCED Broad Field 05 is ‘agriculture, environmental and related studies’ and currently does not attract HECS-HELP Benefit.

Agriculture related eligible occupations for Mathematics or Science graduates applying for the HECS-HELP Benefit are highlighted as follows:

Actuary, **Agricultural scientist**, **Agronomist**, Biochemist, Biologist, Biophysicist, Botanist, Chemist (not dispensing pharmacist), Chemistry technician, **Ecologist**, **Environmental scientist**, **Forester**, Geologist, Geophysicist, Laboratory assistant, Laboratory technician, Life scientist, Mathematician, Medical laboratory scientist, Medical laboratory technician, Medical physicist, Medical technician, Metallurgist, Meteorologist, Microbiologist, Park ranger or ranger –environmental/cultural/guide, Physicist, Physiologist, Primary school teacher, Secondary school teacher of mathematics or science, **Soil scientist**, **Soil technician**, Statistician, Technical officer, Zoologist.

Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program

Australian Apprentices undertaking an Australian Apprenticeship in an agricultural or horticultural occupation may be eligible for Tools For Your Trade payments under the Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program.

Agricultural Australian Apprentices must be undertaking an Australian Apprenticeship in any Certificate level II, III or IV qualification in agriculture anywhere across Australia.

Horticultural Australian Apprentices must be undertaking an Australian Apprenticeship in any Certificate II, III or IV qualification in horticulture in rural and regional areas of Australia.