

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2005-2006 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 3
Output Group: 3.3 – International Education Group

DEST Question No. E276_06

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Refers to DIMIA Question No 73 (May 2004)

Question:

What is the latest figure for cancellations at Bridge Business College? Has DEST carried out any compliance actions involving Bridge College in the last year? Please provide details.

Answer:

Visa Cancellations

With regard to student visa cancellation data for Bridge Business College (Bridge), the following information was supplied to DEST by DIMIA;

“The information regarding cancellations for individual providers that was previously supplied to Senator Carr included cancellations for breach of visa condition, as well as cancellations for administrative reasons such as finishing course early. DIMIA's reporting mechanisms are unable to drill down into only breach of condition cancellations for individual providers and for this reason, the cancellations previously provided are not indicative and it would be unfair to individual providers to draw assumptions from them. Until DIMIA's systems can provide breach of cancellation numbers neither DEST nor DIMIA can undertake analysis.”

DEST Compliance Actions

Compliance monitoring visits were conducted at Bridge on:

- 5 and 6 April 2004;
- 27 May 2004;
- 7 July 2004;
- 16 September 2004;
- 13 January 2005; and
- 24 February 2005.

The purpose of these visits was to determine the extent to which Bridge was complying with:

- the reporting requirements of the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (the Act) [sections 19 and 20];
- the records of academic performance and attendance records requirements of the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (National Code) [paragraphs 34-39]; and
- record keeping requirements of the Act [section 21].

The visits also provided the opportunity for the Department to provide Bridge with guidance on their compliance obligations so that the development and implementation of their new student data base and information system would support their ESOS reporting obligations.

On 6 August 2004, under section 93 of the *Act*, Bridge was given a Notice of Intention to Suspend two courses (Certificate III in Business Studies, 028889A, and Certificate III in Information Technology (Software Application), 037458) for:

- misleading and deceptive conduct in connection with the recruitment of overseas students or intending overseas students breach of section 15 of the *Act*);
- failing to give the Secretary of DEST information about two students who terminated their studies before completing their course (breach of subsection 19(1)(d);
- failing to give the Secretary of DEST information about 12 students who had changes to the identity or duration of their course (breach of subsection 19(1)(e) of the *Act*;
- failing to fulfil its obligations to monitor attendance records every fortnight (breach of subparagraph 39.2 of the National Code; and
- failing to have procedures in place for contacting and counselling students for students who have been absent for 5 consecutive days or students who do not consistently attend their course.

Bridge's response to the Notice satisfied the Department that the defects and non-compliance issues had been remedied and consequently, the Department did not proceed to course suspension.