

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012**

Outcome 3 - Tertiary, Skills, International and Indigenous Strategy

DEEWR Question No. EW0836_12

Senator Mason asked on 20 October 2011 , Hansard page 80

Question

How many higher education providers are operating effectively on three semesters

Senator MASON: Has it had any effect on the data you collect or anything like that?

Senator Chris Evans: We will take it on notice and see what we find. I would be interested myself.

Senator MASON: Could you also take on notice how many universities operate, in effect, a trimester system? I will have to leave it with you precisely what that means because it is, I concede, is a grey area.

Senator Chris Evans: I know it is more common now, like distance learning and all those other aspects

Ms Paul: In a technical sense, the main impact it potentially has on measurement is how we measure a full-time student. What we like to call the EFTSL, the equivalent full-time student load, is effected continuously and that is what Mr Warburton was referring to and how we count. Otherwise I would not have thought the impact would be too great.

Mr Griew: We will try and find out how many higher education providers are operating effectively on three semesters and how many students are involved, and if there is anything that particularly marks those providers out in our data.

Answer

The Department does not formally collect information on universities' academic calendars. The department is aware that across the higher education sector there are a variety of arrangements that allow students to complete their course of study within shorter timeframes. These include a trimester system where all or most courses on offer at the institution are taught across three consecutive trimesters.

A number of universities run a trimester academic year at selected, smaller campuses. These may cater to specific subjects and/or a particular student group.

Many universities also offer additional summer or winter sessions that provide students with an option to undertake additional units of study to fast track the completion of their course.

Examples of some the different arrangements are set out below showing the EFTSL and number for Commonwealth Supported Students in 2010 at that university.

Full Trimester Model (consecutive)

1. Deakin University - 17,789 EFTSL (22,205 students)
2. Southern Cross University – 6,606 EFTSL (10,147 students)
3. University of New England (in transition for 2012) – 7,707 EFTSL (14,640 students)
4. Bond University (no Commonwealth Supported Students)

Mixed Trimester-Semester Model

1. Griffith University: Trimester at Logan campus for Griffith Business School and Logan Accelerated Programs students
2. James Cook University: Trimester for Brisbane and Singapore campuses