

Senate Finance & Public Administration Committee:
Answers to written Questions on Notice Budget Estimates 2013-14
Parliamentary Departments Portfolio

Department: Parliamentary Budget Office

Topic: Education expenses

Senator: Senator Scott Ryan

Question reference number: 79

Type of question: Written

Question

What is the department/agency's guidelines on study?

For this financial year to date, detail all education expenses (i.e. in house courses and tertiary studies) for each portfolio department and agency. Include what type of course, the total cost, cost per participant, the employment classification of each participant, how many participants and the amount of study leave granted to each participant (provide a breakdown for each employment classification). Also include the reason for the study and how it is beneficial for the department/agency.

Answer

- a) The Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) offers employees financial assistance of up to \$1,500 per semester and a total of \$3,000 per annum for the purposes of undertaking formal study in fields which directly relate to the PBO's functions and priority activities and which meet the employee's career development needs.

Payment is made by way of reimbursement upon successful completion of the approved study and provision of evidence of the amounts incurred by the employee to undertake the study and may include the reimbursement of Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) costs within the abovementioned financial assistance limits.

The guidelines also provide for study leave to attend a course or contact session or to prepare for preparation of assignments or exams that occur during business hours to a maximum of 3 hours per week with a maximum 39 hours per semester per unit.

- b) As at 31 May 2013, the PBO had incurred \$1,500 for financial assistance in relation to study.

The PBO currently has approved study for five PBO employees under the study guidelines at the PEL1, PSL6 and PSL4 employee level for post graduate study. Financial assistance and study leave granted are in accordance with the guidelines as outlined in the answer to question (a) above. The courses directly relate to the core functions of the PBO and will enhance the skills of the employees.