

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARINGS: 11 February 2013

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(AE13/0508) PROGRAM – 1.1: Visa and Migration

Senator Bridget McKenzie (Written) asked:

How does the department ensure that English proficiency is set at a level which ensures educational quality for international students? Has DIAC reviewed the appropriateness of language proficiency tests? What are the outcomes of any such review? What are the costs of implementing such recommendations?

Answer:

The Department does not set English language requirements in order to ensure educational quality. This is the responsibility of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIISTRE). Under the National Code, education providers also have an obligation to ensure students have sufficient levels of English language to complete their course.

However, the Department must be able to assure the Australian public that Student visa applicants granted Student visas have basic levels of English that will enable them to interact effectively with their education provider for administrative purposes and, at least at a basic level, with the community.

Therefore, under migration legislation all Student visa applicants are required to meet criteria related to English language.

Under the Regulations, depending upon their Assessment Level, Student visa applicants are able to satisfy English language proficiency requirements by providing evidence that they have been enrolled by an education provider or achieved a required score from a specified English language test.