

Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE)

3 April 09

TEACHER EDUCATION: A NATIONAL PRIORITY

We bring to your attention the detrimental consequences for teacher education of successive policy and funding decisions relating largely to its designation as a "National Priority". Prior to the Higher Education Support Act (2004), Education was in the same funding cluster as the Social Studies and Behavioural Sciences (SS&BS). Undergraduate teacher education received the same income as undergraduate SS&BS (weighted 1.3) and graduate entry teacher education received 8% more (weighted 1.4), which in part redressed the additional expense of the intensive one-year Graduate Diploma of Education program.

As a result of its designation as a national priority under HESA both undergraduate and graduate entry teacher education now earns only 92% of the income of the rest of the SS&BS cluster. Note that, in 2007, the Report of the House of Representatives Inquiry into Teacher Education, *Top of the Class*, described teacher education as badly under funded, stating that

"a large proportion of submissions expressed concerns about the level of funding for teacher education. All viewed the funding level as inadequate and many singled the issue out as the most important in the inquiry ... having serious consequences for teacher education. (p 108).

It recommended that the Commonwealth:

from 2008, increase the Commonwealth Contribution Amount for an Equivalent Full-Time Student Load in the Education cluster (to) the same level as that applying to the Foreign Languages, Visual and Performing Arts cluster [and also]

... commission an examination of the cost of providing practicum and increase the amount of the loading for practicum to fully reflect its costs;

Overview of decisions

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| <p>1988-2003 Under the Relative Funding Model:</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education is in the same funding cluster as the Social Studies & Behavioural Sciences. • Undergrad teacher education places receive 100% of the funding of the SS&BS cluster (RFM weight 1.3) • Graduate entry teacher education receives 108% of the funding for the cluster (weight 1.4), this helping to address the considerable additional costs of the shorter duration intensive graduate entry courses. |
| <p>2004 Following HESA:</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education (with Nursing) is precluded from charging the variable student contribution. • Undergraduate <u>and</u> graduate entry Education places earn 98% of the SS&BS cluster. • The 98% is <u>inclusive</u> of a special 'practical component' to assist the funding of school placements (\$717 in 2007), the partial compensation to Education for restricting it from generating additional income through the variable student contribution. |
| <p>2007 Top of the Class, tabled:</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommends that the Commonwealth fund Education at level of Foreign Language, Visual and Performing Arts (FLV&PA, cluster weight 1.6) or 122% of SS&BS cluster • Recommends commissioning an examination of the cost of providing practicum and increasing the amount of the loading for practicum to fully reflect its costs. • Recommends commissioning evaluation of the impact on teacher education courses of fixing the student contribution rate rather than allowing the variable student contribution |
| <p>2008 Top of Class ignored in review of HESA:</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education is placed back into the SS&BS cluster, effectively removing the loading for practicum (ie Education received an effective funding increase from Commonwealth of \$109 per EFTSU compared with \$840 for the rest of SS&BS) • Education is still precluded from charging variable HECS so the student contribution for Education is \$1018 less than for the rest of SS&BS • The income for Education is now 92% of the rest of the SS&BS cluster compared with 100% for undergraduate and 108% for graduate entry in 2003. (Effectively graduate entry initial teacher education is funded at 85% of the previous rate.) This is 81% of the funding of FLV&PA cluster recommended by Top of the Class.) |
| <p>2008 The 2007 budget created a Placement Fund for 4 years ONLY which:</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007 budget <u>promised</u> \$450 per eftsu to initial teacher education only (other Education not included). • 2008 <u>actually</u> delivered \$394 per EFTSL in 2008 (not the promised \$450) since insufficient in budget to cover compliant load. • This results in 95% of the funding of the rest of SS&BS cluster for Initial Teacher Education. Other Education receives 92%, cannot access the Placement Fund and cannot charge variable HECS. • Program reviewed in September 6 months after first funding allocation arrived in March. • ACDE wrote to Minister in Oct 08 asking for speedy indication of funding conditions and rate for 2009-11. |
| <p>2009</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2009 ACDE received response from Minister Gillard: program to continue in 2009 with similar conditions but same budget allocation of \$18.4 million is to be spread over total compliant load in system. • DEEWR informally suggests funding in 2009 could be as low as \$300 per EFTSL (cf \$450 of 2007 promise) because of expansion of compliant places in system (500 new Early Childhood places, reports of extensive over enrolment and shifts of load into teacher education, more courses compliant with conditions of funding). • Program not expected to continue in 2010-11 - will be 'rolled into' EFTSL formula based funding. |