

Question on Notice

No. 505

Asked on 5 June 2014

DR DOUGLAS asked the Minister for Education, Training and Employment (Mr Langbroek)

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QUESTION:

With reference to an increasing number of unemployed people up-skilling through TAFE and keeping in mind many are relying on Centrelink payments to live from week to week —

Will the Minister explain why introductory subjects to a VET-fee help course at Gold Coast TAFE must be paid upfront whilst the diploma course is covered by Fee Help?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for his question.

As the Member has not identified the course, it is not possible to respond specifically to the question. However, I am advised that, in general terms, the majority of Diploma courses are offered via VET FEE-HELP at TAFE Queensland Gold Coast without any pre-requisites. FEE-HELP is applicable to higher education qualifications and is not available through TAFE Queensland Gold Coast.

The Commonwealth Government loan scheme, VET FEE-Help, assists eligible students with the cost of their tuition fees and is usually only available to students undertaking a higher level vocational education and training qualification (i.e. Diploma or Advanced Diploma).

TAFE Queensland is currently participating in a trial which commenced in January 2014 to extend VET FEE-HELP to five Certificate IV qualifications in the areas of Aged Care, Disability, Building and Construction, Engineering and Small Business Management. All five qualifications are available through TAFE Queensland Gold Coast. The trial will conclude in December 2016.

For all other non-VET FEE-HELP courses and where the cost of the course is over \$500, students can negotiate a payment plan. Payment plans require a 25% payment upfront followed by monthly instalments.

For students experiencing financial hardship, an application for a payment plan will be considered for student fees under \$500 and a reduction to the upfront payment can also be considered via application to the Executive Director of Studies at the relevant TAFE institute.