EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Guidelines issued under subsection 238-10 of the Higher Education Support Act 2003

Amendment No. 10 to Chapter 8A of the Other Grants Guidelines 2006

Issued by the authority of the Minister for Education

Subject: - Higher Education Support Act 2003

Amendment No. 10 to Chapter 8A of the Other Grants Guidelines 2006

Authority

Section 238-10 of the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (the Act) provides that the Minister may make guidelines for the purposes of the Act. In particular, item 8 of the table in subsection 238-10(1) of the Act states that the Minister may make the Other Grants Guidelines so as to give effect to matters set out in Part 2-3 of the Act.

Subsection 41-15(1) of the Act provides that the Other Grants Guidelines may specify one or more programs under which grants for particular purposes specified in the table in subsection 41-10(1) are to be paid. The table in sub-section 41-10(1) lists who is eligible for various grants under Part 2-3 of the Act.

Background

These Guidelines amend the Higher Education Support Act 2003 - Other Grants Guidelines 2006 (Other Grants Guidelines 2006) registered on 22 November 2006 (see F2006L03785) and which commenced on 23 November 2006. The Guidelines are now being amended for the tenth time.

Purpose and effect

Chapter 8A provides for the payment of grants to eligible higher education providers to assist them with the costs associated with their provision of the practical components of teacher education.

In announcing the $77 million Improving the Practical Component of Teacher Education (IPCTE) program, the previous government stated that funding available in 2007/08 of $18.020 million would translate to $450 per Equivalent Full-Time Student Load (EFTSL). To qualify for funding under the IPCTE program, higher education providers were required to offer to all students undertaking a three or four year pre-service teacher education course a minimum of 120 professional experience days, and students undertaking one or two year courses a minimum of 60 days of professional experience. This represented a significant increase in practicum days for a number of teacher education courses around the country.

The amount allocated for the calendar year 2008 in the 2007/08 budget was, however, insufficient to allow for the full amount per EFTSL to be paid to providers in 2008. The 2008 targeted load data received from higher education providers translates to only $394 per EFTSL in 2008.

In light of the funding shortfall, the government has, in consultation with the sector, made amendments to Chapter 8A to refocus the program on improving the quality, rather than the quantity, of professional experience days undertaken by teacher education students.

In order to receive funding under the IPCTE program, providers must still provide a minimum of 80 days of professional experience to all three or four year education degree students, a minimum of 60 days of professional experience to all students undertaking two year courses or a double degree, and a minimum of 45 days of professional experience to all students undertaking one year courses. These minimums reflect the statutory requirements enshrined in State and Territory legislation.

In addition, the amendment requires higher education providers to:

- implement processes to assure and improve the quality of the practical component of their teacher education courses;
• contribute to the development of the new graduate professional standards; and
• have a plan ready for implementation of the new graduate standards when they are put in place.

Funding under the IPCTE program for 2007/08 has been disbursed, and it is not the intention of the amendments to Chapter 8A to allow higher education providers that did not meet the eligibility requirements of the Guidelines before the amendments were made to apply for funding under the Guidelines, as amended.

Consultation
Higher education providers were widely consulted in the implementation of the IPCTE program and they expressed their concern about creating an increased minimum requirement for the number of practicum days. Input received during the consultation was revisited and incorporated in these amendments. The Australian Council of Deans of Education was consulted in February and March 2008 and its input was also incorporated in these amendments.

Commencement
The Guidelines commence on the day after the day on which they are registered on the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments.