



STUDENT INCOME SUPPORT – MASTERS BY COURSEWORK PROGRAMS

The Rudd Government will extend income support provided through Youth Allowance and Austudy to students enrolled in all Masters by coursework programs. Other eligibility requirements would remain the same as for students enrolled in lower level courses.

Effective from 1 January 2012, the measure will benefit approximately 6252 masters by coursework students in 2012–13.

The cost of this measure is \$72.7 million over two years.

Benefits

The measure ensures more equitable access to student income support and recognises the value of masters-level study for students from low-income backgrounds. Masters qualifications are increasingly required for entry to professional level employment.

The measure will help to boost overall skill levels in Australia by encouraging people to undertake masters by coursework degrees, including those degrees required for professional entry.

This initiative is part of the reforms to the student income support system which aim to ensure that financial barriers to the participation of students from low socio economic backgrounds are removed. It will enable these students to complete masters qualifications, increasingly required for entry to the workforce. Students will also be able to take advantage of restructured university course arrangements, a process which is accelerating in the higher education sector.

Students undertaking all Masters by coursework degrees will be able to test their eligibility for student income support.

This measure applies to students who are otherwise eligible for income support provided through Youth Allowance and Austudy.

Next steps

This measure, along with other reforms to student income support, will be legislated in 2009 and guidelines updated as appropriate.

Centrelink has been consulted on both costings and the timeframe for implementation of this measure. Required modifications to Centrelink systems are expected to be completed by December 2009.