

Tick for ACOLA's research training reform proposals

JOHN ROSS THE AUSTRALIAN 11:57AM November 4, 2016

The federal government has tied up loose ends in its reforms to the research training system, formerly accepting all six recommendations from a 2015 review by the Australian Council of Learned Academies — although most have already been implemented.

The review, which reported in April this year, found that more flexible entry arrangements and scholarships were needed for higher degree by research students.

It also called for new measures to encourage industry to collaborate with universities and HDR students; increased weighting for indigenous HDR completions in research funding formulas; and better statistical monitoring of HDR completions, satisfaction and career outcomes.

In a response announced today, the government accepted all of these proposals and said they were already being addressed through separate mechanisms.

These included a National Innovation and Science Agenda program; recently announced reforms to research block grants; the expansion of the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute's internship program; and recent improvements to the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching data collection.

The only new action will be the formation of a working group to support the implementation of the review's proposals. A spokesman for Education Minister Simon Birmingham said the new group would have a co-ordinating role.

The government has won widespread praise for its handling of the research training reforms. However, graduate studies deans have complained of impossibly short time frames in implementing the changes to block grant funding.

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