

# ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

HOW WE CAN HELP WITH YOUR COSTS WHILE YOU'RE STUDYING

When will I get my first payment? Do I get paid during holidays?

How do I make repayments? **How much can I borrow?**

What happens if I withdraw from my course? Can I get a loan?

What if I go overseas? What difference does my parents' income make?

How much can I earn if I get the Student Allowance?

Is my scholarship counted as income? How much will I get?

Where can I find more information?



**STUDYLINK**

Hoto Akoranga

*A service of the Ministry of Social Development*

## Hi and Welcome...

While you're studying for your future you'll want to know all about the financial support you can get. At StudyLink we want to make things as easy as possible for you.

In this booklet we've included most of what you need to know about getting financial help from us. It's a general guide – you need to apply to find out if you qualify.

If you have any questions after you've read this, visit our website **[www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz)**.

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# Student Allowance

A Student Allowance can help with your living expenses while you study. It's money that you don't have to pay back.

## Can you get a Student Allowance?

### General Student Allowance criteria

To get a Student Allowance you'll need to be:

- 18 years old or over (some 16–17 year olds can also get it)
- studying a full-time<sup>1</sup> course (or have our approval to study with limited full-time<sup>1</sup> status)
- at secondary school or on a tertiary course approved by the Tertiary Education Commission (your education provider can tell you if your course is approved)
- a New Zealand citizen, permanent resident<sup>1</sup> or refugee<sup>1</sup>.

### Additional criteria for students aged 16–17 years old

There are additional criteria for 16–17 year olds studying at tertiary level, secondary school or for home schooled students. Go to our website [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz) to find out more.

### Help for parents of 16–17 year olds who can't get a Student Allowance

If you're 16–17 years old, don't qualify for a Student Allowance, and you live away from your parents' home while you study, your parents may qualify for an Away from Home Allowance. Go to our website [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz) to find out more.

### Situations where you can't get a Student Allowance

You can't get a Student Allowance if you're in prison, on a benefit<sup>1</sup>, doing paid work as part of your course, or have a Student Allowance debt that you haven't organised to pay back. If you're unsure whether you are able to get a Student Allowance you should still apply so we can test your eligibility.

### How long you can get a Student Allowance for

Student Allowance can only be paid for up to 200 weeks per student. This may be extended in some situations. Go to our website [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz) to find out more about situations where you may be able to get a Student Allowance for longer than 200 weeks.

### How much you can earn

You can earn income<sup>1</sup> up to \$192.01 a week before tax without affecting your Student Allowance payments. You'll need to tell us how much you earn, and let us know every time your income changes. For every cent you earn over \$192.01 before tax, your Student Allowance will reduce by the same amount.

If you have a partner, you'll also need to tell us how much they earn as this will affect how much you will receive. Remember: as a student if you personally earn over \$192.01 your Student Allowance payments will be affected even if your and your partner's combined income is under your combined income limit. For more information on the income limits for students with partners check out [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz).

You need to tell us every time your income changes. The fastest and easiest way to do this is using your MyStudyLink account at [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz).

### What happens over study breaks

You will still receive Student Allowance payments if your study break is three weeks or less. For breaks longer than three weeks, you are not entitled to receive the Student Allowance.

<sup>1</sup> See definitions on pages 23–26.

The best way to finance your study breaks is to find work. However, if you can't get a job, see pages 17 and 18 to find out about the Unemployment Benefit Student Hardship.

## How much you can get

### Students under 24 years old without children

If you are under 24 years old without children, we test your parents'<sup>1</sup> combined income to calculate how much you will get for the Student Allowance.

#### PARENTAL INCOME TESTING

For you to be able to get a Student Allowance, your parents' combined income<sup>1</sup> must be less than:

- \$85,017.66 before tax if you live away from a parental home<sup>1</sup> to study *or*
- \$78,418.34 before tax if you live in a parental home<sup>1</sup>.

How much of your parents' income we test depends on:

- if your parents live together or in separate households<sup>1</sup>
- if your parents support other dependent students<sup>1</sup> aged 16–23 years old.

Find out how much you could get by using the Student Allowance rate calculator on our website [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz).

#### CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE WE DON'T TEST YOUR PARENTS' INCOMES

Under certain circumstances, if only one or neither of your parents support you, we may not test their incomes.

Go to our website [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz) to find out about a One Parent application or Independent Circumstances Allowance.

### Students 24 years old or over without children<sup>1</sup>

If you are 24 years old or over with no children, how much you can get for the Student Allowance depends on if you are single or in a relationship with someone who is also 24 years old or over.

#### IF YOU ARE SINGLE<sup>1</sup>

If ...	Weekly payment after tax, at tax rate 'M' is:..
you live in a parental home <sup>1</sup>	\$152.30
you live away from a parental home <sup>1</sup>	\$190.39

#### IF YOU HAVE A PARTNER<sup>1</sup>

If ...	Weekly payment after tax, at tax rate 'M' is:..
your combined income is more than \$384.02 but less than \$800.01 a week before tax and you live with your partner	\$68.78
your combined income is more than \$384.02 but less than \$800.01 a week and you live away from your partner	\$102.46
your combined income is \$384.02 or less a week before tax	\$317.30
you are both students, but only one of you is eligible for the Student Allowance	\$190.39
you are both students, eligible for the Student Allowance	\$158.65 each

<sup>1</sup> See definitions on pages 23–26.

## All students with children

How much you can get for the Student Allowance depends on if you are single with children, or if you have a partner and children. If you are over 18 years old, and have children your parents' income is not tested.

### IF YOU ARE SINGLE WITH CHILDREN

Weekly payment after tax, at tax rate 'M' is:	\$272.70
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### IF YOU HAVE A PARTNER AND CHILDREN

If ...	Weekly payment after tax, at tax rate 'M' is:..
your combined income is more than \$384.02 but less than \$800.01 a week before tax and you live with your partner	\$68.78
your combined income is more than \$384.02 but less than \$800.01 a week and you live away from your partner	\$102.46
your combined income is \$384.02 or less a week before tax	\$317.30
you are both students, but only one of you is eligible for the Student Allowance	\$272.70
you are both students, eligible for the Student Allowance	\$158.65 each

## Extra help with costs if you have children and/or a dependent partner

You or your partner may be eligible for extra help with accommodation, health or emergency costs (or childcare costs if you have a dependent child) from the Ministry of Social Development. Check pages 17–21 for information about extra help with costs.

### Accommodation Benefit

As part of the Student Allowance you may be able to get an Accommodation Benefit to help with your accommodation costs if:

- you're living away from the parental home while you study, and
  - you don't live with a spouse/partner, or
  - you live with your spouse/partner and have a combined income less than \$384.03 per week.

Note: if you have a child in your care you may qualify for an Accommodation Benefit even if you live in the parental home. For more information about the Accommodation Benefit go to [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz).

The Accommodation Benefit rates are set amounts which are non taxable.

Eligible students will generally receive the Accommodation Benefit rate for the region in which their education provider is located. However, if you are studying extramurally the Accommodation Benefit rate is for the region in which you live. If you live in a hostel, how much you get may depend on the hostel you live in. If you are studying overseas on an approved exchange programme the Accommodation Benefit rate is for the region in which your New Zealand education provider is located.

Here are some examples of what you may get each week:

If you live in...	If you're single with a child you'll get...	Otherwise you'll get...
Auckland	\$60.00	\$40.00
Hamilton	\$55.50	\$37.00
Palmerston North	\$46.00	\$31.00
Wellington	\$60.00	\$40.00
Christchurch	\$60.00	\$40.00
Dunedin	\$52.00	\$34.50
<b>Please note: these rates are subject to change. Please visit our website – <a href="http://www.studylink.govt.nz">www.studylink.govt.nz</a> for the most up-to-date rates.</b>		

1 See definitions on pages 23–26.

Note: You won't get an Accommodation Benefit if you (or your partner) rent a property owned or managed by Housing New Zealand. You may qualify for income-related rent instead. Go to the Housing New Zealand website [www.hnzc.co.nz](http://www.hnzc.co.nz) to find out more or phone your local Housing New Zealand Neighbourhood Unit – you'll find their number on the website or in your phone book.

### STUDENTS WITH PARTNERS

If you're 24 years old or over and in a recognised relationship<sup>1</sup>, you can get an Accommodation Benefit in any week that:

- your combined income is less than \$384.02 (before tax) or
- your combined income is more than \$384.02, but less than \$800.01 (before tax) and you're living apart from (but not estranged from) your partner.

Please note:

- as a student if you personally earn over \$192.01 your Student Allowance payments will be affected and
- you won't be eligible for the Accommodation Benefit for any week that you live in a parental home<sup>1</sup>, unless you or your partner have a dependent child<sup>1</sup>.

## Your responsibilities if you get a Student Allowance

### Tell us about changes

You must tell us if your circumstances change so we can make sure you're getting the right amount of Student Allowance.

The fastest and easiest way to do this is using MyStudyLink at [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz).

You can use MyStudyLink to tell us if:

- your, or your partner's, income changes or
- your, or your partner's, personal details change. For example, name, address or bank account or
- your living situation changes. For example, if you start a new relationship.

Call us on **0800 88 99 00** if:

- you withdraw from a course, fail or drop a paper, or change your course or
- you, or your partner, go overseas or
- you are applying for a Work and Income benefit.

If you don't let us know, you could be overpaid and you'll need to pay the money back. We could take legal action to recover this money.

### Passing more than half the work of a full-time course

If you get a Student Allowance for tertiary study, you must pass more than half the work of a full-time<sup>1</sup> tertiary course to get it again – unless you don't pass because of a reason beyond your control such as illness. High school students do not need to meet this requirement.

See our website [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz) for more information about passing more than half the work of your course.

## How and when to apply

You need to apply for a Student Allowance each time you enrol for a new period of study.

Apply early, well before your course starts, even if you're still deciding what you're going to study.

The quickest and easiest way to apply is online at our website [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz). You can also check out the application process and find out what documents you may need to provide.

Make sure you give us all the details we need when we ask for them or it may delay your application.

<sup>1</sup> See definitions on pages 23–26.

# When payments start

The earliest your payments can start is in the second week of your course. This is because we make payments in arrears. You need to be fully enrolled at your education provider before we can pay you.

All payments are made direct to your nominated bank account. **Note:** if we receive your application after the end of the first week of your course, or the date you qualify if that's later, you may miss out on some payments. Payments are unlikely to be backdated.

## Frequently asked questions

**You must tell us every time your income changes. The fastest and easiest way to do this is using MyStudyLink at [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz).**

### 1. Do I need to let you know if my income is below \$192.01 before tax a week?

Yes, if you or your partner get any income you need to tell us. Any income you get may also affect any extra assistance you are receiving such as Non-beneficiary Accommodation Supplement, Disability Allowance or Temporary Additional Support. If you don't tell us you could be overpaid and you'll have to pay the money back.

### 2. Is my scholarship counted as income<sup>1</sup>?

Yes, scholarships are counted as income for the Student Allowance. This includes lump sum and regular payments of a scholarship, for example weekly payments. Some exceptions are the Step Up Scholarship, Bonded Merit Scholarship and some TeachNZ Scholarships.

For lump sum payments of merit grant scholarships, the first \$750, along with any portion of the scholarship tagged for fees or course-related costs, is deducted from the total scholarship amount. Any portion tagged for fees or course-related costs is determined by the scholarship provider. The remainder of the scholarship is then divided by the period that the scholarship covers to determine the weekly income from each scholarship – this will be counted as income when assessing your Student Allowance.

To find out if your scholarship is counted as income, visit [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz).

### 3. I am being paid holiday pay at my job – is this income?

Yes, holiday pay is classed as income. It can be paid in several ways and this affects how we treat the holiday pay for Student Allowance:

- If holiday pay is paid as part of weekly employment earnings we need to know the total amount of earnings each week.
- If the holiday pay is paid as a lump sum at the end of employment, this holiday pay is entered as earnings during the last week of employment.
- It is also income when paid as a weekly wage during annual leave.

### 4. I receive Child Support payments for a dependent child – is this income?

Yes, any Child Support you receive is classed as income. You need to tell us about this.

### 5. I have a job in my study break, do I need to tell you about this?

If your Student Allowance payments continue during your study break you need to tell us your personal income. Student Allowance is paid for study breaks of three weeks or less and you need to tell us of any changes while receiving a Student Allowance. You will also need to tell us about any income you earn over your study break if you receive the Unemployment Benefit Student Hardship or any other financial assistance from StudyLink.

### 6. If I'm on a Work and Income benefit, can I stay on it while I study full-time?

It depends on the type of benefit you're on. If you're getting a Domestic Purposes, Widows, or Invalids Benefit, or an Emergency Maintenance Allowance, you may be able to stay on your benefit while studying full-time. If you're on any other benefit it is likely that you'll need to move to a Student Allowance.

You must talk to your Work and Income Case Manager about your study before you start your course.

<sup>1</sup> See definitions on pages 23–26.

## **7. Can I get a Student Allowance for Summer School?**

Yes, if your Summer School course is:

- full-time (ask your education provider about this) *or*
- related and attached to your main full-time study programme.

You also need to meet all the other conditions for getting the Student Allowance. If your programme is part-time, you may be able to get the Unemployment Benefit Student Hardship instead (call us on **0800 88 99 00** to find out more).

## **8. What happens to my Student Allowance if I drop a paper?**

You need to tell us straight away. If you drop a paper you may not be studying full-time any more so you may not qualify for a Student Allowance. If you don't tell us, you could be overpaid and you'll have to pay the money back.

## **9. What happens to my Student Allowance if I withdraw from my course?**

Your Student Allowance needs to stop from the day you stop studying full-time. If you withdraw, it could mean you won't pass more than half the work of a full-time course. If this happens, you won't be able to get the Student Allowance in the future unless you meet certain requirements.

To find out more about this visit our website [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz).

## **Did you know?**

MyStudyLink is an online tool that allows you to view and update your details online. From November 2009 you will be able to view your mail online. Sign up at MyStudyLink – Mail Online and we'll send you an email or text when you have new mail to view. Go to [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz) to find out more.

# Student Loan

A Student Loan can help to finance your study. It's made up of three parts – compulsory fees, course-related costs and living costs. When you apply for a loan, you choose what parts you need.

If you're planning to take out a Student Loan, remember you do have to pay it back, so only borrow what you need and keep your debt to a minimum.

## Things to think about first

A Student Loan can really help to finance your tertiary studies. But it is a loan that you have to pay back. When you have a Student Loan you need to start paying it back once you earn over a certain amount – it could take years to pay off.

Before you take out a loan think carefully about whether it's right for you:

- Is there a scholarship you may be entitled to?
- Can you work part-time while studying?
- Is there extra help with costs (such as help with health costs or childcare) that you may be entitled to? (See pages 17–21 for information about extra help.)
- Could you finance your studies without a loan?
- Do you really understand what's involved in paying back a loan?

**The less you borrow, the faster you'll pay off your loan.**

To get an idea of what is involved in paying off a Student Loan take a look at the figures below – you can do your own calculations by visiting Inland Revenue's website [www.ird.govt.nz/studentloans](http://www.ird.govt.nz/studentloans).

### Example

Tama's Student Loan is \$29,000 and he currently earns \$35,000 a year. He makes the minimum repayments each week. It will take him a little over 18 years to pay off his loan.

However, Kim's loan is \$14,000 because she worked part-time while she studied. Paying the minimum amount each week, her loan will be paid back in under 9 years.

Better still, Jeremy has a loan of \$15,000. He pays \$30 a week more than the minimum amount. He'll pay off his loan approximately 10 years earlier.

**That's a big difference! The less you borrow, the faster you'll pay off your loan.**

**Remember to only borrow what you need. Have you checked if you can get a Student Allowance? Visit [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz). You don't have to pay a Student Allowance back.**

## Other useful websites

Here are some other useful websites to check out:

Student Job Search

[www.sjs.co.nz](http://www.sjs.co.nz)

Career Services

[www.careers.govt.nz](http://www.careers.govt.nz)

Budgeting services

[www.sorted.org.nz](http://www.sorted.org.nz)

Funding and scholarship Information

[www.fis.org.nz](http://www.fis.org.nz)

Working for Families Tax Credits

[www.ird.govt.nz/wff-tax-credits](http://www.ird.govt.nz/wff-tax-credits)

Income Tax and Student Loan repayments

[www.ird.govt.nz](http://www.ird.govt.nz)

It's your future ... visit our website [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz) and find out about all the options that may be available to you for financing your study.

# For more information

To find out more about other options that may be available to you to help finance your study visit our website [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz) or call us on **0800 88 99 00** to talk to someone about your individual circumstances.

## What's in a Student Loan?

The Student Loan is made up of three parts. When you apply for a Student Loan, you choose what parts you need. All parts need to be paid back.

**Compulsory fees** – pays the compulsory fees for your programme (including compulsory Student Association fees). It doesn't include special charges such as penalty fees for late enrolment, administration charges for paying by instalments or optional service fees.

**Course-related costs** – helps with expenses relevant to your studies, like buying books, equipment or stationery.

**Living costs** – helps with your living expenses, especially if you don't qualify for the full amount of Student Allowance.

**Note:** You'll need to pay a \$50.00 Student Loan administration fee for each Student Loan you take out. The fee is added to your Student Loan as soon as you use it.

## Can you get a Student Loan?

### General Student Loan criteria

To get a Student Loan, you'll need to be a New Zealand citizen, permanent resident<sup>1</sup> or refugee.

You'll also need to sign a contract with the Government and be enrolled in a tertiary course approved by the Tertiary Education Commission (your education provider can tell you if your course is approved).

The course must be:

- full-time<sup>1</sup> (or you must have our approval to study with limited full-time<sup>1</sup> status) or
- part-time and 32 weeks or longer.

If you're studying part-time for less than 32 weeks, and your course has an EFTS<sup>1</sup> value of 0.25 or more, you may qualify for compulsory fees only.

### Situations where you may not be able to get all parts of the Student Loan

If you are getting a Student Allowance, studying part-time, in prison, on a benefit<sup>1</sup>, getting a Training Incentive Allowance, currently bankrupt or on a course already paid for by the Government, you may not be able to get some or all parts of the Student Loan.

Check out our website [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz) for more information.

## How much you can borrow

When you apply for a Student Loan, you choose what parts you need. Remember what you borrow you have to pay back.

### How much you can borrow for compulsory fees

You can borrow either part or the total amount of your compulsory fees.

If some of your fees have already been paid, this will be deducted from the amount you can borrow. For example, if your fees are \$1,500 and you paid \$100 deposit, the compulsory fees part of your Student Loan will be \$1,400.

### How much you can borrow for course-related costs

You can borrow up to \$1,000 per loan account (usually a 52 week period) for course-related costs. You need to apply for your Student Loan first before you can apply for the course-related costs component.

You don't have to claim all your costs at once, just specify when you apply how much you need. You may need to provide evidence of your costs. You can claim the balance at any time up until your course finishes.

<sup>1</sup> See definitions on pages 23–26.

You can apply for your course-related costs online using MyStudyLink. Using MyStudyLink you will have the ability to:

- apply for course-related costs
- view the status of your course-related costs applications including payment date.

## How much you can borrow for living costs

You can borrow up to \$160.24 a week for living costs while you're studying, or on a study break of three weeks or less.

If you request the maximum amount of living costs each week you may choose to have this adjusted automatically through the Consumers Price Index<sup>1</sup> (CPI) process on 1 April each year.

You choose how much you want to borrow. If you don't need the full amount, ask for less. You can change the amount at any time. The easiest way to do this is by using your MyStudyLink account at [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz). Payments cannot be backdated.

For more information about the CPI process or to view the new living costs amount published from time to time, visit our website [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz).

# Student Loan contract

## The Student Loan contract terms and conditions

When we process your application we'll send you a contract to sign. This is a formal agreement between you and the Government, so it's important that you read and understand its terms and conditions. If you're unsure about anything, get legal advice before you sign it.

You need to sign a Student Loan contract with the Government for every Student Loan you take out and take out a new Student Loan each time you start a new course. A contract usually covers a 52 week period.

If you're under 18 years old one of your parents (or a guardian) must sign your contract (unless you're legally married or in a civil union, have a dependent child, or receive an Independent Circumstances Allowance<sup>1</sup>). This doesn't mean they're guaranteeing your loan; you are still responsible for paying it back. Once a parent has signed the contract they allow the student access to all parts of the Student Loan. They can't withdraw their consent.

## Cancelling your Student Loan contract

You can cancel your Student Loan contract if you decide you don't want a loan after you've signed it. You must do this within seven working days from the date of your first Loan Entitlement Advice letter. A Loan Entitlement Advice letter is a notice we send you when your loan is approved. To cancel your loan you must write to us, but please call us straight away if you decide you no longer want a loan. If you don't cancel your loan within the seven working days you will have to pay the \$50 administration fee and repay any money we have paid to you or your education provider. Find out full details on our website [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz).

# Student Loan transactions, balance and interest

For every Student Loan you take out, we set up a loan account once your Student Loan is approved. The loan account keeps track of your transactions, balance and interest. A loan account usually covers a 52 week period.

## When your loan account closes and transfers to Inland Revenue

Each loan account closes on 31 December following your course end date. You can't use your Student Loan once your loan account has closed.

After your loan account has closed, your balance will transfer to Inland Revenue on 28 February the following year.

Inland Revenue is then responsible for assisting you to comply with your obligations as a Student Loan scheme borrower until your loan is paid back.

## Interest free Student Loans

Any Student Loan borrower who has been in New Zealand for 183 or more consecutive days (about six months) may be eligible for an interest free Student Loan.

<sup>1</sup> See definitions on pages 23–26.

Interest charged will still show on your statements, but will automatically be written off at the end of the year. Inland Revenue will send you confirmation of the write-off after April. Find out more information on interest free Student Loans and the current Student Loan interest rate at our website [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz).

## How and when to apply

You generally need to take out a new Student Loan each time you start a new course.

Remember: you will need to pay back each Student Loan that you take out. So only borrow what you need.

Apply early, well before your course starts, even if you're still deciding what you're going to study.

The quickest and easiest way to apply is online at our website [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz). You can also check out the application process and find out what documents you may need to provide.

Make sure you give all the details we need when we ask for them, or it may delay your application.

You can check the status of your application using MyStudyLink at [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz).

## When payments start

This depends on when you applied for your Student Loan, and which part(s) you qualify for. You have to be fully enrolled in your course to get a Student Loan.

If your Student Loan is for ...	The earliest we can pay this is...
Compulsory fees	two weeks before your course begins.
Course-related costs	two weeks before your course begins.
Living costs	in the second week of your course. You're paid in arrears – this means your payment for one week isn't made until the following week. We can't usually back-pay you for living costs so you need to apply for a Student Loan well before your course begins to make sure you get all your payments.

## Your responsibilities

### Tell us about changes

You need to tell us about changes so we can keep your information up to date.

The fastest and easiest way to do this is using MyStudyLink at [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz).

You can use MyStudyLink to tell us if:

- your personal details change. For example, name, address or bank account.

Call us on **0800 88 99 00** if:

- you withdraw from a course, fail or drop a paper, or change your course or
- you go overseas.

### Repaying your Student Loan

A Student Loan can help to finance your tertiary studies. But remember, it's a loan that you have to pay back.

When you have a Student Loan you need to start paying it back once you earn over a certain amount – this could take years to pay off.

For more information on repaying your Student Loan check out our website at [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz). You can access the Retirement Commission's Sorted Student Loan repayment calculator from our website to see how long it may take you to pay your loan back. Inland Revenue also has a Student Loan repayment calculator on their website [www.ird.govt.nz/studentloans](http://www.ird.govt.nz/studentloans).

# Frequently asked questions

## **1. Do I need to prove that I can repay a Student Loan?**

No – you don't have to provide any security or guarantee for the loan, because the Government is providing the loan and will recover the money from you through Inland Revenue in the same way it collects tax.

## **2. Is anyone else responsible for paying back my Student Loan?**

No.

## **3. Once I have a Student Loan set up, do I have to use it?**

No – you can have a loan and never use it. Please note though, that we can't usually back date you for living costs for any week that's already passed.

## **4. Can I get a Student Loan if I'm studying part-time?**

Yes – if your course is 32 weeks or more and you meet the other conditions, you can get a Student Loan for compulsory fees and course-related costs only. You can't borrow for living costs.

Yes – if your course is less than 32 weeks and you're studying 0.25 EFTS<sup>1</sup> or more, you may be able to get a Student Loan for compulsory fees only.

For more information visit our website [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz).

## **5. Can I pay some of the compulsory fees with my own money?**

Yes – but we recommend you pay your portion as early as possible or the full fee amount may be paid by your Student Loan. If an overpayment occurs, your education provider must return any overpayment to your loan account.

## **6. Can I be reimbursed from my Student Loan if I have already paid my compulsory fees?**

No – fees can only be paid to your education provider. Your education provider can only request fees that are outstanding.

## **7. What happens to my Student Loan living costs if I get a Student Allowance?**

The amount you can get for living costs goes down by the Student Allowance you get after tax.

For example, if you request the maximum living cost amount of \$160.24 and your Student Allowance is \$100 a week after tax, you can only borrow \$60.24 for your living costs.

## **8. What happens to my living cost payments if I find out later that I qualify for a Student Allowance?**

You'll get the full amount of living costs that you asked for, until you start getting the Student Allowance. Any back-payments you get for the Student Allowance will automatically be used to repay the amount you've already received for living costs from your Student Loan.

## **9. Is there a limit to how much I can earn while getting a Student Loan?**

No – unlike the Student Allowance and most benefits there are no income limits for the Student Loan.

## **10. Can my parents be given information about my loan account?**

Not without your permission. If you're under 18 years old, your parents must give their consent for you to get a Student Loan, but they can't access the information you give us without your permission.

If you want to give someone else authority to enquire about your application you'll need to complete an Agent's Authority. You can download a form at [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz).

## **11. What happens to my Student Loan if I withdraw from my course after the fees have been paid?**

If you withdraw from your course you are still responsible for repaying your Student Loan. You will need to ask your education provider if you qualify for any fee refund. Any refund will be paid directly to your loan account.

<sup>1</sup> See definitions on pages 23–26.

# Scholarships

Scholarships are a great way to fund your study and they are open to a wide range of students.

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## Scholarships you might be able to get

Not all scholarships depend on your previous academic achievement – there are scholarships that take into account your region, needs, academic abilities, study history, subject areas and future plans.

Before you start tertiary study, have a look around as there could be a scholarship that suits you.

We recommend you look at scholarships offered by your education provider, ask your school careers advisor, visit the Career Services website at [www.careers.govt.nz](http://www.careers.govt.nz) and search the internet.

We can also refer you to agencies that may have other scholarships available.

BreakOut is a searchable database of New Zealand scholarships, awards and grants. You can visit the BreakOut section of the Funding Information Service website at [www.fis.org.nz](http://www.fis.org.nz) for a list of places where you can use these services for free or ask your local library if they offer the service.

Scholarship funds and rules change from time to time so make sure you get the most up-to-date information before you apply.

## Important information about StudyLink scholarships

StudyLink previously delivered the Bonded Merit Scholarship and the Step Up Scholarship. From 28 May 2009 these scholarships are no longer available for new applicants.

For students who were approved to receive a Bonded Merit Scholarship or Step Up Scholarship before 28 May 2009 there have been changes to the conditions of these scholarships.

Please visit our website [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz) for more information on these changes.

# Extra help with costs

There are a number of ways that we can help with costs while you study, or if you are on a study break and can't find work.

## Help during study breaks if you can't find work

The **Unemployment Benefit Student Hardship** is a weekly payment to help meet your living expenses during your study breaks if you can't find work. You can't get it if you work or study full-time.

### Can you get the Unemployment Benefit Student Hardship?

To get the Unemployment Benefit Student Hardship you'll need to be:

- 18 years old or over *or*
- 16–17 years old and living with a partner<sup>1</sup> and children<sup>1</sup> you support *or*
- 16–17 years old and approved for the Independent Circumstances Allowance (see our website [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz) for more details).

You'll also need to be a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident who normally lives here and:

- plan to study full-time<sup>1</sup> after your break *and*
- register with Student Job Search at [www.sjs.co.nz](http://www.sjs.co.nz), or Work and Income if there's not a Student Job Search in your region *and*
- actively look for full-time work *and*
- have assets<sup>1</sup> under \$4,300 if you're single, or \$7,464 if you have a partner or child *and*
- qualify for the Student Allowance – if you're in hardship you may still get it even if you don't qualify for the Student Allowance.

You'll need to meet the following work test obligations:

- be available for and take reasonable steps to obtain suitable employment *and*
- accept any offer of suitable employment *and*
- attend and participate in an interview opportunity for any suitable employment to which you are referred.

Please note: If you have not been in previous study or you are 16-17 years old and getting a Student Allowance your application may be processed as an Emergency Benefit. If this happens, you will get the same amount as you would have received if you got Unemployment Benefit Student Hardship.

<sup>1</sup> See definitions on pages 23–26.

## How much you can get

The amount you get depends on your personal situation such as your age, living arrangements, income and assets.

The guide below shows the maximum amount you can get a week after tax at the 'M' rate. It doesn't include any Family Tax Credits or extra income support you may get.

Payments are made direct to your bank account every week (this can be a joint account). If you live with a partner they also get payments every week.

If you are ...	Weekly payment after tax, at tax rate 'M' is:..
16–17 years old (special circumstances only)	\$158.65
Single (18–19 years old living at home)	\$126.92
Single (18–19 years old living away from home)	\$158.65
Single (20–24 years old)	\$158.65
Single (25 years old or over)	\$190.39
Single with 1 or more children	\$272.70
Married or civil union couple	\$158.65 each

Inland Revenue provides more assistance to families with children. To find out more about the Working for Families Tax Credits payments check out Inland Revenue's website [www.ird.govt.nz](http://www.ird.govt.nz) or call them on **0800 227 773**.

## How to apply

You need to complete an Unemployment Benefit Student Hardship application.

You can download an application from our website [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz) or call us on **0800 88 99 00** and we'll send you one. You can also get one by visiting your nearest StudyLink Outreach site or Work and Income service centre.

Once you have completed your application form please check that you have answered all the questions and attached all the evidence we need. This will ensure your application is processed as quickly as possible. If we do not have all the information we need your payments could be delayed.

You can post your completed application and any documents you need to provide to:

StudyLink Student Support Centre  
Freepost 113907  
Private Bag 11070  
Palmerston North 4442.

If you didn't receive a Student Allowance this year, you'll need to apply for one for next year before we can finish processing your application for Unemployment Benefit Student Hardship. The best way to apply for a Student Allowance is online at [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz).

## When payments start

The earliest you can get your Unemployment Benefit Student Hardship is in the third week of your break. That's because you have a stand-down<sup>1</sup> (like all benefits<sup>1</sup>) – and you're paid in arrears which means your payment for one week isn't made until the following week. How long your stand-down<sup>1</sup> is depends on your average income in the previous 26 or 52 weeks (whichever is lower). Go to our website [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz) to find out more about the Unemployment Benefit Student Hardship.

# Help going from a Student Allowance to a benefit

A **Student Allowance Transfer Grant** can help if you have a partner or child and are in hardship because your Student Allowance has stopped and you're waiting for your benefit<sup>1</sup> to start. It is a one-off payment usually made during your stand-down<sup>1</sup> period.

You need to apply for this grant, and an Unemployment Benefit Student Hardship, before your course finishes or in the week after so you don't miss out on the grant. For more information on the Student Allowance Transfer Grant check out our website at [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz).

<sup>1</sup> See definitions on pages 23–26.

# Help with study costs if you're on a benefit

If you get the Domestic Purposes, Widows or Invalids Benefit or Emergency Maintenance Allowance from Work and Income, you may be able to get the **Training Incentive Allowance** to help you with your study costs.

How much you may be able to get depends on your costs and the level and length of your course. The fees are paid directly to the people providing the training. Payment for other costs is made to you along with your benefit.

For more information on the Training Incentive Allowance, call Work and Income on **0800 559 009**, go to their website **www.workandincome.govt.nz** or talk to your Work and Income Case Manager.

## Help with accommodation costs

An **Accommodation Supplement** can help with the cost of renting, boarding or owning a home. You may be able to get it if you're on a low income or getting the Unemployment Benefit Student Hardship, or another benefit<sup>1</sup> (not the Student Allowance).

Go to our website **www.studylink.govt.nz** to find out more about the Accommodation Supplement.

## Help with the costs of starting a new job

A **Transition to Work Grant** can help with the costs of starting work or going to a job interview, such as clothes and travel for the first few days of your job.

For more information on the Transition to Work Grant, visit our website **www.studylink.govt.nz**.

## Help with health costs

### Health cards

The **Community Services Card** can help with the cost of visiting your doctor and getting prescriptions. It's a family card so you can use it for dependent children under 18 years old.

If you get the Unemployment Benefit Student Hardship you'll automatically be sent a card. If you get a Student Allowance you'll automatically be sent a card, except if you're paid a lower rate because your partner is earning. In this case, or if you have a Student Loan only, you still need to apply for one.

To qualify, your yearly income must be under a certain limit – depending on your personal situation.

You may qualify for a **Pharmaceutical Subsidy Card** if you or your children need a lot of prescriptions each year. To find out more about this card, talk to your pharmacist.

You may be able to get a **High Use Health Card** if you don't qualify for a Community Services Card and you visit the doctor often for an ongoing medical condition. You get the same subsidies on visits to the doctor and prescriptions as the Community Services Card – but you can't use it for other family members. Talk to your doctor to find out more.

For more information about the **Community Services Card** go to Work and Income's website **www.workandincome.govt.nz** or call the Community Services Card Centre on **0800 999 999**. For information about other health cards, call Work and Income on **0800 559 009** or go to their website.

### Ongoing medical costs for an illness or disability

If you, your partner or child have on-going medical costs for an illness or disability, you may be able to get a **Disability Allowance**.

The Disability Allowance helps with the extra costs you, your partner or child have because of a disability that is likely to last at least six months.

It can help with costs such as ongoing visits to the doctor or hospital, medicines and travel. How much you get depends on your costs.

<sup>1</sup> See definitions on pages 23–26.

The **Child Disability Allowance** pays a set amount to people who are caring at home for a child with a serious disability. The child must be under 18 years old, need constant care and attention and be financially dependent on you. The Child Disability Allowance doesn't depend on your income or costs.

For more information on the Disability Allowance and the Child Disability Allowance, visit our website [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz).

## Help with childcare costs

### The Childcare Subsidy and 20 Hours Early Childhood Education (20 Hours ECE)

You may be able to get a **Childcare Subsidy** to help with the costs of childcare while you're studying.

This helps pay childcare costs for children under five (or under six if you get a Child Disability Allowance for the child). We can help with up to 50 hours a week for each child while you're studying. If your partner is able to take care of the child you may only be eligible for nine hours Childcare Subsidy a week. The child has to attend the childcare or pre-school service at least three hours a week.

The Government also provides **20 Hours ECE** to fund the cost of children aged three and four attending early childhood education for up to 20 hours a week. This is up to six hours a day, 20 hours a week, at any teacher-led Early Childhood Education service offering 20 Hours ECE, which has a place available for the child.

The Childcare Subsidy may still be available to support people who need extra hours on top of 20 Hours ECE.

If you want to know more about the childcare subsidy visit the Work and Income website [www.workandincome.govt.nz](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz). For information about 20 Hours ECE check out [www.teamup.co.nz](http://www.teamup.co.nz).

### Help during school holidays, and before and after school care

If your children are 5–13 years old and you have a partner who's working, you or your partner may be able to get an **Out of School Care and Recreational (OSCAR) Subsidy** to help with before and after school care and during the school holidays. For more information visit the Work and Income website [www.workandincome.govt.nz](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz).

### Help for parents under 18 years old

If you are a parent under 18 years old and in secondary school, you may be able to get a **Young Parent Childcare payment**.

For more information visit the Work and Income website [www.workandincome.govt.nz](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz).

## Help for emergencies

If you have an emergency and you don't have enough money to meet your necessary costs, we may be able to help with one of these grants. There are special conditions, so please ask us about them.

- A **Special Needs Grant** can help if you have an emergency like urgent dental care (you may have to pay this back).
- A **Recoverable Assistance Payment** helps with necessary costs like replacing your prescription glasses in an emergency (you'll have to pay this back).
- **Temporary Additional Support** can provide financial assistance as a last resort for people in financial hardship who can't meet their essential costs from their income or other sources.

For more information on help with emergencies or to make an appointment with your local Outreach office to apply for assistance call us on **0800 88 99 00**.

# Support for Families from Inland Revenue

## Working for Families Tax Credits

Working for Families Tax Credits are entitlements for families with children. They are made up of four types of payments and you may qualify for one or more, depending on your personal situation.

The four types of payments are:

1. Family tax credit: This is a payment for each dependent child aged 18 years old or younger.
2. In-work tax credit: This is a payment for families who normally work a minimum number of hours each week.
3. Minimum family tax credit: This is a payment for families who earn up to \$24,493 a year before tax from salary/wages, and who work a minimum number of hours each week.
4. Parental tax credit: This is to help meet the needs that come with having a new baby and is for the first 56 days after your baby is born.

These tax credits are available for families with children whose income is under a certain amount and residence rules apply. The type of payment and how much you could be eligible for, may be affected if your family income includes an income tested benefit, Student Allowance or New Zealand Superannuation.

For more details about Working for Families Tax Credits visit Inland Revenue's website [www.ird.govt.nz](http://www.ird.govt.nz) or call them on **0800 227 773** (or **0800 377 774** if you or your partner are in business).

## Paid Parental Leave

Paid parental leave is a Government funded entitlement for eligible parents when they take parental leave from their job to care for their newborn or adopted child (under the age of six years old).

You cannot receive both paid parental leave and parental tax credits for the same child. If you qualify for both you'll need to decide which payment you would like to receive. Once you have made your decision, you will not be able to change it.

For most people, paid parental leave payments will be higher than parental tax credit.

To find out more about paid parental leave or to order a paid parental leave application form, go to the Employment Relations Service (ERS) section of the Department of Labour website [www.ers.dol.govt.nz](http://www.ers.dol.govt.nz), or phone them on **0800 20 90 20**.

If you're eligible for both payments and you'd like some advice on which would be the better one for you, call Inland Revenue on **0800 377 777**.

# Legal things

Here are some important things you need to know when you get financial help from us.

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## Be honest with us

When you apply for financial help from us, you must be totally honest about your personal situation and tell us if anything changes. If we find you haven't been honest with us, we'll stop your payments. You may have to pay back the money you received and we could take legal action to recover this money. It's not worth the risk.

## Tell us about changes

It's important that you tell us about any change in your circumstances so we can make sure you're getting the right amount of support.

The fastest and easiest way to do this is using MyStudyLink at [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz).

You can use MyStudyLink to tell us if:

- your, or your partner's, income changes or
- your, or your partner's, personal details change. For example, name, address or bank account or
- your living situation changes. For example, if you start a new relationship.

Call us on **0800 88 99 00** if:

- you withdraw from a course, fail or drop a paper, or change your course or
- you, or your partner, go overseas or
- you are receiving an Unemployment Benefit Student Hardship.

If you don't let us know, you could be overpaid and you'll need to pay the money back. We could take legal action to recover this money.

## Call recording

Calls may be recorded by the Ministry of Social Development to improve our service to you. This includes ensuring accuracy and assisting with staff training.

## We check the information you give us

We have the right to check certain information you give us – with your education provider or employers for instance. We also compare records with other government agencies including Inland Revenue, the Ministry of Justice, the Department of Corrections, the New Zealand Customs Service, the Department of Internal Affairs, the Accident Compensation Corporation, Housing New Zealand, Statistics New Zealand, the Ministry of Health, Immigration New Zealand, the Ministry of Education, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, the Tertiary Education Commission, Student Job Search and education providers. It may also be compared with social security information (for example, pension or benefit information) held by other governments (including Australia and the Netherlands).

## You have rights

You can ask to see your file and ask us to correct anything that's wrong.

If you're unhappy with a decision about your student finances, talk with us first and we'll try and resolve things as quickly as possible.

If we can't resolve things for you, you'll need to follow a standard process.

You can download the brochure Student Reviews, Appeals and Disputes, which tells you about this process, from our website [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz) or call us and we'll send you one.

You have the right to expect helpful and friendly service from us.

# Definitions

These are definitions for some of the terms included in this booklet. They may mean different things depending on whether they relate to the Student Allowance, Student Loan or Unemployment Benefit Student Hardship. It is really important you fully understand what each term means.

## General definitions

### BENEFIT

A benefit is any income support that pays for living expenses and is paid to either you or your partner, such as the Invalids Benefit or Unemployment Benefit (a War Pension isn't counted as a benefit).

### EFTS

The Tertiary Education Commission decides if a course is either full-time or part-time by applying what's called an EFTS (equivalent full-time student) value to each course. The EFTS value is determined by the content of your course. If you're unsure of the EFTS value of your course, check with your education provider.

### EXTRAMURAL

Extramural is when you are not completing your studies on-site at the education provider, for example distance learning.

### INCOME

Income is any money you or your partner get from any source, taxable or non-taxable. This could include, but is not limited to, wages, salary, termination payment, bonus pay, holiday pay, child support, maintenance payments, paid parental leave, interest from savings and investments, dividends from shares, income from a family trust, farm or business, income from boarders or rent, superannuation, overseas benefits and pensions, weekly accident insurance payments, some scholarships, any indirect monetary benefits you get such as free board or shares in a business, and any other income that you have or may deprive yourself of.

Note: for Temporary Additional Support assistance the following are also considered income: Student Allowance, the living costs component of the Student Loan, Working for Families tax credits, all Work and Income benefits except Unsupported Child's Benefit and Orphans Benefit.

### LIMITED FULL-TIME STATUS

Limited full-time status is a provision for students who are unable to undertake the workload of a full-time course due to one of the following reasons:

- you're finishing a recognised programme and to do this you need to study less than full-time but more than half of a full-time course.

Or

- your education provider supports your application to study less than full-time for one of the following reasons:
  - you have an illness that stops you studying full-time *or*
  - you can't study full-time where there is a sufficient cause outside your control (this could include a disability which stops you studying full-time) *or*
  - it's in your best interest to study less than full-time (best interest does not apply to Bonded Merit Scholarship).

If you are receiving a Bonded Merit Scholarship or Step Up Scholarship and want to apply for limited full time status, visit [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz) for more information.

**Please note – being approved to study with limited full-time status when you receive a loan is not the same as being full-time for interest write-off purposes.**

To apply for limited full-time status you need to complete a Limited Full-time application. You can download this form from our website [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz) (remember you still need to complete a Student Allowance or Student Loan application as well – you can do this online at [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz)).

## **PARTNER**

A partner is someone you are in a recognised relationship with. For example your spouse, civil union partner, or someone of the same or opposite sex with whom you have a de facto relationship. Please see the definitions for recognised relationship if you have a partner.

# Student Allowance

## **DEPENDENT STUDENTS**

For the parents of a student applying for a Student Allowance, another dependent student is someone:

- who is attending a full-time course at a tertiary provider or a secondary school *and*
- who is not studying overseas unless they are undertaking a recognised exchange programme, *and*
- who is aged 16 years or over but under 24 years at 1 January of the year the Student Allowance is applied for *and*
- who has not been awarded an Independent Circumstances Allowance *and*
- for whom you are not paid a Work and Income Orphans or Unsupported Child's Benefit *and*
- who receives financial support from you.

Please note: this definition is different from that of the Unemployment Benefit Student Hardship.

## **CHILDREN/SUPPORTED CHILDREN**

For the Student Allowance a child is someone:

- who is under 24 years old and lives with you at least 50 percent of the time *and*
- whose well-being and financial support is your responsibility,

This can include stepchildren, children at boarding school, adopted or whangai children, grandchildren or mokopuna. It does not include children:

- who earn more than \$80 a week before tax, or get a benefit, Student Allowance or similar type of payment *and*
- for whom you are paid a Work and Income Orphans or Unsupported Child's Benefit.

Please note: this definition is different from that of the Unemployment Benefit Student Hardship.

## **FULL-TIME**

Each tertiary level course has an EFTS value assigned to it.

For an individual course to be approved as full-time, the length of that course must meet a certain EFTS value.

For example:

<b>Length of individual course</b>	<b>Minimum EFTS value required to be full-time</b>
12 weeks	0.3
20 weeks	0.5
32–52 weeks	0.8

There are particular situations where courses can be joined together and assessed as full-time.

If you're unsure if your course meets the full-time criteria, check with your education provider.

StudyLink will request a Verification of Study (VoS) from your education provider to verify if you meet the full-time criteria.

There are courses that are shorter than 12 weeks (eg summer school). For these courses to be considered as full-time the EFTS value must be at least 0.025 for each week of that course, and the course must be approved by the Tertiary Education Commission for Student Allowance purposes.

## **PARENT**

A parent is a natural, adoptive or whāngai parent, a guardian, caregiver, step-parent, partner of your parent, or any other person acting as a parent who is responsible for your well-being and financial support. A person who receives a Work and Income Orphans or Unsupported Child's Benefit for you is not recognised as a parent for Student Allowance purposes.

## **PARENTAL HOME**

A parental home in relation to a student, means the home of a parent where the student is living with a parent, or a home provided or maintained by the parent of the student, whether or not the parent lives with the student. It doesn't include a property where the student is paying the market rent or is responsible for the payment of the outgoings for that home.

A student who is living in a parental home is paying market rent if they are responsible for the payment of what is considered the full market rent for that home. If rooms are rented out (but not to the parent/s of the student), the student must still be responsible for ensuring the full market rent for the home is paid.

Outgoings can include payments for the following: mortgage, rates, house insurance and essential repairs and maintenance. Expenses such as phone, power or internet payments are not considered to be outgoings.

## **PARENTS' INCOME**

This is any taxable income your parents receive for the tax year you are studying in, including any overseas taxable income that they don't pay New Zealand tax on.

## **PERMANENT RESIDENT**

A permanent resident is someone who holds permanent residency status in New Zealand. To be eligible for the Student Allowance, a permanent resident must have legally lived in New Zealand for at least two years, held permanent residency status for at least two years, and be ordinarily resident in New Zealand.

## **RECOGNISED RELATIONSHIP**

A recognised relationship is when you are both 24 years old or over and in a relationship such as a marriage, a civil union or a de facto relationship with someone of the same or opposite sex. If either of you is under 24 years old, at least one of you must have a child in your care to be in a recognised relationship.

Please note: this definition is for Student Allowance only.

## **REFUGEE**

There are two categories of refugee status:

- Refugees who are in New Zealand under the Refugee Quota system (or mandate refugees) are automatically eligible for assistance.
- Convention Refugees are people who have applied for refugee status under other criteria. They can apply before, upon or after arriving in New Zealand. Once they are approved refugee status they have to apply for permanent residency to be eligible for assistance.

## **SEPARATE HOUSEHOLDS**

By separate households we mean that your parents are living at different addresses for the majority of the week. Separate households do not include addresses used for holiday periods.

## **SINGLE**

A single person is anyone who is not in a recognised relationship (see above). It includes anyone who is separated, divorced or widowed. Note: For Student Allowance, if you are under 24 years of age, you are considered to be single even if you are in a marriage, civil union or defacto relationship unless at least one of you has a child in your care.

# **Student Loan**

## **CONSUMERS PRICE INDEX**

The Consumers Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the price change of goods and services purchased by private New Zealand households. The CPI measure is also used to determine any adjustments to Student Allowance rates and Student Loan living costs borrowing limits on 1 April each year. For more information on the CPI process go to the Statistics New Zealand website [www.stats.govt.nz](http://www.stats.govt.nz).

## **FULL-TIME**

The Tertiary Education Commission assigns an EFTS (equivalent full-time student) value to each course to determine if it meets the full-time status criteria for Student Loans.

For example

Length of individual course	Minimum EFTS value required to be full-time
12 weeks	0.3
20 weeks	0.5
32–52 weeks	0.8

The study status of your course determines what components of the Student Loan you can access.

For example:

Study status	Fees	Course-related costs	Living costs
Full-time, Full year (ie studying both 1st and 2nd semester)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Full-time, Part year (ie studying either 1st or 2nd semester)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Part-time, Full year	Yes	Yes	No
Part-time, Part year	Yes	No	No

Note: if the length of your course does not meet the required EFTS value to be full-time, StudyLink will check to see if there is any part or segment of your course which may still qualify as full-time.

For example: Your course is 32 weeks long, so you would need to have 0.8 EFTS to be full-time. Your first semester EFTS value is 0.4, but your second semester is only 0.3. StudyLink will determine that you are full-time for the first semester but not for the second semester.

### PERMANENT RESIDENT

For the Student Loan, a permanent resident is someone who holds permanent residency status in New Zealand.

## Unemployment Benefit Student Hardship

### ASSETS/CASH ASSETS

Assets include anything you or your partner own that can readily convert into cash such as savings, shares, stocks, loans to others or property you don't live in.

### CHILDREN/DEPENDENT CHILDREN

By children we mean anyone under 18 years old who lives with you and whom you financially support – this includes stepchildren, children at boarding school, adopted or whāngai children, grandchildren or mokopuna. It doesn't include children who are financially supporting themselves or working full-time, or anyone you are being paid a Work and Income Orphans or Unsupported Child's Benefit, or a Child, Youth and Family payment for. Please note: this definition is different from that of the Student Allowance.

### RECOGNISED RELATIONSHIP

A recognised relationship is when one or both of you are 16 years old or over and in a relationship such as a marriage, a civil union or de facto relationship with someone of the same or opposite sex. Please note: this definition is different from that of the Student Allowance.

### STAND-DOWN

This is the waiting time from when you qualify for the Unemployment Benefit Student Hardship (usually after your last exam) until the time you are entitled to your benefit (your payments start later because you're paid a week in arrears). You won't get paid during a stand-down. If you have a partner or a child and you're in hardship because your Student Allowance has stopped and you're waiting for your benefit to start, you may be able to get the Student Allowance Transfer Grant.

# The Student Allowance process – what you can expect

If you have any questions you can visit our website [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz).

Once you have submitted your application for a Student Allowance you can check your application status using a MyStudyLink account at [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz).

## Step 1:

You apply for the Student Allowance:  
The easiest way to apply is online at [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz). If you can't apply online call StudyLink on **0800 88 99 00** to get an application form.

You need to apply at least 21 days before your course starts, or you may not get paid on time. You can apply for your Student Allowance before you enrol for study but you will need to be fully enrolled before we can pay you. Make sure you give us all the details we need – this speeds things up.

## Step 2:

We will process your application and check the information you give us.

We will send you a letter asking for more information if we need it. We need to have all the information before the end of the course for which you have applied for a Student Allowance or it will be declined. We also send you a letter if you don't qualify for a Student Allowance.  
If you applied online you may be sent a paper declaration to sign. If you are under 24 or have a partner, we will also send forms for your parents or partner to complete.

## Step 3:

We will send you a pre-approval letter showing how much you're likely to get.

This letter doesn't mean your Student Allowance is approved. We still need to check your study details with your education provider before we can approve your application.

## Step 4:

We check your details with your education provider closer to the time your course starts. We'll check:

- the dates of your course
- if you're full-time or part-time.

Make sure you've fully enrolled or your education provider won't be able to confirm your details and you may not get paid on time.

## Step 5:

We will assess your Student Allowance based on your study details.

We send you a letter to tell you if your Student Allowance is approved. If your application has been declined, we send you a letter explaining why. From November 2009 you will be able to sign up to view your mail online at MyStudyLink.

## Step 6:

Your payments can start.

You can use MyStudyLink to check on when your payments start.

**If you don't apply on time or don't give us all the information we need, we can't pay you on time.**

# MyStudyLink – get it all done online

## Using your MyStudyLink account you can:

- apply for your student finances
- check your Student Allowance and Student Loan application status
- view and update your personal details
- check your Student Loan balance, change the amount of your living cost payments and apply for your course-related costs
- view details of your next payment and previous transactions.

## New services coming soon:

- visit our redesigned website and use the improved online application service (from October 2009)
- check out what financial assistance you may be able to get (from October 2009)
- view your mail online (from November 2009).

## HOW TO CONTACT US

Website: [www.studylink.govt.nz](http://www.studylink.govt.nz)

Phone: **0800 88 99 00**

Fax: **0800 88 33 88**

**StudyLink Student Support Centre**  
**FreePost 113907**  
**Private Bag 11070**  
**Palmerston North 4442**