



21 December 2023

Jessica

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Tēnā koe Jessica

On 27 November 2023, you requested information regarding the Student Allowance (SA) to the Ministry of Education, in accordance with the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). The Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) accepted transfer of parts four and five of your request.

Please find my decision on each part of your request set out separately below.

***4.) The total amount of students who have received student allowance each year and how many have received the full student allowance entitlement since 2005. If those who received any student allowance can also be divided into undergraduate/postgraduate, under 24/above 24, with/without children, with a partner/without a partner***

The Ministry considers most qualifications at Level 8 or above of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority Framework (the Framework) to be postgraduate level. The exception to that rule is Bachelors degrees with Honours, which retained eligibility for the Student Allowance. They are considered undergraduate qualifications for the purposes of the policy. **Table 1** of the attached **Appendix 1** includes a breakdown showing the number of students receiving SA between 2005 and 2022 and whether they were receiving it while studying at postgraduate level.

Students who commenced study toward qualifications at Level 8 or above of the Framework after 1 January 2013 were ineligible for the SA. You will see this change in policy reflected in the 'Postgraduate' column of Table 1. Further information about the policy is available here: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/students/student-allowance/programmes-not-recognised-01.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/students/student-allowance/programmes-not-recognised-01.html).



Data showing the number of SA recipients above and below age 24, whether they had children, their relationship status between 1999 and 2023, and the number of students who received the Accommodation Benefit (AB), is publicly available here: [www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/studylink/archive/index.html](http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/studylink/archive/index.html).

**Table 2** of the attached **Appendix 2** shows the number of students who have received the full rate of SA and those whose payments were abated between 2005 and 2022.

***5.) The total amount of students who have received a student allowance and accommodation benefit too and what region they live in, since 2005***

Please refer to **Table 3** of the attached **Appendix** which shows the number of students who have received SA in the period 2005-2022, broken down by region and year.

It should be noted, the Ministry's regional breakdown is based on the New Zealand post code system that changed in 2006 and came into full use in 2008. Consequently, there are several SA recipients between 2005 and 2008 for whom the Ministry did not record the new post code. This is reflected in the 'Incorrect new post code' row of **Table 3** in Appendix 2.

Matching the entries in the 'Incorrect new post code' category with the new post code system would require the Ministry to divert personnel from their core duties and allocate extra time to complete this task. The diversion of these resources would impair the Ministry's ability to continue standard operations and would be an inefficient use of the Ministry's resources. As such, your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act, as it requires substantial collation. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**  
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact [OIA\\_Requests@msd.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with my decision, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Magnus O'Neill'.

pp.  
Magnus O'Neill  
**General Manager**  
**Ministerial and Executive Services**



## Appendix 1

**Table 1- The number of students receiving SA between 2005 and 2022 and whether they were receiving it while studying at postgraduate level**

	Level				Total
	Unknown	Other	Secondary	Postgraduate	
2005	2,187	50,091	1,482	3,045	56,805
2006	1,983	53,109	1,386	2,958	59,433
2007	1,524	56,835	1,344	2,772	62,481
2008	912	60,444	1,437	2,907	65,700
2009	609	76,161	2,034	3,831	82,635
2010	474	88,563	2,109	4,803	95,943
2011	99	92,043	2,091	5,037	99,273
2012	15	90,033	1,872	4,995	96,909
2013	6	81,924	1,674	1,491	85,092
2014	3	78,240	1,323	102	79,668
2015	6	73,794	1,242	9	75,051
2016	6	70,059	963	3	71,028
2017	6	64,458	888	3	65,352
2018	3	63,822	906	-	64,728
2019	3	61,665	828	-	62,496
2020	3	60,897	822	-	61,722
2021	3	62,112	699	3	62,814
2022	3	50,877	546	-	51,426



**Notes regarding Table 1:**

- To protect confidentiality, the Ministry uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data.
- These data tables have had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table.
- Random rounding does not round down to zero, a value of one or two will be rounded to three.
- The impact of applying random rounding is that columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row totals.
- The published counts will never differ by more than two counts.
- Information about qualification level QACC Code was only available since October 2012 so some early programs paid will not have a code so qualification level cannot be determined.