



9 December 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 13 November 2025, requesting information about students studying overseas in receipt of Student Allowance.

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please find my decision on each part of your request set out separately below.

I have also included some general information about Student Allowance statistics at the end of this letter, for your further information.

- *3. Are you able to say how many students for each of the last five years have indicated they are studying overseas, and have applied for Student Allowance?*

Please see the attached **Appendix** for **Table One** showing the number of Student Allowances granted to students studying overseas between 1 January 2020 and 31 October 2025.

- *4. Does MSD collate where these students are studying overseas, the courses they are studying, and whether that study is genuine?*

The Ministry requires students studying overseas as part of their qualification to complete an Overseas Study application form which includes information on the country of study. This information is held on individual client files and not centrally collated. As substantial manual collation would be required to collate this information, if you were to request information around country of study, it would likely be refused under 18(f). The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

By completing the relevant section on the Overseas Study application form, education providers confirm that the overseas study undertaken by the student will form part of the requirements of a programme in New Zealand approved by the Tertiary Education Commission – and recognised by NZQA or Universities NZ.

In addition to the Overseas Study form, the Verification of Study (VoS) process requires education providers to confirm details of a student's full programme of study to StudyLink.



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

Students studying overseas have the same performance and course completion requirements as a student who is studying in New Zealand and receiving Student Allowance.

General information about Student Allowance

The Ministry reports on Studylink statistics on a regular basis. This information can be found here: <http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/studylink/archive/index.html>.

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with my decision on your request, 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 or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

pp. 

Anna Graham

General Manager

Ministerial and Executive Services



Appendix

Table One: The number of Student Allowances with overseas study between 1 January 2020 and 31 October 2025.

Year	Student Allowance
2020	288
2021	165
2022	240
2023	411
2024	450
2025 (up to 31 October 2025)	552

Notes:

- Where an overseas study application has been approved for Student Allowance
- Student Allowances are grouped by year of study start date
- A student will only be counted once in a year.
- To protect confidentiality, the Ministry of Social Development 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.
- Post COVID-19 numbers have returned to approximately pre COVID-19 numbers.