



22 July 2025

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

Thank you for your email of 19 June 2025, requesting historic information on increases to the parental income thresholds applied to eligibility for student allowances.

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

The Government's policy is that full-time students under 24 need to share the costs of study with their parents and the Government. This is regardless of whether they live at home, away from home or their parents financially support them. Using parents' income to calculate the Student Allowance means the focus is on supporting students who, without it, may not be able to go into tertiary education.

If a student's parents' joint earnings are more than \$69,935.32 a year before tax (as at 1 April 2025), the rate they receive for Student Allowance goes down. They are unable to get a Student Allowance if their parents' joint earnings while they study are more than:

- \$127,701.81 if they live with them
- \$137,187.86 if they don't live with them.

The parental income threshold is normally adjusted annually, in conjunction with the annual adjustment to Student Allowance rates, to take account of CPI with effect from 1 April. However, there were no CPI adjustments to this threshold from 1 April 2012. It was frozen at \$55,027.96 until 2019. It was then increased to \$55,958.24 on 1 April 2019 and has been annually CPI adjusted since. For example, the parental income threshold from 1 April 2024 was increased from \$68,413.80 to \$69,935.32 on 1 April 2025. A list of the Student Allowance annual parental income thresholds and cut-out points for the relevant tax year from 1 April 1999 can be found through the publicly available link on the Work and Income Map website: www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/deskfile/student-support-tables/student-allowance-rates-and-thresholds/previous-parental-income-limits-01.html. Legislation specifies parental income as a weekly amount. However, operationally an annual parental income figure is sought from the parents of students and used in the calculation.

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
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