



Student Allowance

January to June 2026

The [Student Allowance Scheme](#) provides financial assistance for eligible full-time students who are enrolled in a recognised course of study or programme, at an approved education provider. It is paid weekly to help students with their living expenses.

For this report, a student is defined as a person who received at least one payment from [StudyLink](#) in the calendar year, up to the end of the specified reporting month. The data in this report is cumulative calendar year-to-date figures. Amounts are rounded to the nearest dollar and all percentages are computed using actual data and rounded to one decimal point. Total percentages may not add up to exactly 100 percent because of rounding effects. In line with the Ministry of Social Development's confidentiality policy, all numbers of people in this document have been randomly rounded to base three. The last three years of data and annual comparisons are presented in summary tables. Earlier figures are included in the Student Allowance data file.

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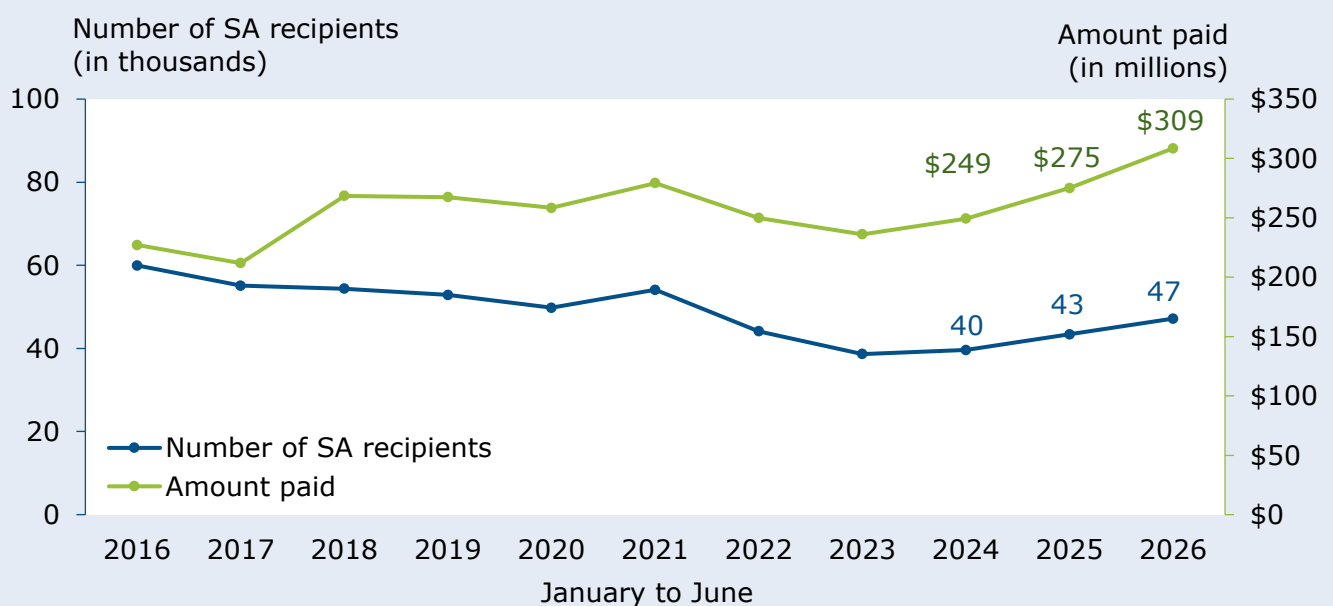
Number of recipients and amount paid

There were more Student Allowance recipients from January to June 2026 than in the same period in 2025

From January to June 2026, 47,160 students received financial assistance under the Student Allowances (SA) Scheme. This was a rise of 3,750 students (up 8.6 percent) when compared with the same period in 2025.

A total of \$308.6 million was paid for SA and Accommodation Benefit (AB) from January to June 2026, a rise of 12.2 percent when compared with the same period in 2025.

Figure 1.1: Number of recipients and amount paid for SA and AB, January to June 2016–2026





On average, students received \$5,870 in SA payments from January to June 2026. This was 3.9 percent more than students received, on average, in the same period in 2025.

From January to June 2026, students who were also entitled to AB received \$1,076 in AB on average. This was up 0.9 percent from the same period in 2025.

Below is a summary table with year-on-year comparisons over the last three years.

Table 1.1: Number of recipients, amounts paid, and average amount paid

Student Allowances	January to June			Annual change	
	2024	2025	2026	2024-25	2025-26
Student Allowance	39,621	43,410	47,160	9.6%	8.6%
Accommodation Benefit	26,445	28,035	29,520	6.0%	5.3%
Total number of recipients	39,621	43,410	47,160	9.6%	8.6%
Amount paid for Student Allowance	\$221,056,297	\$245,182,313	\$276,832,695	10.9%	12.9%
Amount paid for Accommodation Benefit	\$28,348,605	\$29,891,938	\$31,776,440	5.4%	6.3%
Total amount paid	\$249,404,902	\$275,074,252	\$308,609,134	10.3%	12.2%
Average Student Allowance	\$5,579	\$5,648	\$5,870	1.2%	3.9%
Average Accommodation Benefit	\$1,072	\$1,066	\$1,076	-0.6%	0.9%

Note: Not every SA recipient is eligible for Accommodation Benefit.



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Education providers

From January to June 2026, 27,687 students received SA for study at University only. This was 1,941 more students (up 7.5 percent) when compared with the same period in 2025 (25,746).

There were 11,898 students who received SA for study at only the New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (NZIST)/Polytechnic. This was 1,239 more students (up 11.6 percent) when compared with the same period in 2025 (10,659).

Table 2.1 provides a summary of the number of SA recipients by the type of provider that they were enrolled in over the last three years. The SA data file includes breakdowns for the small number of students who received SA for more than one provider type during the year.

Table 2.1: Number of SA recipients by type of education provider

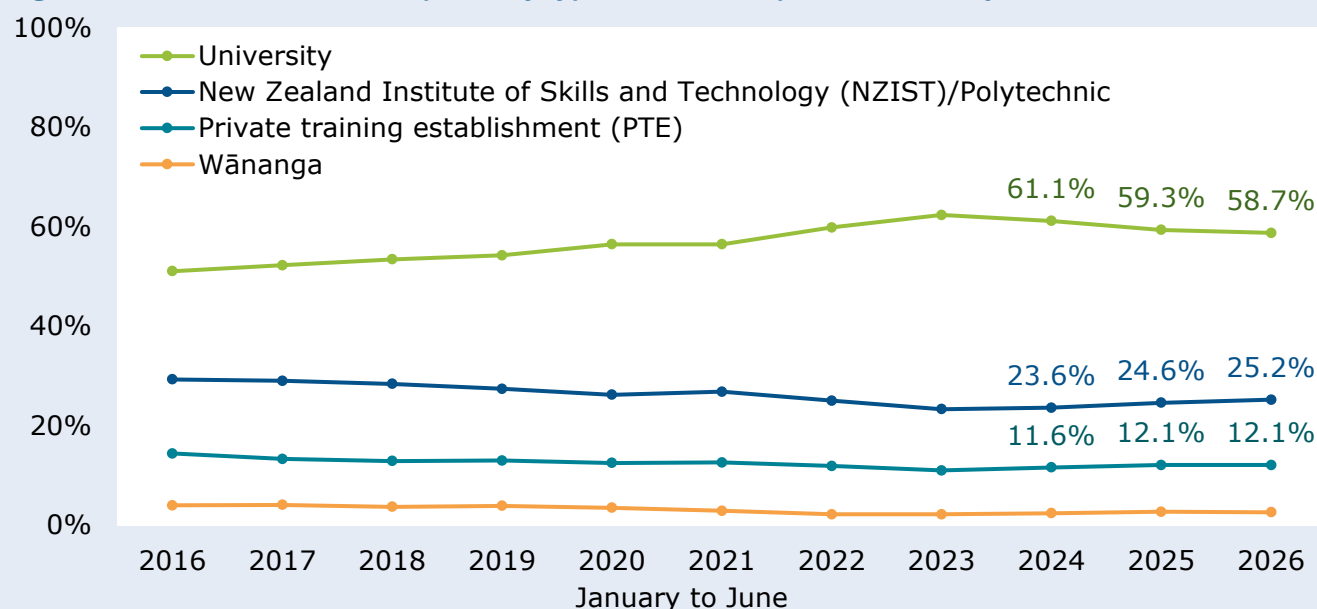
Type of provider	January to June			Annual change	
	2024	2025	2026	2024–25	2025–26
University	24,207	25,746	27,687	6.4%	7.5%
New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (NZIST)/Polytechnic	9,336	10,659	11,898	14.2%	11.6%
Private training establishment (PTE)	4,593	5,262	5,727	14.6%	8.8%
Wānanga	963	1,167	1,215	21.2%	4.1%
Multiple and other providers	522	576	630	10.3%	9.4%
Total number of Student Allowance recipients	39,621	43,410	47,160	9.6%	8.6%

Note 1: From 1 January 2026 NZIST began its disestablishment and returned to regional governance.

Note 2: “Multiple and other providers” includes combinations of providers (e.g. University and NZIST, PTE and University) that some students attended during the specified reporting period, as well as ‘other’ types of education providers such as high schools.

Students attending only University made up 58.7 percent of SA recipients, followed by students attending only the New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (NZIST)/Polytechnic at 25.2 percent.

Figure 2.1: Distribution of SA recipients by type of education provider, January to June 2016–2026



Note: To avoid double counting, the figure above excludes a small number of students attending more than one provider type.

Table 2.2: SA paid to students by type of education provider

Type of provider	January to June			Annual change	
	2024	2025	2026	2024–25	2025–26
University	\$128,532,917	\$136,353,838	\$153,086,469	6.1%	12.3%
New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (NZIST)/Polytechnic	\$55,667,158	\$65,606,623	\$75,166,826	17.9%	14.6%
Private training establishment (PTE)	\$26,463,256	\$30,665,989	\$34,804,058	15.9%	13.5%
Wānanga	\$6,875,676	\$8,498,504	\$9,196,556	23.6%	8.2%
Multiple and other providers	\$3,517,291	\$4,057,360	\$4,578,786	15.4%	12.9%
Total amount paid for Student Allowance	\$221,056,297	\$245,182,313	\$276,832,695	10.9%	12.9%

Note 1: Data does not include payments for AB.

Note 2: “Multiple and other providers” includes combinations of providers (e.g. University and NZIST, PTE and University) that some students attended during the specified reporting period, as well as ‘other’ types of education providers such as high schools.

3

Allowances paid based on personal and family circumstances

The [weekly rates for Student Allowance](#) are based on the personal and family circumstances of students, e.g., age, income of the student (and their partner if they have one), parental income for most students aged under 24 years, relationship status, and other circumstances.

From January to June 2026, 23.3 percent of SA recipients were single students who were living away from home. This proportion was 0.3 percentage points higher than it was in the same period in 2025.

Figure 3.1: Proportion of SA recipients based on personal and family circumstances, January to June 2016–2026

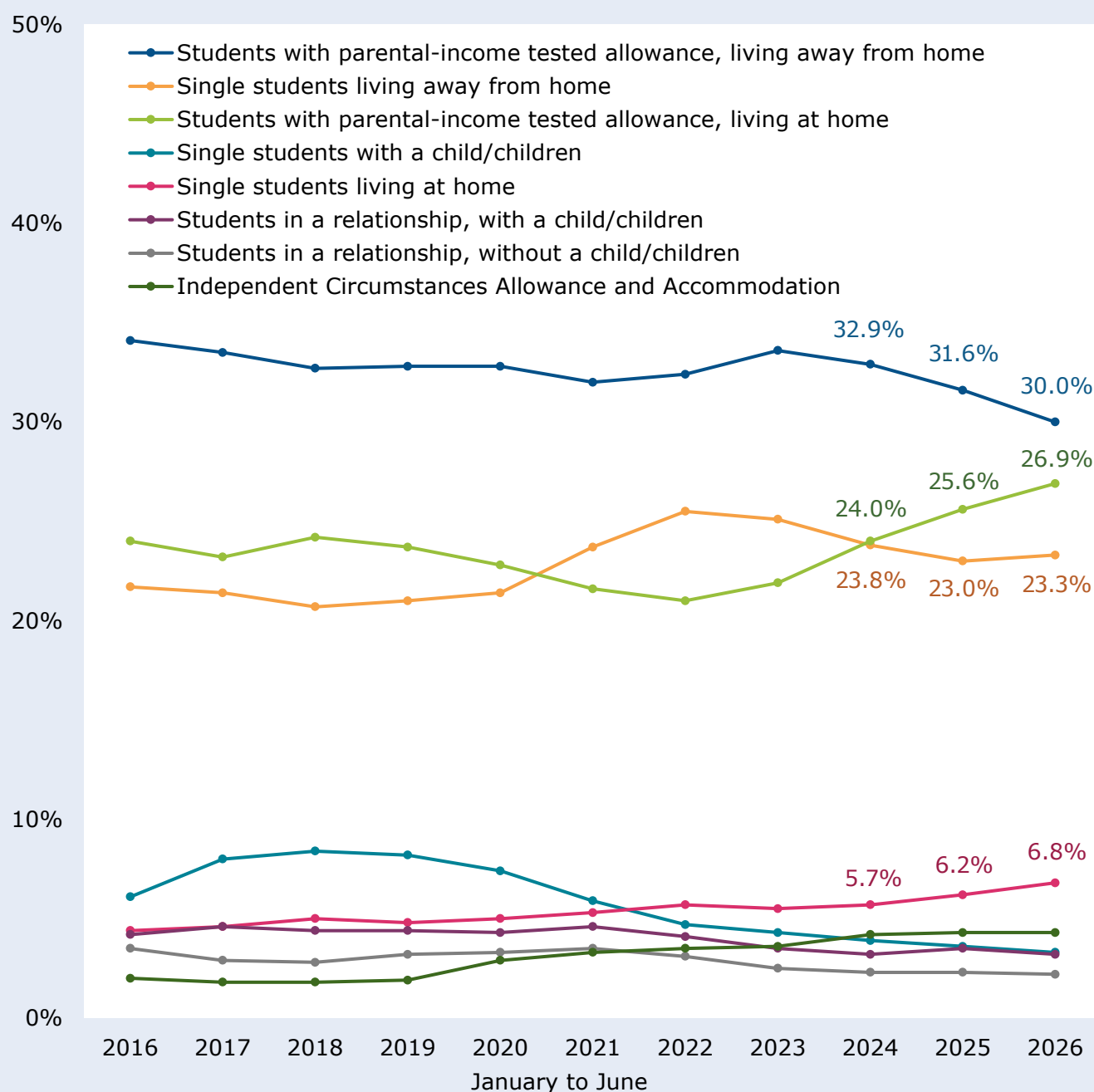




Table 3.1: Number of recipients based on personal and family circumstances

Personal and family circumstances	January to June			Annual change	
	2024	2025	2026	2024–25	2025–26
Students with parental-income tested allowance, living at home	9,510	11,115	12,708	16.9%	14.3%
Students with parental-income tested allowance, living away from home	13,041	13,701	14,157	5.1%	3.3%
Single students living at home	2,265	2,679	3,186	18.3%	18.9%
Single students living away from home	9,432	9,972	10,980	5.7%	10.1%
Single students with child/children	1,530	1,566	1,536	2.4%	-1.9%
Students in a relationship, without a child/children	927	999	1029	7.8%	3.0%
Students in a relationship, with a child/children	1,263	1,503	1,524	19.0%	1.4%
Independent Circumstances Allowance and Accommodation	1,647	1,878	2,037	14.0%	8.5%
Total number of Student Allowance recipients	39,621	43,410	47,160	9.6%	8.6%

Note: In this document, ‘single’ generally refers to students aged 24 years or older who are single. Under the SA scheme, a relationship is not recognised if either party is under 24 years old. Students who are under 24 are usually subject to a parental income test for SA. For more information, please see [here](#).

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Demographics of Student Allowance recipients

The following tables provide a summary profile of SA recipients for each of the last three years, up to the month specified. As demographics may change during the year, the profile is as recorded at the end of the period. Detailed data series are available in the SA data file.

Table 4.1: SA recipients by age group

Age group	January to June			Annual change	
	2024	2025	2026	2024–25	2025–26
16–17 years	123	144	138	17.1%	-4.2%
18–24 years	26,631	29,196	31,713	9.6%	8.6%
25–34 years	9,027	9,834	10,707	8.9%	8.9%
35–44 years	2,235	2,457	2,724	9.9%	10.9%
45–54 years	1,020	1,167	1,248	14.4%	6.9%
55 years and older	582	615	627	5.7%	2.0%
Total number of Student Allowance recipients	39,621	43,410	47,160	9.6%	8.6%

Note 1: Age is calculated as at the end of the period.

Note 2: A breakdown of “55 and older” is available in the SA data file.



Table 4.2: SA recipients by gender

Gender	January to June			Annual change	
	2024	2025	2026	2024-25	2025-26
Female	23,265	25,167	27,426	8.2%	9.0%
Male	15,762	17,505	18,981	11.1%	8.4%
Gender Diverse	594	738	750	24.2%	1.6%
Total number of Student Allowance recipients	39,621	43,410	47,160	9.6%	8.6%

Table 4.3: SA recipients by residential status

Residential status	January to June			Annual change	
	2024	2025	2026	2024-25	2025-26
Citizen by birth	28,908	31,347	33,441	8.4%	6.7%
Citizen	5,877	6,537	7,047	11.2%	7.8%
Permanent resident	4,326	4,845	5,898	12.0%	21.7%
Other	507	681	774	34.3%	13.7%
Total number of Student Allowance recipients	39,621	43,410	47,160	9.6%	8.6%

Note: “Other” includes students who have refugee status, and those classified as protected person/s. Details of “Other” are included in the downloadable data file.

Table 4.4: SA recipients by relationship status

Relationship status	January to June			Annual change	
	2024	2025	2026	2024-25	2025-26
Single	37,011	40,407	44,091	9.2%	9.1%
Married/Civil Union	1,641	1,818	1,860	10.8%	2.3%
Defacto	963	1,179	1,200	22.4%	1.8%
Unknown	0	3	3	N/A	0.0%
Total number of Student Allowance recipients	39,621	43,410	47,160	9.6%	8.6%

Note: ‘Unknown’ refers to students who have had a change in relationship status which needs to be confirmed. These students will not receive further payments until their relationship status is confirmed.



It is not mandatory for students to disclose their ethnicity and students may report more than one ethnicity.

The numbers presented in table 4.5 are total response – students who reported more than one ethnic group were counted in each group they identified with. The total number of responses therefore does not add up to the total number of SA recipients.

Table 4.5: SA responses by ethnic group

Ethnic group (Total response)	January to June			Annual Change	
	2024	2025	2026	2024–25	2025–26
European	21,744	23,121	24,213	6.3%	4.7%
Māori	7,719	8,562	9,603	10.9%	12.2%
Pacific Peoples	4,734	5,544	6,276	17.1%	13.2%
Asian	10,485	11,724	13,278	11.8%	13.3%
Middle Eastern/Latin American/African	1,845	2,187	2,451	18.5%	12.1%
Other	207	204	210	-1.4%	2.9%
Total recipients with recorded ethnicity	39,189	42,915	46,632	9.5%	8.7%
Not specified	432	495	525	14.6%	6.1%
Total number of Student Allowance recipients	39,621	43,410	47,160	9.6%	8.6%

Note: A detailed breakdown of ethnic groups is included in the Student Allowance datafile.

