MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

Student Loan
January to June 2026

The Student Loan Scheme helps students to pay for course fees (compulsory fees charged by education providers), course–related costs (e.g. books, computer, travel) and living costs.

For this report, a student is defined as a person who received at least one payment under this scheme 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 randomly rounded numbers, and then 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 Loan data file.

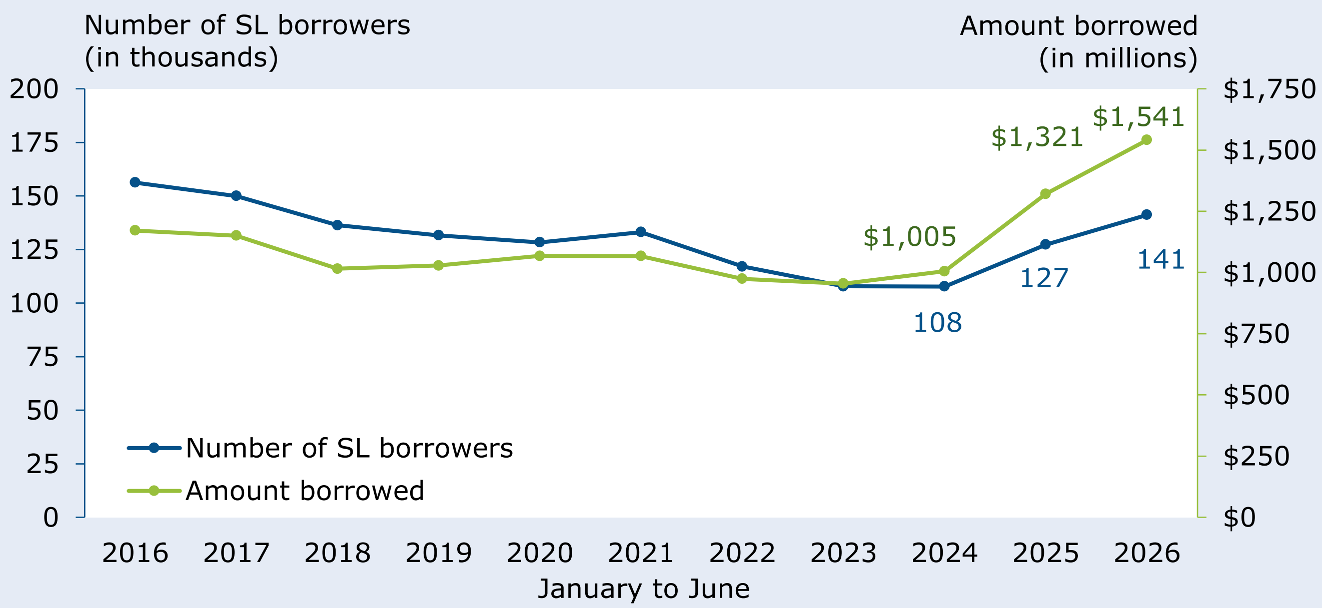
1 Number of borrowers and amount paid

More students drew down a student loan from January to June 2026 than in the same period in 2025

From January to June 2026, 141,150 students borrowed under the Student Loan (SL) Scheme. This was 13,890 more students (up 10.9 percent) when compared with the same period in 2025.

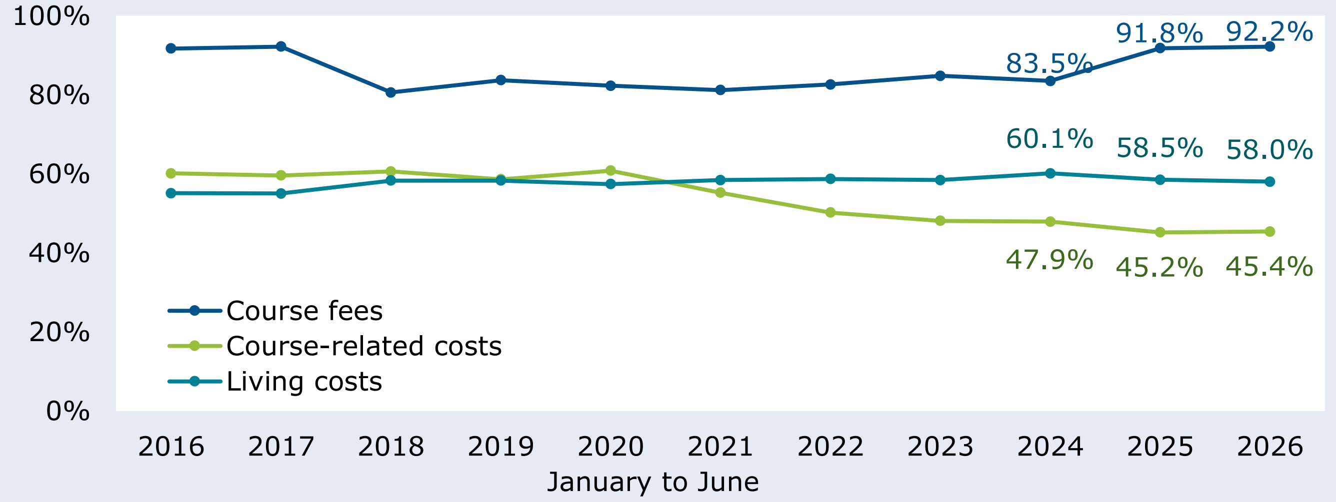
From January to June 2026, the total amount borrowed for course fees, course-related costs, and living costs was $1,540.8 million. This was a rise of 16.7 percent when compared with the same period in 2025.

Figure 1.1: Number of SL borrowers and amount borrowed, January to June 2016–2026



From January to June 2026, 92.2 percent of SL borrowers borrowed to pay for course fees.

Figure 1.2: Proportion of SL borrowers by loan component, January to June 2016–2026



Note: From April 2020, course-related costs entitlement was increased for study in 2020 as part of the COVID-19 tertiary support package.

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

Table 1.1: Number of SL recipients, amount borrowed, and average amount borrowed, by loan component

Loan component	January to June			Annual change	
	2024	2025	2026	2024–25	2025–26
Course fees	89,937	116,811	130,143	29.9%	11.4%
Course-related costs	51,591	57,501	64,143	11.5%	11.6%
Living costs	64,707	74,451	81,843	15.1%	9.9%
Total number of Student Loan borrowers	**107,745**	**127,260**	**141,150**	**18.1%**	**10.9%**
Amount borrowed for course fees	$685,830,727	$954,774,235	$1,122,789,205	39.2%	17.6%
Amount borrowed for course-related costs	$48,029,434	$53,181,507	$59,549,908	10.7%	12.0%
Amount borrowed for living costs	$270,691,190	$312,591,223	$358,445,743	15.5%	14.7%
Total amount borrowed	**$1,004,551,350**	**$1,320,546,965**	**$1,540,784,856**	**31.5%**	**16.7%**
Average course fees	$7,626	$8,174	$8,627	7.2%	5.5%
Average course-related costs	$931	$925	$928	-0.6%	0.3%
Average living costs	$4,183	$4,199	$4,380	0.4%	4.3%

Note 1: Establishment fees, repayments and refunds are not included in the above summary table but are available in the downloadable Excel file.

Note 2: The overall increases in borrowers and borrowing for compulsory fees reflects the fact that the first-year Fees Free scheme was replaced with a final-year Fees Free scheme from 1 January 2025, meaning that students are now borrowing for fees in their first year of study. Under the final-year Fees Free scheme, fees for students' final years will be refunded on application following completion of their qualification. The Fees Free scheme will end on 31 December 2026. Students completing their qualification or programme after 31 December 2026 will no longer be eligible for the Fees Free scheme.

2 Education providers

From January to June 2026, there were 99,630 students who drew down SL for study at University only. This was a rise of 9,678 students (up 10.8 percent) when compared with the same period in 2025 (89,952).

The number of students who drew down SL for study at only the New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (NZIST)/Polytechnic was 26,598. This was 2,739 more students (up 11.5 percent) when compared with the same period in 2025 (23,859).

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

Table 2.1: Number of SL borrowers by type of education provider

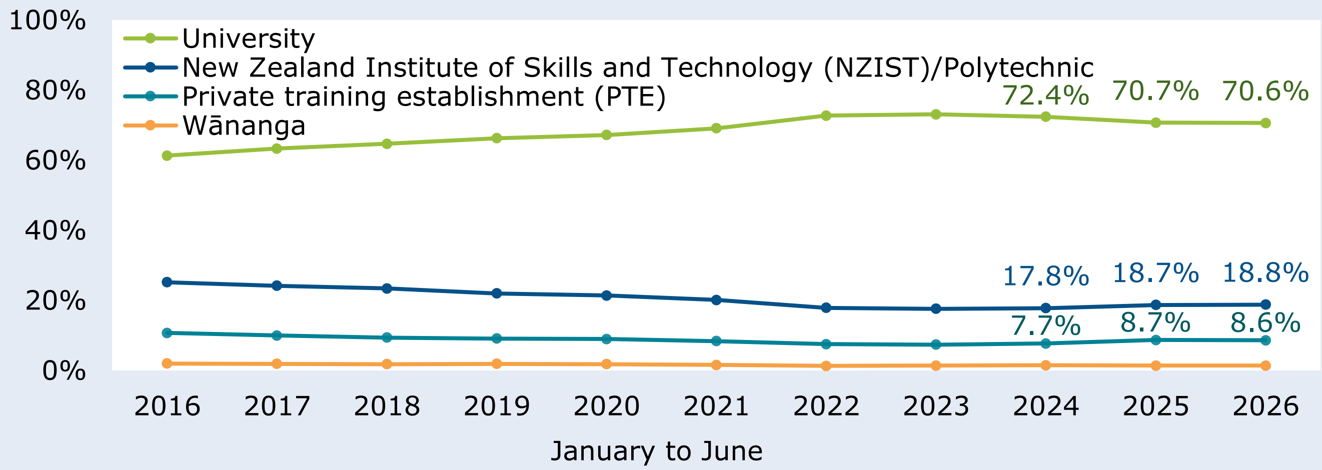
Type of provider	January to June			Annual change	
	2024	2025	2026	2024–25	2025–26
University	77,985	89,952	99,630	15.3%	10.8%
New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (NZIST)/Polytechnic	19,209	23,859	26,598	24.2%	11.5%
Private training establishment (PTE)	8,319	11,082	12,192	33.2%	10.0%
Wānanga	1,626	1,779	1,938	9.4%	8.9%
Multiple and other providers	609	588	792	-3.4%	34.7%
Total number of Student Loan borrowers	**107,745**	**127,260**	**141,150**	**18.1%**	**10.9%**

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.

Students attending only University made up 70.6 percent of SL recipients, followed by students attending only the New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (NZIST)/Polytechnic at 18.8 percent.

Figure 2.1: Distribution of SL borrowers 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: Amount borrowed for course fees by type of education provider

Type of provider	January to June			Annual change	
	2024	2025	2026	2024–25	2025–26
University	$524,919,167	$718,979,527	$845,936,770	37.0%	17.7%
New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (NZIST)/Polytechnic	$97,065,110	$142,157,692	$166,726,196	46.5%	17.3%
Private training establishment (PTE)	$55,085,633	$83,690,277	$96,727,982	51.9%	15.6%
Wānanga	$4,242,269	$5,271,277	$6,348,197	24.3%	20.4%
Multiple and other providers	$4,518,548	$4,675,461	$7,050,059	3.5%	50.8%
Total amount borrowed for course fees	**$685,830,727**	**$954,774,235**	**$1,122,789,205**	**39.2%**	**17.6%**

Note: “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.

3 Demographics of Student Loan borrowers

The following tables provide a summary profile of SL borrowers from January to June, for the previous three years. Detailed data series are available in the SL data file.

Table 3.1: SL borrowers by age group

Age group	January to June			Annual change	
	2024	2025	2026	2024–25	2025–26
16–17 years	426	1,482	1,614	247.9%	8.9%
18–24 years	74,850	91,425	101,769	22.1%	11.3%
25–34 years	19,569	20,556	22,137	5.0%	7.7%
35–44 years	8,403	8,928	10,059	6.2%	12.7%
45–54 years	3,669	3,963	4,548	8.0%	14.8%
55 years and older	825	903	1,026	9.5%	13.6%
Total number of Student Loan borrowers	**107,745**	**127,260**	**141,150**	**18.1%**	**10.9%**

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

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

Table 3.2: SL borrowers by gender

Gender	January to June			Annual change	
	2024	2025	2026	2024–25	2025–26
Female	66,813	77,235	85,581	15.6%	10.8%
Male	39,624	48,348	53,769	22.0%	11.2%
Gender Diverse	1,311	1,680	1,803	28.1%	7.3%
Total number of Student Loan borrowers	**107,745**	**127,260**	**141,150**	**18.1%**	**10.9%**

Table 3.3: SL borrowers by residental status

Residential status	January to June			Annual change	
	2024	2025	2026	2024–25	2025–26
Citizen by birth	80,817	95,772	104,571	18.5%	9.2%
Citizen	17,100	19,965	21,711	16.8%	8.7%
Permanent resident	9,510	11,028	14,292	16.0%	29.6%
Other	321	495	579	54.2%	17.0%
Total number of Student Loan borrowers	**107,745**	**127,260**	**141,150**	**18.1%**	**10.9%**

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.

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

The numbers presented in this table are total responses – 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 SL borrowers.

Table 3.4: SL responses by ethnic group

Ethnic group (total response)	January to June			Annual change	
	2024	2025	2026	2024–25	2025–26
European	71,085	82,275	88,629	15.7%	7.7%
Māori	18,954	22,677	25,710	19.6%	13.4%
Pacific Peoples	10,410	13,347	15,573	28.2%	16.7%
Asian	20,850	25,929	30,801	24.4%	18.8%
Middle Eastern/Latin American/African	3,591	4,509	5,199	25.6%	15.3%
Other	408	438	504	7.4%	15.1%
Total borrowers with recorded ethnicity	**106,395**	**125,946**	**139,812**	**18.4%**	**11.0%**
Not specified	1,347	1,314	1,335	-2.4%	1.6%
Total number of Student Loan borrowers	**107,745**	**127,260**	**141,150**	**18.1%**	**10.9%**

Note: A detailed breakdown of ethnic groups is included in the Student Loan data file.