



Student Allowance

January to March 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.

1

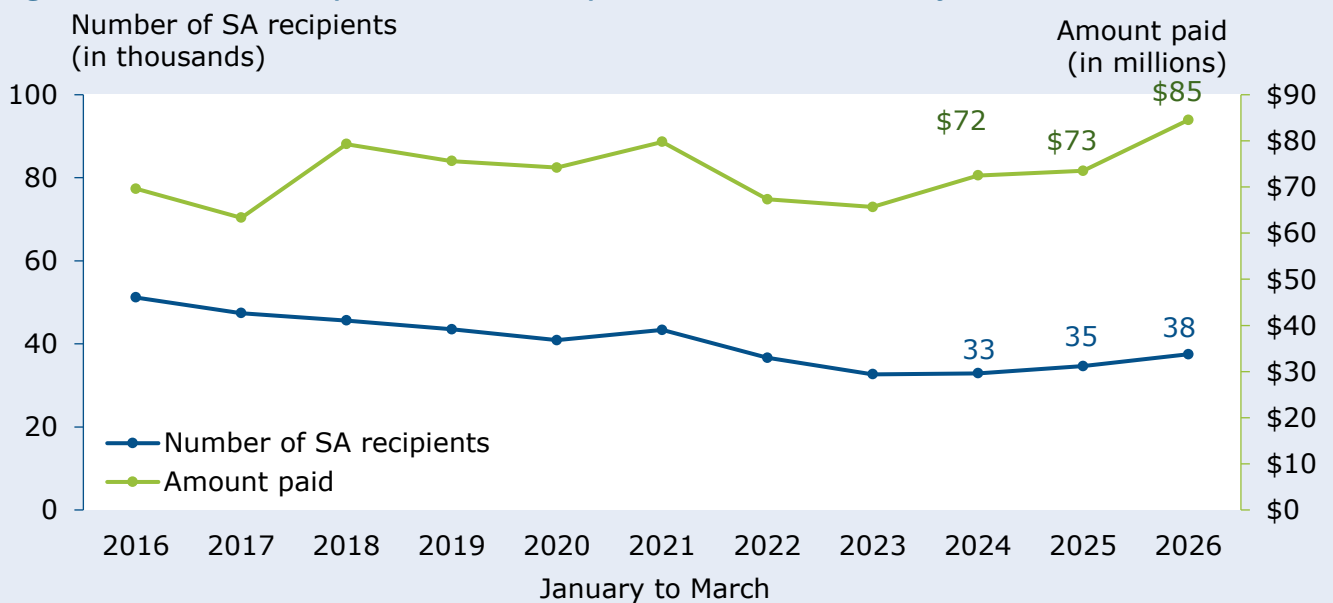
Number of recipients and amount paid

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

From January to March 2026, 37,500 students received financial assistance under the Student Allowances (SA) Scheme. This was a rise of 2,868 students (up 8.3 percent) when compared with the same period in 2025.

A total of \$84.5 million was paid for SA and Accommodation Benefit (AB) from January to March 2026, a rise of 15.0 percent when compared with the same period in 2025.

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





On average, students received \$2,011 in SA payments from January to March 2026. This was 6.9 percent more than students received, on average, in the same period in 2025.

From January to March 2026, students who were also entitled to AB received \$375 in AB on average. This was up 4.2 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 March			Annual change	
	2024	2025	2026	2024-25	2025-26
Student Allowance	32,907	34,629	37,497	5.2%	8.3%
Accommodation Benefit	22,554	23,052	24,249	2.2%	5.2%
Total number of recipients	32,904	34,632	37,500	5.3%	8.3%
Amount paid for Student Allowance	\$63,856,153	\$65,176,209	\$75,412,355	2.1%	15.7%
Amount paid for Accommodation Benefit	\$8,633,802	\$8,297,391	\$9,099,885	-3.9%	9.7%
Total amount paid	\$72,489,955	\$73,473,601	\$84,512,240	1.4%	15.0%
Average Student Allowance	\$1,941	\$1,882	\$2,011	-3.0%	6.9%
Average Accommodation Benefit	\$383	\$360	\$375	-6.0%	4.2%

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





2

Education providers

From January to March 2026, 22,347 students received SA for study at University only. This was 1,410 more students (up 6.7 percent) when compared with the same period in 2025 (20,937).

There were 9,396 students who received SA for study at only the New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (NZIST)/Polytechnic. This was 885 more students (up 10.4 percent) when compared with the same period in 2025 (8,511).

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 March			Annual change	
	2024	2025	2026	2024–25	2025–26
University	20,625	20,937	22,347	1.5%	6.7%
New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (NZIST)/Polytechnic	7,635	8,511	9,396	11.5%	10.4%
Private training establishment (PTE)	3,603	3,960	4,464	9.9%	12.7%
Wānanga	720	834	888	15.8%	6.5%
Multiple and other providers	321	384	402	19.6%	4.7%
Total number of Student Allowance recipients	32,904	34,632	37,500	5.3%	8.3%

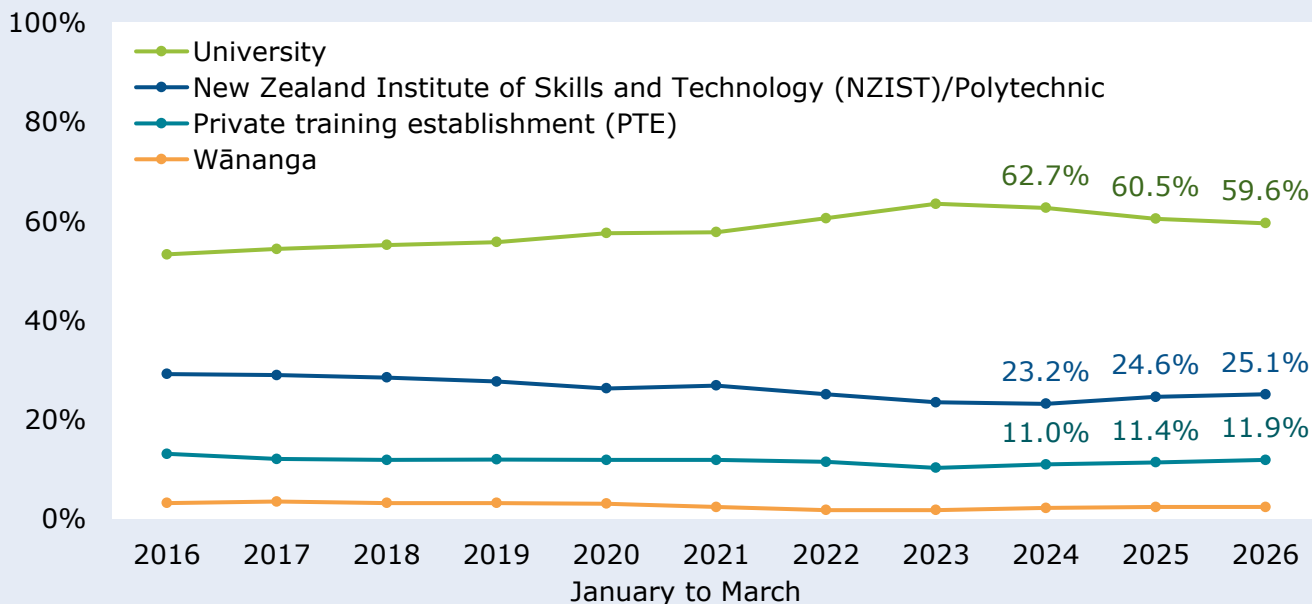
Note 1: From 1 January 2026 NZIST began its disestablishment and returned to regional governance.

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 59.6 percent of SA recipients, followed by students attending only the New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (NZIST)/Polytechnic at 25.1 percent.

Figure 2.1: Distribution of SA recipients by type of education provider, January to March 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 March			Annual change	
	2024	2025	2026	2024–25	2025–26
University	\$35,999,606	\$34,177,912	\$39,300,092	-5.1%	15.0%
New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (NZIST)/Polytechnic	\$16,195,634	\$18,093,661	\$21,343,324	11.7%	18.0%
Private training establishment (PTE)	\$9,076,198	\$9,935,605	\$11,401,588	9.5%	14.8%
Wānanga	\$1,553,092	\$1,794,763	\$2,122,663	15.6%	18.3%
Multiple and other providers	\$1,031,623	\$1,174,269	\$1,244,688	13.8%	6.0%
Total amount paid for Student Allowance	\$63,856,153	\$65,176,209	\$75,412,355	2.1%	15.7%

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 March 2026, 25.2 percent of SA recipients were single students who were living away from home. This proportion was 0.7 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 March 2016–2026

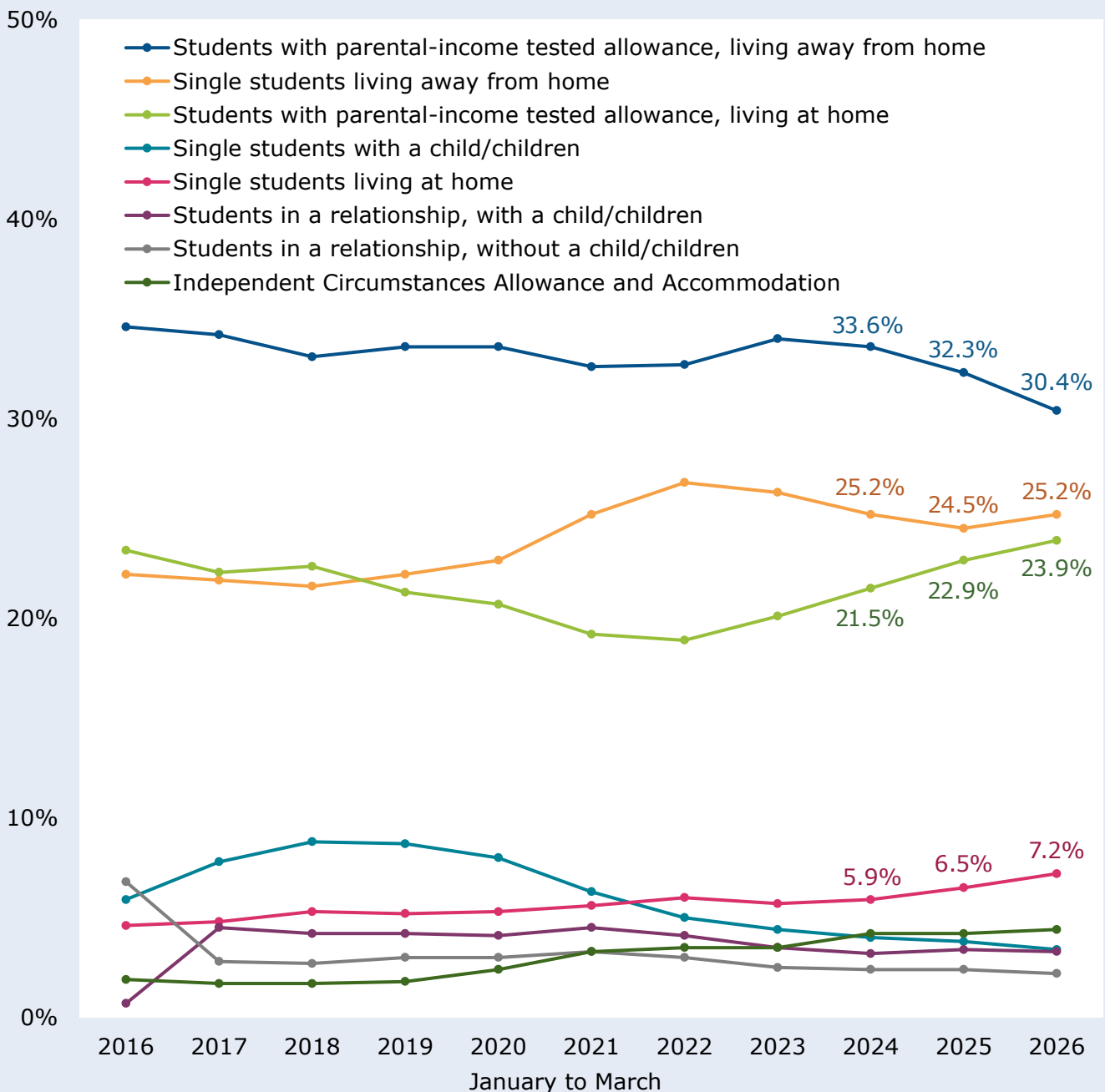




Table 3.1: Number of recipients based on personal and family circumstances

Personal and family circumstances	January to March			Annual change	
	2024	2025	2026	2024–25	2025–26
Students with parental-income tested allowance, living at home	7,086	7,944	8,955	12.1%	12.7%
Students with parental-income tested allowance, living away from home	11,070	11,199	11,388	1.2%	1.7%
Single students living at home	1,953	2,235	2,700	14.4%	20.8%
Single students living away from home	8,286	8,484	9,462	2.4%	11.5%
Single students with child/children	1,320	1,320	1,281	0.0%	-3.0%
Students in a relationship, without a child/children	777	816	843	5.0%	3.3%
Students in a relationship, with a child/children	1,041	1,179	1,233	13.3%	4.6%
Independent Circumstances Allowance and Accommodation	1,374	1,458	1,632	6.1%	11.9%
Total number of Student Allowance recipients	32,904	34,632	37,500	5.3%	8.3%

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](#).

4

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 March			Annual change	
	2024	2025	2026	2024–25	2025–26
16–17 years	339	441	414	30.1%	-6.1%
18–24 years	21,534	22,482	24,306	4.4%	8.1%
25–34 years	7,851	8,265	9,009	5.3%	9.0%
35–44 years	1,890	2,025	2,250	7.1%	11.1%
45–54 years	843	927	1,023	10.0%	10.4%
55 years and older	450	489	492	8.7%	0.6%
Total number of Student Allowance recipients	32,904	34,632	37,500	5.3%	8.3%

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 March			Annual change	
	2024	2025	2026	2024-25	2025-26
Female	19,599	20,316	22,155	3.7%	9.1%
Male	12,810	13,701	14,712	7.0%	7.4%
Gender Diverse	495	615	636	24.2%	3.4%
Total number of Student Allowance recipients	32,904	34,632	37,500	5.3%	8.3%

Table 4.3: SA recipients by residential status

Residential status	January to March			Annual change	
	2024	2025	2026	2024-25	2025-26
Citizen by birth	24,093	25,110	26,595	4.2%	5.9%
Citizen	4,857	5,193	5,598	6.9%	7.8%
Permanent resident	3,558	3,777	4,662	6.2%	23.4%
Other	396	552	645	39.4%	16.8%
Total number of Student Allowance recipients	32,904	34,632	37,500	5.3%	8.3%

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 March			Annual change	
	2024	2025	2026	2024-25	2025-26
Single	30,768	32,262	35,037	4.9%	8.6%
Married/Civil Union	1,350	1,443	1,494	6.9%	3.5%
Defacto	789	927	966	17.5%	4.2%
Unknown	0	3	3	N/A	0.0%
Total number of Student Allowance recipients	32,904	34,632	37,500	5.3%	8.3%

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 March			Annual Change	
	2024	2025	2026	2024-25	2025-26
European	18,711	19,287	20,019	3.1%	3.8%
Māori	6,354	6,735	7,626	6.0%	13.2%
Pacific Peoples	3,555	3,948	4,641	11.1%	17.6%
Asian	8,571	9,072	10,260	5.8%	13.1%
Middle Eastern/Latin American/African	1,500	1,722	1,929	14.8%	12.0%
Other	171	168	171	-1.8%	1.8%
Total recipients with recorded ethnicity	32,559	34,242	37,089	5.2%	8.3%
Not specified	345	390	414	13.0%	6.2%
Total number of Student Allowance recipients	32,904	34,632	37,500	5.3%	8.3%

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

