



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

14 JUN 2017

Dear **S 9(2)(a)**

On 1 April 2017 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *The number of students age 40+, but less than pension age, that have used more than 100 weeks of student allowance? Data for each year over past 5 years (more if available).*

The below table addresses your request:

**The number of students paid Student Allowance who, as at 31 December of the respective year, were aged 40 years or more (but less than 65 years), and who had received 100 or more weeks of Student Allowance, by calendar year.**

Year	Number of students
2012	2,645
2013	2,433
2014	1,964
2015	1,248
2016	1,226

**Notes:**

- Age is determined as at 31 December of the respective calendar year. As such, some students may have been aged less than 40 years at time of the first payment.
- Some students may be represented in multiple years.

In 2014 there was a change to Student Allowance entitlements. For study starting on or after 1 January 2014, students aged 40 years or over at study start date, have a maximum of 120 weeks (approximately three years) entitlement to Student Allowance.

The 120 week limit provides support enabling students to complete most Bachelor degrees, or most sub-degree level study including foundation level study, certificates or diplomas.

Students affected by the change retained a 7 Equivalent Full-time Student (EFTS) life-time limit for interest-free student loans for course fees, as well as generous tuition subsidies. Those up to the age of 55 are also entitled to interest-free student loans to assist with living costs, provided they meet the criteria for Student Loans.

The policy change means that:

- If a student is aged 40 or over at study start date and they have already used 120 or more weeks of Student Allowance, they will not be entitled to a Student Allowance.
- If a student is aged 40 or over at the date they start study, and they have used less than 120 weeks of Student Allowance, they will be able to receive up to a maximum of 120 weeks of Student Allowance.
- If a student is 39 years of age at the date they start study, and they turn 40 years old during that period of study, they are assessed under the 200 week limit for the duration of that period of study.

Those students whose study started in 2013 and carried over in to 2014 were assessed under the 200 week limit for the duration of that period of study. Please note that the period of study referred to is the period of study covered by the student's application.

Further information on student assistance available through Work and Income and StudyLink is available on the Work and Income website at: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/students/index.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/students/index.html)

Further statistics about the number and demographics of students receiving Student Allowances, and the amounts received are available from the Ministry of Social Developments website at: [www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/studylink](http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/studylink)

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public shortly. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact [OIA\\_Requests@msd.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding Student Allowance recipients over the age of 40 years, 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](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ruth Bound', written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

Ruth Bound  
**Deputy Chief Executive, Service Delivery**