



11 August 2022

Tēnā koe

On 18 July 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- 1. Since January 1 2022, how many people have informed Study Link they are 'withdrawing from study'?*
- 2. Please include annual 'withdraw from study' statistics each year from 2015 to 2022.*
- 3. Please provide a breakdown, for each year, of the reason students are withdrawing from study. (Completed study, no longer studying, economic cost etc).*
- 4. And I please ask that anything within the spirit of this request that is not mentioned be included in the response.*

The Ministry, through its StudyLink service, connects students with the information they need to make considered educational decisions. It administers and pays Student Loans, Student Allowances, Jobseeker Support Student Hardship and various other forms of additional support to students.

Information for students and other interested parties, is available on the StudyLink website: www.studylink.govt.nz/.

I will respond to each of your requests in turn.

- 1. Since January 1 2022, how many people have informed Study Link they are 'withdrawing from study'?*
- 3. Please provide a breakdown, for each year, of the reason students are withdrawing from study. (Completed study, no longer studying, economic cost etc).*

When a student who receives student support payments withdraws from study they need to let StudyLink know straight away. This is to ensure their payments stop from the correct date. Students do not need to tell us why they've withdrawn, so this information is not collected.

They also need to officially withdraw from their education provider. Once this has occurred, the education provider notifies us of the student's formal withdrawal and the date this is effective from. A student's reason for withdrawing is not collected.

Students do not always tell us they've withdrawn, and if they simply stop attending rather than officially withdrawing from their education provider, it can be some time before we are advised.

Students may withdraw from study for many reasons, including personal or family circumstances, or because they simply decide that they no longer want to study. When a student stops studying, they are no longer eligible for student support payments. The reason they are no longer studying does not affect this, therefore is not required and we do not collect it.

Therefore, the information you have requested cannot be provided and is refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act as this information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

- 2. Please include annual 'withdraw from study' statistics each year from 2015 to 2022.*

Please see **Table one** bellowing showing the number of students withdrawing from study between 1 January 2015 and 30 June 2022.

Table One: Students withdrawing from study between 1 January 2015 and 30 June 2022:

Withdrawal Year	Total
2015	19,383
2016	18,582
2017	18,582
2018	18,024
2019	18,141
2020	16,644
2021	16,326
2022 to June	7,866

Notes:

- Where students have a loan or allowance application and StudyLink has been advised they have withdrawn.
- Student may still have other current study/applications.
- 2022 is part year to June.
- To protect confidentiality the Ministry uses processes to make it difficult to identify an individual person or entity from published data.
- These data tables have had random rounding to base three applied to all cell counts in the table.
- The impact of applying random rounding is that columns and rows may not add exactly to the given column or row totals.
- The published counts will never differ by more than two counts.

4. *And I please ask that anything within the spirit of this request that is not mentioned be included in the response.*

Withdrawing from a particular course of study doesn't always mean a student is no longer studying. Students may withdraw from one course to transfer to another, or may withdraw from only part of their study, thereby reducing their workload. A student who is changing courses may need to reapply for student support. If they are no longer eligible, they may be able to access other types of assistance.

Students must meet performance requirements to remain eligible for student support. Withdrawing from study may mean they haven't passed enough to access a Student Loan or Student Allowance if they return to study.

Information about withdrawing from study, and how this may affect future study is available on the StudyLink website: www.studylink.govt.nz/in-study/study-details/withdraw.html.

The Student Loan Scheme provides financial support to New Zealanders to undertake tertiary education. You can find more information regarding Student Loans at the following link: www.studylink.govt.nz/products/a-z-products/student-loan/index.html.

In regard to your request, you can find this information available at the following links:

- www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/studylink/index.html, and
- www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/studylink/archive.html, and
- www.studylink.govt.nz/in-study/study-details/withdraw.html.

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 and any attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry'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.

If you are not satisfied with this response about students withdrawing from study, 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



George Van Ooyen
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