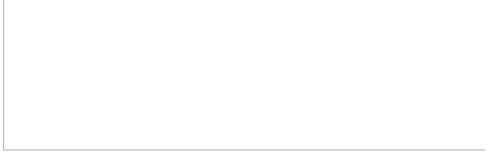




- 6 JUL 2016



Dear 

On 14 June 2016 the Ministry received the transfer of part of your request from the Department of Corrections requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *The number of people in prison who are in receipt of a Student Allowance or Student Loan.*

The availability of Student Loans to prisoners who wish to study as part of an approved sentence management plan assists with rehabilitation and increases opportunities for employment once released. Having a qualification helps bring economic and social benefits to the individual concerned and the wider community, and contributes to reduced re-offending.

Prisoners who are eligible for Student Loans can access compulsory fees and course-related costs, subject to the agreement of their prison. Applications from prisoners are managed by a small group of experienced staff, who liaise directly with the education officer at the prisoner's correctional facility and the prisoner's education provider to confirm that study is endorsed by the prison, and all costs claimed are essential and appropriate. Students who are in prison are required to provide evidence of any course-related costs they claim.

Please find the following table which shows the number of prisoners who have received a Student Loan at the start of the study year.

Start Year	Student count
2013	115
2014	155
2015	131

Students who are imprisoned are not entitled to Student Allowance. Changes to the Corrections Act passed in April 2008 enabled the Ministry to suspend immediately any payments to a client who had been taken into custody. Where students are identified as having received payments of Student Allowance for a period where our information confirms that they were in prison, an overpayment is established for the payments they were not entitled to.

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.

The Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public after ten working days. 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.

I hope you find this information regarding prisoners who are in receipt of a Student Loan helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review of my response by the Ombudsman, whose address for contact purposes is:

The Ombudsman
Office of the Ombudsman
PO Box 10-152
WELLINGTON 6143

Yours sincerely



Ruth Bound
Deputy Chief Executive, Service Delivery