



# Hot Off The Press

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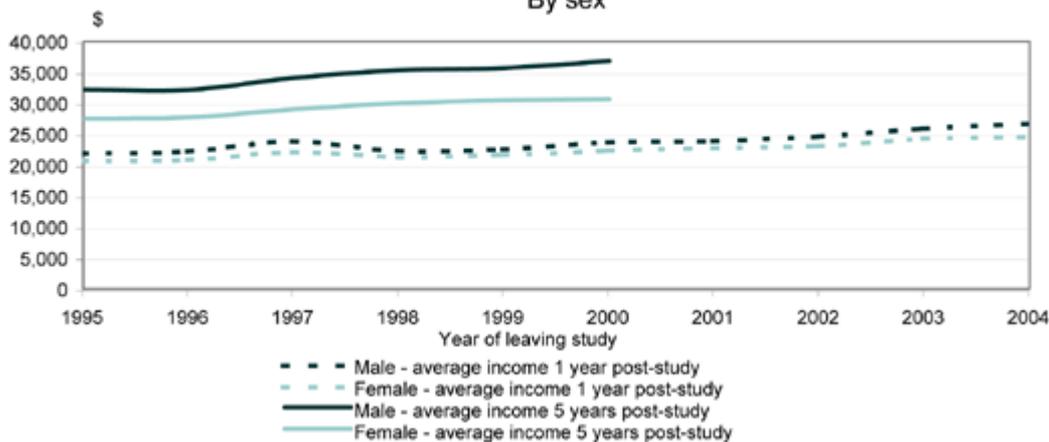
## Student Loans and Allowances

### 2005

### Highlights

- Males' income was 20 percent higher than females' five years post-study for students who left in 2000.
- Post-study average income was highest for health field of study and lowest for food, hospitality and personal services.
- Leaving debt increased by 32 percent for those who left between 1997 and 2004.
- Leaving debt for borrowers aged 60 years and over increased 141 percent from 1997 to 2004.
- The number of students who received only an allowance decreased by 44 percent between 2000 and 2005.
- Pacific peoples had repaid the smallest proportion of their leaving debt five years post-study, at 4 percent for students who left in 2000.
- Europeans had repaid the largest proportion of their leaving debt five years post-study, at 25 percent for students who left in 2000.

Average Income 1 Year and 5 Years Post-study  
By sex



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There is a companion media release published – [Student Loans and Allowances: 2005](#).

# Commentary

## Student loans and allowances

Statistics New Zealand's Integrated Dataset on Student Loans and Allowances links educational information from the Ministry of Education with borrowing and allowance information from the Ministry of Social Development (StudyLink) and income and repayments information from Inland Revenue. It allows the educational characteristics of student loan borrowers and student allowance recipients to be linked with the details of their loans, allowances and income.

This release supplements information in the Annual Report on the Student Loan Scheme Incorporating the Financial Statements to 30 June, published by Ministry of Education, StudyLink and Inland Revenue released in October 2006.

## Definitions

**Amount borrowed / amount received:** the amount borrowed or received by a student in a particular calendar year (this is not the total amount borrowed by the student over all years of study).

**Leaving debt:** the total debt still owing on leaving study, including any repayments the student may have made during study. This data will always be a year behind the release date. For example, in the 2005 dataset on student loans and allowances leaving debt data is only available for those who left study up to 2004 and did not return the following year.

**Debt five years post-study:** the total debt still owing five years after leaving study, including any repayments made up to this time.

**Income one year post-study:** the taxable income earned in the tax year after leaving study.

**Income five years post-study:** the taxable income earned in the tax year five years after leaving study.

**Note:** Debt and income information, when provided, does not distinguish those who completed their qualification from those who did not.

Field of study, level and provider type are those during the student's last year of study.

Information on borrowers who were overseas relates only to individuals who notified Inland Revenue that they were leaving or had left New Zealand.

## Time periods covered by this release

The aim of this release is to provide statistics from the earliest point at which information is available. Due to the nature and sources of data available, this aim results in some statistics being reported on from different years:

**1992** – Leaving debt, debt five years post-study and full repayment information is available for those who left study from 1992 onwards.

**1995** – Income information is only available for those who left study from 1995 onwards.

**1997** – Information on ethnicity, field of study, level of study and provider type is only available from 1997 onwards.

**1998** – Information on the residency of former borrowers is only available from 1998 onwards.

**2000** – The amount borrowed or received in a particular calendar year is only available from 2000 onwards.

Due to the inclusion of income data in this release, and the time required to include the data for salary and wage earners and for those who are self-employed, the most recent data available is for 2005.

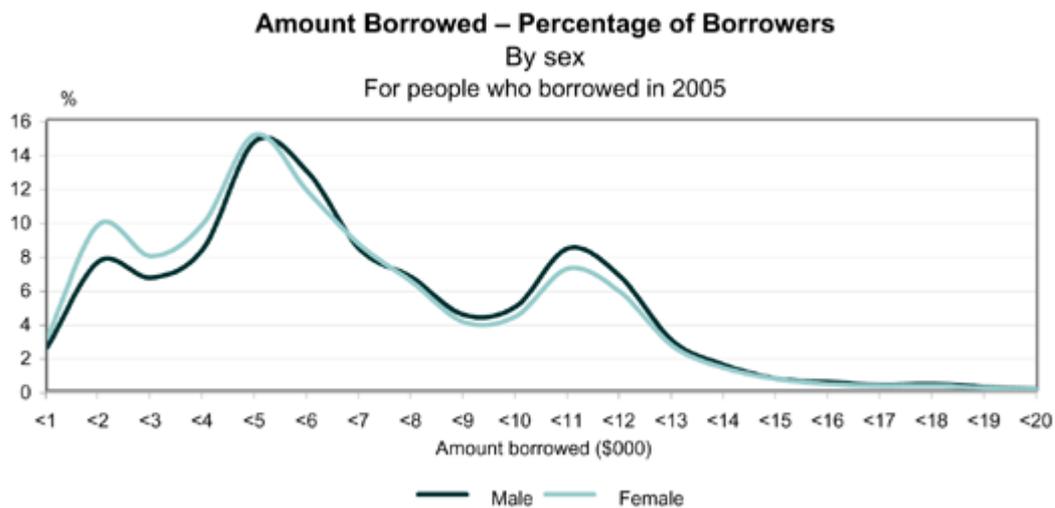
# Male and female borrowing debt, repayments and income

## Overall trend of borrowing

Borrowing in 2000 followed a broadly similar pattern to borrowing in 2005. In 2000, 33 percent of students borrowed between \$2,500 and \$4,999.99. In 2005, 28 percent of students borrowed between these amounts. The largest numerical increases in borrowers between 2000 and 2005 were those who borrowed between \$0 and \$2,499.99, and those who borrowed between \$10,000 and \$12,499.99.

There were 21 percent more borrowers in 2005 (154,374 borrowers) compared with 2000 (128,085 borrowers).

The average amount borrowed in a year increased by \$300 (5 percent) from \$6,110 in 2000 to \$6,410 in 2005.



**Note:** Due to the small number of students who borrow more than \$20,000 in a particular year, this graph has been truncated.

## More female borrowers

There were more female borrowers than male borrowers in 2000 and in 2005, with females outnumbering males in all levels of borrowing under \$15,000 (56 percent of borrowers at this level were female in 2000 and 61 percent in 2005).

This was most pronounced among those who borrowed more than \$0 but less than \$2,500 (65 percent of borrowers at this level were female in 2005 with 66 percent in 2000), and between \$2,500 and \$4,999.99 (62 percent of borrowers at this level were female in 2005 with 57 percent in 2000).

Only in the \$15,000 and over borrowing level were females outnumbered by males (53 percent of these borrowers were male in 2005 with 56 percent in 2000).

### **Males borrow more**

In 2005 males borrowed 11 percent more, on average, than females, with a larger percentage of females borrowing under \$5,000, and a larger percentage of males borrowing over \$10,000.

Between 2000 and 2005, the average amount borrowed in one year by males increased by \$410 (6 percent) to \$6,830. Females borrowed \$270 (5 percent) more than in 2000, to average \$6,130 in 2005.

### **Overall trend of leaving debt and debt five years post-study**

The average leaving debt accumulated by students who borrowed under the Student Loan Scheme while studying increased from \$11,220 for those who left study in 1997 to reach \$14,780 for those who left study in 2004 (up 32 percent).

The proportion of borrowers who left study owing less than \$10,000 fell from 59 percent for those who left in 1997 to 50 percent for those who left in 2004. The proportion of leavers with debts in the \$20,000 to \$69,999.99 range increased from 17 percent to 25 percent during this time. For the \$20,000 to \$29,999.99 range the proportion increased from 10 percent to 12 percent.

The proportion of debt repaid within five years of leaving study has decreased over time. Borrowers who left study in 1995 had paid off, on average, 32 percent of their loan five years later. Students who left in 2000 had paid off, on average, 21 percent of their loan five years after leaving study.

### **Higher leaving debt for males**

The average leaving debt for males in 2004 (\$16,290) was \$2,590 higher than for females (\$13,700). This compares with an average difference in 1997 of only \$60 between males (\$11,250) and females (\$11,190).

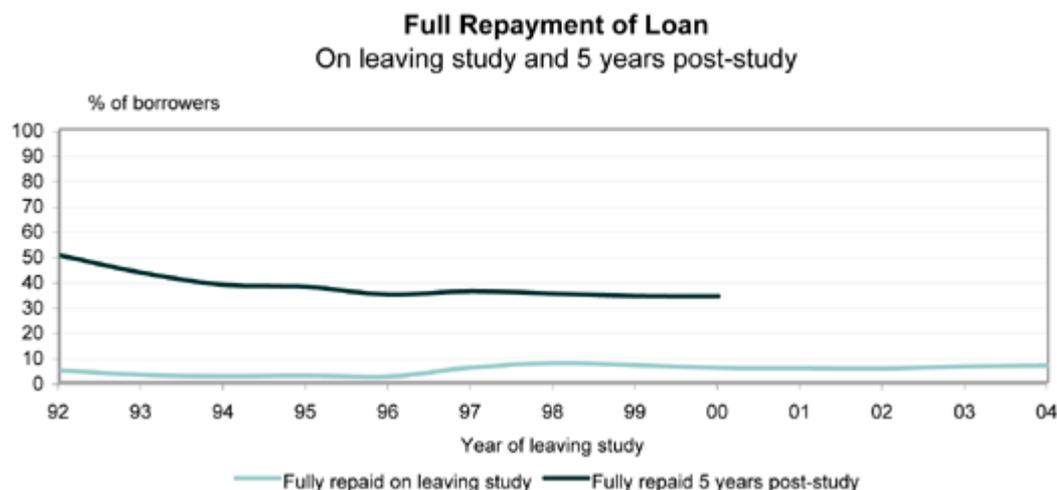
The difference between the average leaving debt for males and for females who left study in 2004 reflects the higher proportion of females with debt under \$10,000, while a higher proportion of males left with debt in the higher ranges of \$20,000 to \$79,999.99.

While debt for males is higher, this difference is more significant for those overseas.

See [Borrowers Overseas](#) for further information ([www.stats.govt.nz/studentloans](http://www.stats.govt.nz/studentloans)).

See [Student Financial Support](#) for further information ([www.stats.govt.nz/studentloans](http://www.stats.govt.nz/studentloans)).

## Proportion of borrowers who had repaid their loan in full on leaving study and five years post-study



Between 1992 and 2004 the number of borrowers with a debt outstanding on leaving study increased from 11,103 to reach 64,413. The number of borrowers who had repaid their loan in full on leaving study also increased from 543 to reach 4,569.

### Plateau in students who fully repaid their loans on leaving since 1997

The proportion of all borrowers who had fully repaid their debt on leaving was around 3 percent between 1992 and 1996. This increased in 1997 and has remained relatively steady at around 6 percent until 2004 (the latest year for which full repayment at the point of leaving study information is available). There is no noticeable change in behaviour from 2001 when the zero interest while studying policy was introduced.

The proportion of males and females who had repaid their loan on leaving study was very similar, with females fractionally higher for some years (up to 1 percentage point).

### Decline in proportion fully repaying loan five years post-study

The proportion of those who had fully repaid their debt five years post-study decreased from 50 percent for those who left study in 1992 (5,829 out of 11,643 borrowers) to 34 percent for those who left in 2000 (14,082 out of 41,421 borrowers). In comparison just 6 percent of borrowers who left study in 2000 had repaid their loan on leaving study (2,328 borrowers).

The decline in full repayments seen from 1992 to 1994 is partly due to the number of years available in which people could borrow. The Student Loan Scheme began in 1992, therefore, those leaving study in 1992 to 1994 had fewer years of borrowing to repay than those leaving in later years. By 1994, this effect had decreased markedly as three years of borrowing would have been available. The proportion of those who had fully repaid their loan five years post-study declined from 39 percent for those who left study in 1994 to 34 percent for those who left study in 2000. In part, this reflects the increase in leaving debt over that time, in response to growth in fees from 1992 to 2000.

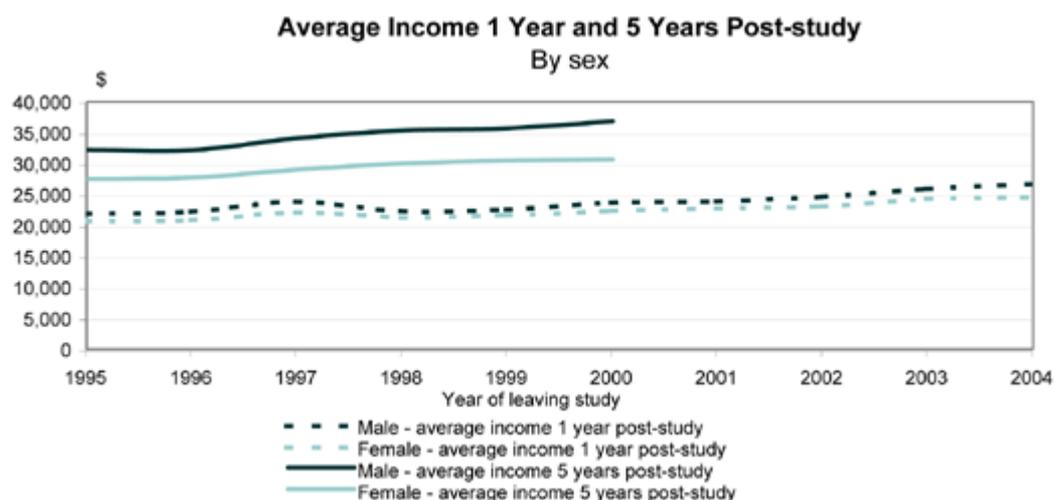
Although females had a lower average income than males, five years post-study, the proportion who have paid off their loan during this time is no less than for males, and for some years is higher (up to 4 percentage points). For those who left in 1992, 52 percent of females had fully repaid their loan in 1997, compared with 48 percent of males. However, for later years (for those leaving in 1998, 1999 and 2000) the proportion of males and females who repaid their loan five years post-study was the same (around 34 percent).

See [Full Repayments](http://www.stats.govt.nz/studentloans) for further information ([www.stats.govt.nz/studentloans](http://www.stats.govt.nz/studentloans)).

### Overall trend of income

The average income one-year post-study has increased by 19 percent from \$21,590 for those leaving study in 1995 to \$25,740 for those leaving in 2004. There was a small decline for those leaving in 1998.

### Male and female income disparity



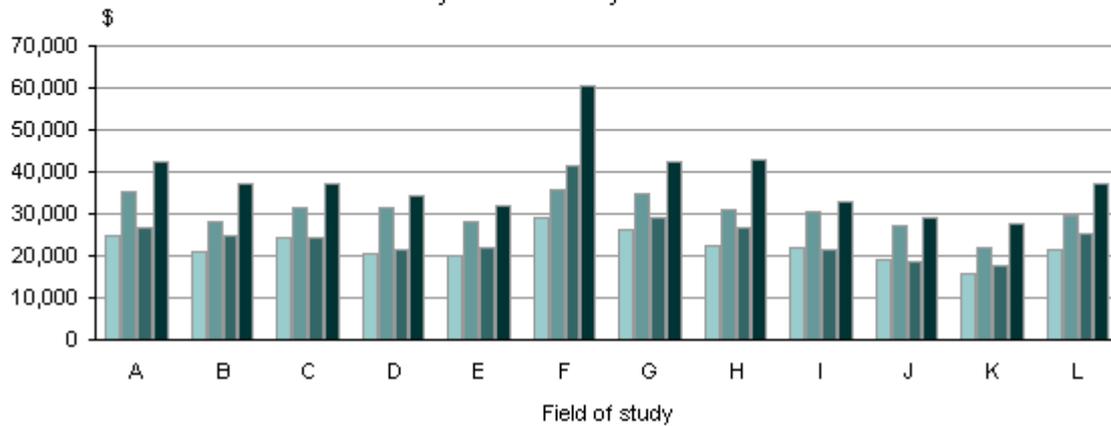
While the average income on year post-study is only slightly higher for males than for females, four years later this gap has widened, so that male income five years post-study is significantly higher than females for the same period.

The average one year post-study income for males who left study in 1995 was 6 percent higher than for females in the same leaving cohort. Four years later, their average income was 17 percent higher than for females in the same leaving cohort.

In comparison, the average one-year post-study income for males who left study in 2000 was also 6 percent higher than for females in the same leaving cohort. Four years later, the male average income was 20 percent higher than for females in the same leaving cohort. This is three percentage points more than the gap for those who left in 1995.

### Average Income for Students who Left Study in 2000

By field of study and sex



- A Natural and physical sciences
- B Information technology
- C Engineering and related technologies
- D Architecture and building
- E Agriculture, environmental and related studies
- F Health
- G Education
- H Management and commerce
- I Society and culture
- J Creative arts
- K Food, hospitality and personal services
- L Mixed field programmes

- Female - average income 1 year post-study for 2001 (last studied 2000)
- Female - average income 5 years post-study for 2005 (last studied 2000)
- Male - average income 1 year post-study for 2001 (last studied 2000)
- Male - average income 5 years post-study for 2005 (last studied 2000)

### Health

Those who left health courses in 2000 had the highest average income one-year post-study (\$31,300 in 2001) and five years post-study (\$39,530 in 2005), a 26 percent increase. Health had the highest average one- and five-year post-study incomes for males and females for those who left in 2000. Health also had the biggest gap between male and female average five-year post-study income at 71 percent, (\$60,660 for males and \$35,530 for females).

### Food, hospitality and personal services

Students who last studied food, hospitality and personal services courses in 2000 had the lowest income of all fields of study one year and five years post-study, earning, on average, \$16,420 in 2001 and \$23,650 in 2005, an increase of 44 percent. The income for males in food, hospitality and personal services who left study in 2000 was, on average, 54 percent higher in 2005 than in 2001, up from \$17,850 to \$27,530. Females who left study in 2000 had an average income of \$15,750 in 2001, and \$21,890 in 2005, a 39 percent increase.

## Management and commerce

For those who left management and commerce courses in 2000, the average income for females increased by 38 percent, from \$22,540 in 2001 to \$31,130 in 2005. For males the average income increased by 61 percent, from \$26,650 in 2001 to \$43,000 in 2005.

## Architecture and building

The income of males in architecture and building who left study in 2000 was, on average, 61 percent more in 2005 than in 2001, up from \$21,440 to \$34,490. Females who left study in 2000 had an average income of \$20,530 in 2001, and \$31,320 in 2005, a 53 percent increase.

## Engineering and related technologies

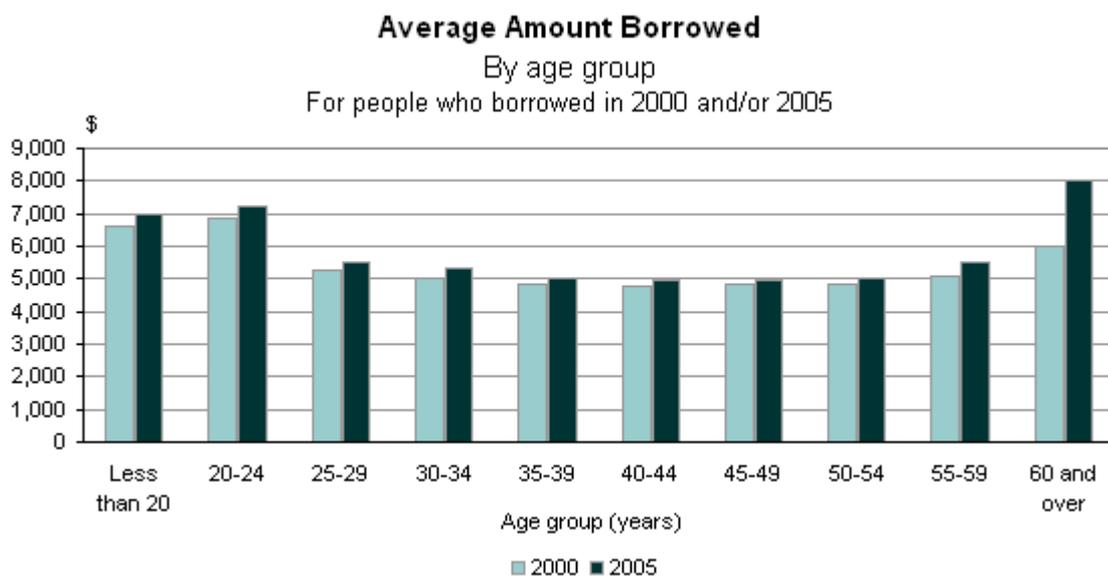
There was only a 1 percent difference in the average income one-year post-study for males and females from engineering and related technology courses in 2001 (both about \$24,000). This was the smallest percentage difference between the sexes. However, four years later in 2005, the average income for the same leaving cohort was \$37,140 for males and \$31,650 for females (17 percent higher for males).

## Creative arts, and society and culture courses

Females who left creative arts and society and culture courses in 2000 had a higher one year post-study income than males (\$19,280 for females and \$18,540 for males in creative arts, and \$21,940 for females and \$21,630 for males in society and culture courses). Four years later in 2005 males' income was 7 and 9 percent higher than females' for these courses, respectively.

See [Debt and Income](http://www.stats.govt.nz/studentloans) for further information ([www.stats.govt.nz/studentloans](http://www.stats.govt.nz/studentloans)).

## Borrowing, debt and income by age group



### Most borrowers under 25 years of age

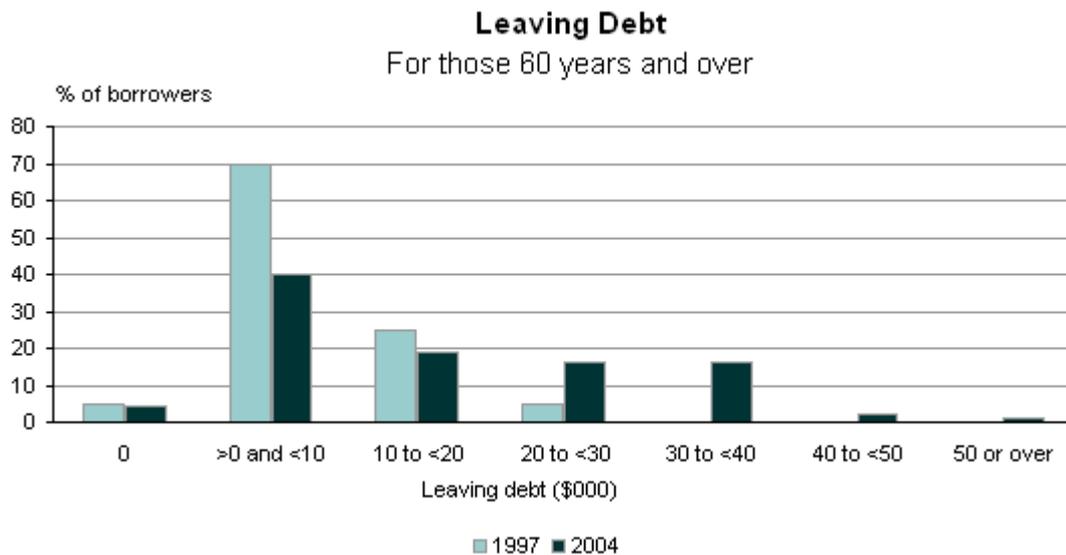
In both 2000 and 2005 the majority of borrowers were under 25 years of age. The 20–24 year age group has held its place as the most common age group to borrow, with 36 percent of students in this category. The proportion of borrowers aged under 40 years has decreased overall from 90 percent in 2000 to 87 percent in 2005 (while the proportion of those aged 40 years and over has increased, from 10 percent to 13 percent over the same period).

### Amount borrowed increases most for those aged 60 years and over

The pattern of borrowing remained fairly stable for most age groups between 2000 and 2005. The biggest increase was for those aged 60 years and over, with borrowing up 34 percent from \$6,010 to \$8,040, making them the largest borrowers on average. There is some volatility in the average amount borrowed over time, due to the small number of borrowers in this age group.

### Highest leaving debt for 25–29 year olds

The highest average leaving debt for those who left study in 2004 was for those aged 25–29 years (\$19,020), followed by 20–24 year olds (\$18,730) and those 60 years and over (\$16,340).



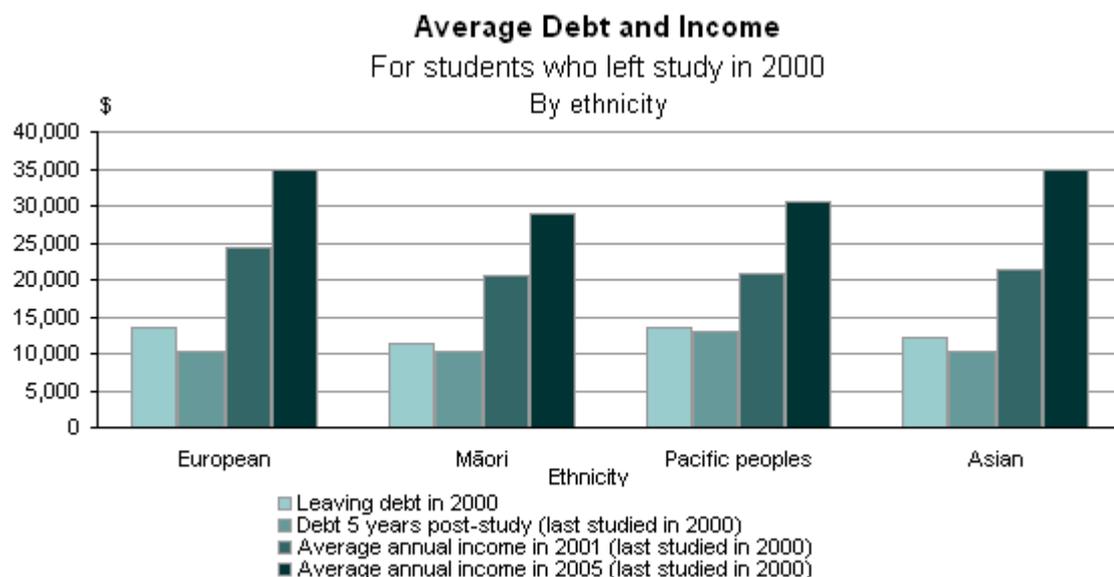
### Leaving debt for those aged 60 years and over increases 141 percent

The average leaving debt for those aged 60 years and over increased significantly from 1997 (\$6,790) to 2004 (\$16,340). This is reflected by the decline in the proportion of borrowers aged 60 years and over in the category greater than \$0 and less than \$10,000 (70 percent in 1997, down to 40 percent in 2004), and an increase in those borrowing \$20,000 to \$39,999.99 (5 percent in 1997, up to 32 percent in 2004).

While the number of those aged 60 years and over who have debt from \$30,000 to \$39,999.99 is very small (about 100) in the 2004 leaving cohort, the proportion of those in this age group borrowing this amount is high compared with other age groups.

See [Student Financial Support](#), and [Debt and Income](#) for further information ([www.stats.govt.nz/studentloans](http://www.stats.govt.nz/studentloans)).

## Borrowing, debt and income by ethnicity



### The 2000 leaving cohort

Ethnic group	Average debt (\$)			Average income (\$)		
	Leaving debt in 2000	Debt in 2005	Percentage decrease (%)	Income in 2001	Income in 2005	Percentage increase (%)
European	13,640	10,280	-25	24,340	34,870	43
Māori	11,450	10,240	-11	20,590	29,000	41
Pacific peoples	13,420	12,860	-4	20,740	30,550	47
Asian	12,190	10,380	-15	21,440	34,790	62
Total	12,960	10,300	-21	23,270	33,520	44

### Overall trends of borrowing, debt and income for ethnic groups

Among borrowers who left study in 2000, Europeans had the highest leaving debt and average income, both one and five years post-study. They also made the most progress in repaying debt over this post-study period.

Pacific peoples had high leaving debt, low average income, and made the least progress of any ethnic group in repaying debt.

Leaving debt and average income were lowest for Māori.

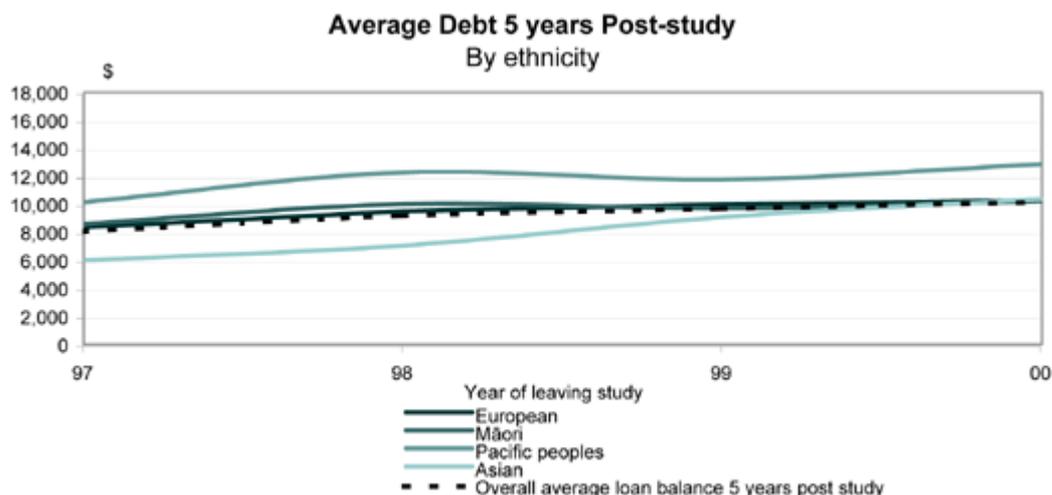
### European and Asian borrowing increases

The average amount borrowed in 2000 and 2005 increased for both European and Asian borrowers – 7 percent for European borrowers, from \$6,180 in 2000 to \$6,590 in 2005; and 11 percent for Asian borrowers, from \$5,920 in 2000 to \$6,560 in 2005. The large increase in the average amount borrowed by those in the Asian ethnic group reflects an increase in the number of Asian borrowers, up from 14,643 in 2000 to 23,343 in 2005 (an increase of 59 percent).

### Māori and Pacific peoples borrowing decreases

The average amount borrowed by Māori and Pacific peoples decreased between 2000 and 2005 (down 1 percent for Māori, from \$5,900 to \$5,850, and down 2 percent for Pacific peoples, from \$6,430 to \$6,290). The decreases for borrowers in these ethnic groups are likely to be due to an increase in enrolments in low-fee and short-duration courses at institutions such as wānanga.

See [Student Financial Support](http://www.stats.govt.nz/studentloans) for further information ([www.stats.govt.nz/studentloans](http://www.stats.govt.nz/studentloans)).



### Pacific peoples debt increases

Pacific peoples' average leaving debt increased by 41 percent from 1997 (\$11,020) to 2004 (\$15,590). This was only slightly lower than the European group's average leaving debt of \$15,600 in 2004, which generally was the highest average leaving debt over time.

Pacific peoples consistently had the highest average debt five years post-study, reaching \$12,860 in 2005 for those who left study in 2000. This was noticeably higher than both the overall average for every year, and averages for European, Māori, and Asian borrowers (which were all under \$10,400 in 2005). In 2005, the average five year post-study debt for Pacific peoples was nearly 24 percent higher than it was for Asian borrowers, the second highest group in 2005 (\$10,380).

### Asian borrowers have steepest rise in leaving debt

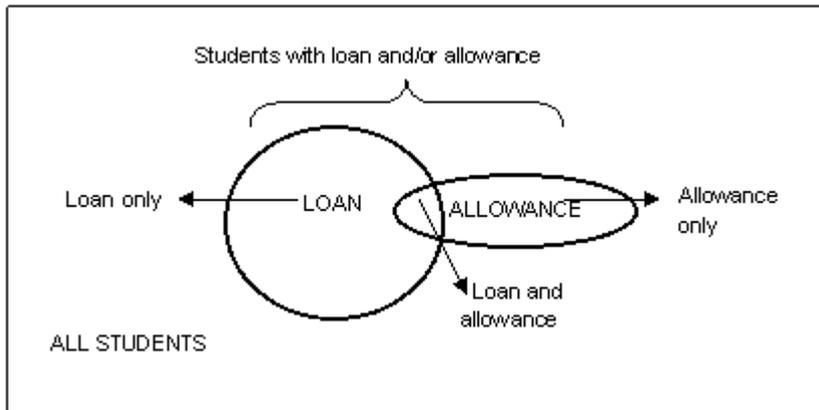
Asian borrowers had the largest rise in average leaving debt, at 73 percent, up from \$8,630 in 1997 to \$14,890 in 2004. The number of Asian borrowers with a leaving debt also increased substantially, from 2,091 in 1997 to 7,710 in 2004. The Asian ethnic group, however, had the lowest average leaving debt between 1997 and 1999.



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# Loans and allowances

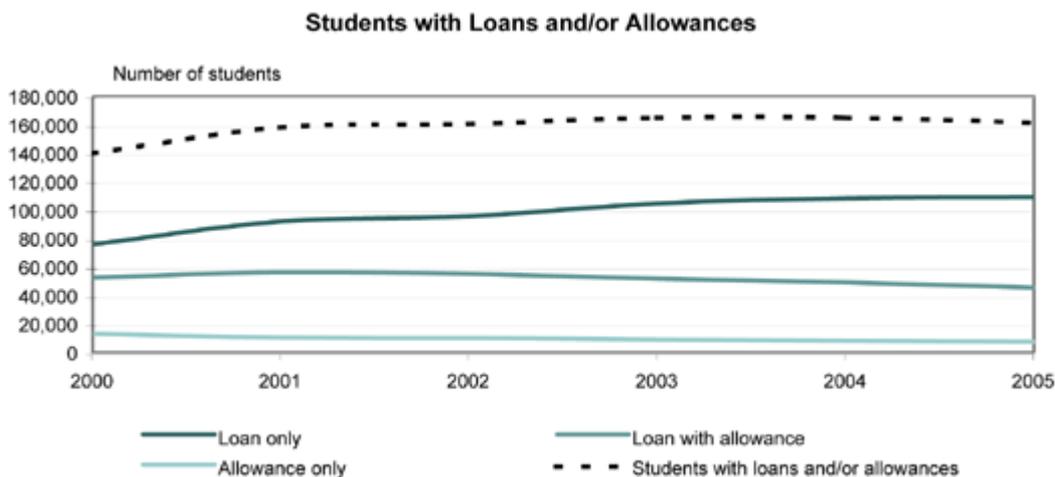
## Financial support options available to students



The above diagram (not to scale) shows the financial support options available to students. Students can have a loan and/or an allowance.

## Overall trend of loans and allowances

The number of students receiving allowances has decreased, while the number of students with a loan (with no allowances) has increased. Students with a loan who have an allowance borrow less. Students with a loan and an allowance have a higher allowance than those without a loan.



## Increasing number of students receive loan and/or allowance

The overall growth in the number of loan and/or allowance students was 16 percent, rising from 140,979 in 2000 to reach 162,966 in 2005. Most of the increase came between 2000 and 2001 (13 percent) reflecting the increase in loan-only students in that time (21 percent).

### **Number of allowance-only students falls 44 percent**

The number of students receiving only an allowance nearly halved between 2000 and 2005, from 12,873 in 2000 to 7,251 in 2005 (a decrease of 44 percent). The number of students receiving a loan and an allowance also decreased 13 percent between 2000 and 2005, down from 52,275 in 2000 to 45,420 in 2005. While the number of students receiving allowances had decreased, students who had both a loan and an allowance borrowed less, on average, than students who had a loan-only (17 percent less in 2000 and 13 percent less in 2005).

The 8 percent increase in loan and allowance students between 2000 and 2001 (up 3,984) reflects in part the drop in allowance-only students in the same years (down 2,592), as students who qualified for an allowance also borrowed.

### **Number of loan-only students increases**

The number of borrowers without an allowance increased 44 percent between 2000 and 2005, from 75,810 to 108,954, with the biggest increase occurring in 2001 (21 percent).

About 7 in every 10 borrowers did not have an allowance in 2005. The proportion of loan-only students rose from 59 percent in 2000 to 71 percent in 2005.

### **Average student allowance received in 2005 remains below 2000 level**

The average amount of student allowance received fell 11 percent between 2000 and 2001, and has not yet returned to the 2000 level (\$5,610 in 2005, \$5,870 in 2000). This is despite allowance rates rising annually.

This trend was reflected in the average total allowance and accommodation supplement received, which fell 10 percent from 2000 (\$6,490) to 2001(\$5,870). It then climbed steadily from 2001 (\$5,870) to 2005 (\$6,390) but has not yet returned to the 2000 level, although it has been helped slightly by the increase in average accommodation benefit received.

### **Accommodation benefit increases**

The average accommodation benefit received increased steadily between 2000 and 2005, and was up 29 percent over five years, from \$780 to \$1,010. Fifteen percent of this increase occurred between 2004 and 2005, up from \$890 to \$1,010.

### **Borrowers with allowances borrow less**

Loan and allowance students borrowed less, on average, than loan-only students (17 percent less in 2000 and 13 percent less in 2005).

However, receiving an allowance has not led to a decline in the average amount borrowed. The annual average amount borrowed by loan and allowance students increased by 6 percent from 2000 (\$5,460) to 2005 (\$5,810). The annual average amount borrowed by loan-only students increased by only 2 percent, up from \$6,550 in 2000 to \$6,660 in 2005.

### Allowances 10 percent higher among borrowers

The average allowance received by loan and allowance students tended to be about 10 percent higher than for allowance-only students. This occurred in all years except in 2000, when the allowance received by loan and allowance students was 15 percent higher.

This difference between allowance students with and without loans could reflect a greater financial need for students who need to borrow. This would flow through to them being eligible for more allowance.

See [Student Financial Support](http://www.stats.govt.nz/studentloans) for more information ([www.stats.govt.nz/studentloans](http://www.stats.govt.nz/studentloans)).

## Comparison of borrowers living overseas and in New Zealand

### Borrowers living overseas and borrowers in New Zealand from 1998 to 2005

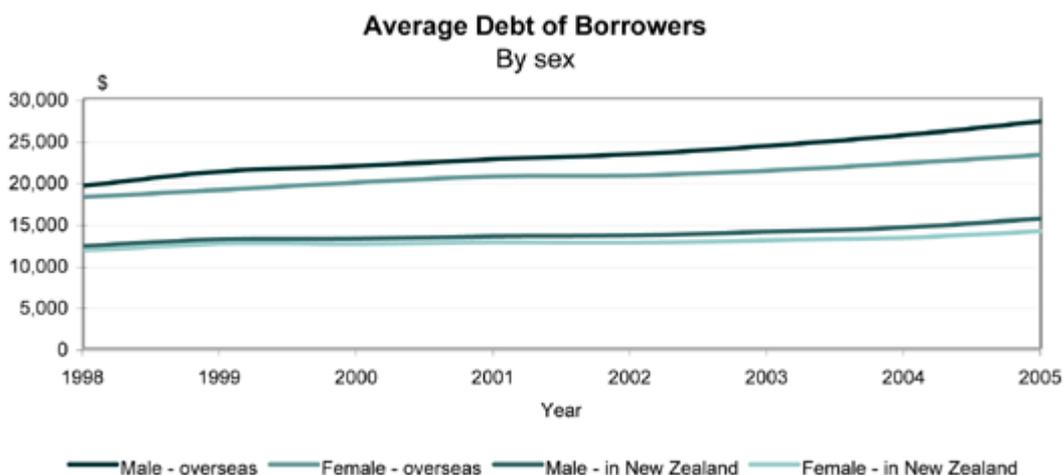
In 2005, 95 percent of those who had borrowed between 1997 and 2004 were recorded as living in New Zealand (not self-declared as living overseas). A total of 360,912 borrowers were in New Zealand and 20,952 borrowers were overseas. There was a similar proportion in 1998, when 96 percent of borrowers were living in New Zealand.

### Average debt higher for borrowers living overseas

The average debt for those living overseas was 57 percent higher than for those living in New Zealand in 1998. This rose to 70 percent higher in 2005.

The average debt of borrowers living overseas increased faster than the average debt of those living in New Zealand between 1998 and 2005. The average debt of borrowers living overseas increased by 33 percent, rising from \$18,830 in 1998 to reach \$25,100 in 2005. This compares with a rise of 23 percent for borrowers living in New Zealand, from \$11,980 in 1998 to reach \$14,730 in 2005.

Contributing factors to the increase in average debt for borrowers who have gone overseas may be increases in the amount borrowed and the application of interest and penalties for those borrowers who did not meet their repayment obligations.



### **Male borrower debt higher, especially for those overseas**

Males had an increasingly higher average debt than female between 1998 and 2005, both for those living in New Zealand and for those living overseas.

In 2005 the average debt of male borrowers who were living overseas (\$27,250) was 17 percent higher than their female counterparts (\$23,220), up from 7 percent higher in 1998 (\$19,490 for males, \$18,150 for females).

This compares with the average debt for males (\$15,550) living in New Zealand being 11 percent higher than for females (\$14,040) in 2005, up from 4 percent higher in 1998 (\$12,240 for males, \$11,730 for females).

### **Highest overseas debt for borrowers who studied health**

The highest overseas average debt for all years was for those who had studied health, increasing 7 percent from \$27,780 in 1998 to reach \$29,740 in 2005. Although borrowers who studied health had the highest average debt overseas, they were just below the two highest average debt categories in New Zealand in 2005 (the natural and physical sciences, and education).

The second-highest overseas average debt in 2005 was for those who had studied science. Their average debt had increased 39 percent, up from \$20,200 in 1998 to reach \$28,130 in 2005. This compared with a 30 percent increase for those in New Zealand from \$15,500 in 1998 to \$20,160 in 2005.

### **Food, hospitality and personal services have lowest debt in New Zealand and overseas**

The lowest average debt for borrowers both in New Zealand and overseas was for those who had studied food, hospitality and personal services courses. Their debt, increased by similar proportions (29 percent in New Zealand, and 28 percent for those overseas) between 1999 and 2005. For those living in New Zealand, debt rose from \$8,420 (1999) to \$10,890 (2005); for those overseas it rose from \$12,080 (1999) to \$15,440 (2005).

The second-lowest overseas average debt was for those who had studied information technology, however, this increased substantially up from \$12,300 in 1999 to reach \$19,760 in 2005 (an increase of 61 percent).

See [Borrowers Overseas](http://www.stats.govt.nz/studentloans) for further information ([www.stats.govt.nz/studentloans](http://www.stats.govt.nz/studentloans)).

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## Technical notes

### Key official statistics

This release includes official statistics on:

- borrowing in a year
- allowance received in a year
- leaving debt
- income after leaving study
- loan balance for those living overseas or for those living in New Zealand
- borrowers who have repaid their loan in full.

### New this year

The following information is available for the first time in this release:

- statistics for students who receive an allowances
- statistics on income for students who have left study are available for those who had borrowed or received an allowance
- statistics presented as time series.

## Glossary

### Economic variables

**Amount Borrowed / Amount Received:** This is the amount borrowed or received by a student in a particular calendar year (this is not the total amount borrowed by the student over all years of study).

**Leaving debt:** This is the total debt still owing in March following the last year of study, including any repayment the student may have made during study. This includes those who had \$0 debt on leaving. For example, if a student last studied in 2000, their leaving debt is their debt in March of 2001. This data will always be a year behind the release date. For example, leaving debt data is only available for those who left study up to 2004 and did not return the following year in the 2005 dataset on Student Loans and Allowances.

**Debt five years post-study:** This is the total debt still owing in March five years after the last year of study, including any repayment made up to this time. This includes those who had \$0 debt five years post-study. For example, for those who last studied in 2000, their debt five years post-study is their debt remaining in March 2006.

**Income one year post-study:** This is the taxable income earned in the tax year after leaving study. This excludes those with \$0 income. For example for those students who left study in 2000, their one year post-study income is in the 2001–2002 tax year.

**Income five years post-study:** This is the taxable income earned in the tax year five years after leaving study. This excludes those with \$0 income. For example for those students who left study in 2000, their five year post-study income is in the 2005–2006 tax year.

## Demographic characteristics

**Age group:** the person's age at 1 July in the reference year in the table.

**Ethnic group:** data for the years before 2000 are sourced from the Ministry of Education, and assign each individual to one ethnic group only. For those who identified with more than one ethnic group this allocation was based on the following order of priority: Māori, Pacific peoples, Asian, Other, European. For example, if a student loan borrower identified as both Samoan and European, then they were assigned to the Pacific peoples ethnic group. Subsequently, unprioritised ethnicity data began to become available, from StudyLink (from 2000 onwards) and the MoE (from 2001 onwards), and where available this unprioritised ethnicity data has been used. The data from both sources may include up to three ethnicities for each individual, meaning that figures relating to 2000 may reflect identification with as many as three different ethnic groups per student, and those from 2001 as many as six different ethnic groups per student.

From 2001 onwards, unprioritised ethnicity data are available for nearly all borrowers. In a small number of cases, where unprioritised ethnicity data are not available, the older prioritised MoE ethnicity data have been used. The change from prioritised to unprioritised ethnicity data will affect ethnic group comparisons between the tables relating to borrowers in 1997 and 2005. Tables spanning the 1997 to 2005 period will reflect a combination of prioritised and unprioritised ethnicity data.

**Declared overseas:** includes people who advised Inland Revenue they were living overseas or were departing to live overseas during the reference year. There will be additional holders of student loans who were overseas and had not advised Inland Revenue, but this figure cannot be accurately quantified.

## Study-related variables

**Level of study:** the qualification(s) for which the student was enrolled. This does not distinguish those who completed their qualification from those who did not. A student can be enrolled in more than one level of study, therefore they can be counted in more than one level in the table.

**Field of study:** the New Zealand Standard Classification of Education of the field(s) of study or subject of a programme of study in which the student was enrolled. A student can be enrolled in more than one field of study, therefore they can be counted in more than one field in the table. Field of study includes all levels of study, and does not distinguish those who completed their qualification from those who did not.

**Provider type:** the type of provider at which the student was enrolled. A student can be enrolled in more than one provider type, therefore they can be counted in more than one provider type in the table. This does not distinguish those who completed their qualification from those who did not.

**Leaving year:** This is the last year of study of a student, and does not distinguish those who completed their qualification from those who did not. For example, if a student last studies in 2000, then the student is considered to have left study in 2000 and their leaving year is 2000.

Field of study, level and provider type during the student's last year of study were assigned to their debt, income and repayment.

## Integrated dataset

The statistics in this release have been produced using a database of student loans and allowances, and tertiary education data held by Statistics New Zealand. One of the important components of the database is an integrated dataset on student loan borrowers and allowance recipients. This dataset was created by linking administrative records from a number of government agencies:

- individual students' tertiary enrolment data from the Ministry of Education (MoE)
- individual students' borrowing data from the now-defunct Student Loan Account Manager (SLAM) provided by Inland Revenue and the MoE
- individual students' borrowing and allowance data (from 1999 onwards for allowances, and 2000 onwards for loans) from StudyLink, a service of the Ministry of Social Development (MSD)
- individuals' repayment and income data from Inland Revenue.

The integrated dataset contains data on the loans of students who borrowed under the Student Loan Scheme. It has recently been updated to include data for 2005, and this Hot Off The Press provides the first release of results following the update with the statistics focusing on the characteristics of student loan borrowers and allowance recipients, and how these relate to borrowing levels, allowances received, leaving debt, income and repayments.

The 2005 data presented in this HOTP is based on linking new data supplies from agencies to Statistics NZ to take advantage of improvement in data quality. This means all previous data has been revised.

The integrated dataset is the only data source that links information on borrowers and allowance recipients' income, debt and repayment with their enrolment details and other characteristics. It includes information on borrowing and allowances, and has the ability to link records over time, thus enhancing its usefulness as a single integrated data source from which to provide statistics for strategic policy and financial analysis.

## History of the dataset

The Student Loan Scheme began in 1992. In June 2000, the Auditor-General released a report entitled *Student Loan Scheme – Publicly Available Accountability Information*. The report proposed that Statistics New Zealand integrate selected datasets relating to the Student Loan Scheme with a view to providing statistics for strategic policy, financial risk management, financial reporting and forecasting. As a result of work undertaken to follow up the Auditor-General's report, Statistics New Zealand was directed to lead an investigation into the privacy, logistical and data issues around data integration. Other agencies involved in the exercise were the Ministry of Education, Inland Revenue, the Treasury, the then Department of Work and Income, and the then Ministry of Social Policy. The Privacy Commissioner was consulted over the privacy issues involved in integrating personal data from different sources.

In April 2002, Cabinet funded Statistics NZ to construct an integrated dataset on student loan borrowers dating back to 1997. Annual updates were also funded, with statistics to be released by Statistics NZ each year. Cabinet's approval for the work was given in the knowledge that the Privacy Commissioner was comfortable with the revised methodology proposed by Statistics New Zealand. During 2002, Statistics New Zealand established the first integrated dataset on student loan borrowers, containing data on students who borrowed in any of the years 1997 to 2000. The first release of data from this new integrated dataset occurred in December 2002. A second release was issued in November 2004, when the dataset was updated to include data on students who borrowed in 2001 and 2002. A third release was issued in November 2005, when the dataset was updated to include data on students who borrowed in 2003. A fourth release was issued in April 2006 to include data on students who borrowed in any of the years 1997–2004.

Further work was undertaken in 2006–2007 to include allowance recipients into the integrated dataset, and the name was changed to Student Loan and Allowances. The focus on the HOTP shifted to producing statistics on borrowing and allowances in a particular year, leaving debt, debt five years post-study, income one and five years post-study and full repayment for all those who borrowed or had an allowance from 1992 onwards and these statistics are available for the first time in this current release.

Due to the shift in concepts reported, the new data supplied by source agencies and the complete reintegration of this data, the statistics produced in this release are not comparable to previous releases in 2002, 2004, 2005 and 2006.

## Matching methodology

The integrated dataset was created in two stages. The first stage merged the records of Inland Revenue and MSD (or SLAM) using tax file numbers. The second stage used a probabilistic matching methodology to match the MoE data to the already linked 'loans' dataset created in the first stage. Variables used in this second stage were: student identification number; tertiary institution number; year of study/borrowing; sex; day, month and year of birth; surname; first initial of first name; and ethnicity. Probabilistic matching allows records to be linked when some of the matching variables are not unique, have incorrect values, or are missing.

The overall link rate for the integrated dataset, after both exact and probabilistic matching was completed, was 94 percent. There was considerable variation in the link rate over the years, due in most part to the lack of education data for students at private training establishments (PTEs) before 2000. For 1997 to 1999, the average link rate was 90 percent, and for 2000 to 2004, the average link rate was 97 percent.

It is important to note that when Statistics NZ is satisfied that all checking has been completed, unique identifiers are not carried through to the integrated dataset. Annual updating of the integrated dataset is achieved through the use of a non-reversible algorithm. Statistics NZ runs the algorithm against the unique identifiers to produce a new linking identifier for each unit record. It is this new variable that enables each year's data to be added to the integrated dataset.

Further information on the matching methodology can be found in two methodological reports published on Statistics New Zealand's website (see [www.stats.govt.nz/research-reports/student-loan-integration](http://www.stats.govt.nz/research-reports/student-loan-integration)).

## **Differences between all student loan borrowers and those in this release**

Users should be aware that official statistics on student loans are also published in the annual report of the Student Loan Scheme, jointly published each year by the MoE, Inland Revenue and the MSD, and various other topical reports by the MoE. The official statistics on student loan borrowers included in this Hot Off The Press may differ from statistics published in the annual report. This is because the source administrative data was provided to Statistics New Zealand at a specified cut-off date which differs from the one used for the compilation of the annual report. In addition, the tables in this Hot Off The Press use different populations from those in the annual report, and different concepts for those populations.

For example, the data on leaving debt produced by Statistics New Zealand includes those who leave study with \$0 leaving debt (having repaid their loan while studying), whereas reports by the MoE at times exclude those who leave with \$0 debt.

The use of probabilistic matching significantly increased the percentage of student loan borrowers whose information was included in the integrated dataset. However, it should be noted that some types of student loan borrowers were still under represented, even after both stages of matching were completed. Due to the absence of data from the MoE's dataset on students attending PTEs before 2000, the link rate of PTE students prior to 2000 was around 30 percent. From 2000 onwards, the link rate rose to around 91 percent.

## **Student loan and tertiary education data held by Statistics New Zealand**

Statistics New Zealand's student loan and tertiary education database has several components:

- the integrated dataset (ie matched data for students who had loans in any of the years 1997–2005)
- Inland Revenue information for 1992–2005 for student loan borrowers whose records were not matched
- Ministry of Social Development information for 2000–2005 for student loan borrowers whose records were not matched
- MoE enrolment data for all formal students from 1997–2005, regardless of whether they were student loan borrowers. A formal student is one who is enrolled in a formal programme of study at a tertiary education provider for more than one full-time week
- SLAM information for students who borrowed in or before 2000. SLAM data was provided by both the MoE and Inland Revenue.

Several of these components are updated each year. Data on other tertiary education issues may be added to the database in the future.

The statistical tables included with this release are just examples of data that can be produced from the database. Customised requests can be run by Statistics New Zealand and, on application, researchers may be able to access unidentified data in Statistics New Zealand's Data Laboratory.

## **Reliability of the data**

Statistics NZ has made every attempt to minimise errors in the student loan and tertiary education database, but two types of error will have occurred: errors in source data and errors due to record linking. Statistics NZ validated source data as it was received from each agency. If errors were detected, agencies were asked to rerun their data and provide it again. There will still, however, be some errors in the source data supplied.

Omissions in the original collection of information and errors in data entry and processing will have occurred. These cannot be quantified. In terms of errors in record linking, Statistics New Zealand used sound probabilistic matching methodology, but errors will still be present. For example, over all years an average of 7 percent of loan records were not linked to a MoE record, with considerable improvement from 2000 onwards. There will be some cases where an Inland Revenue record has been linked to the wrong MoE record, but this is estimated as affecting fewer than 1 percent of the links.

## Supplementary table information

Table 1. Amount borrowed, distribution of borrowing for 2000 and 2005 by characteristics, for people who borrowed in 2000 and 2005.

Table 2. Leaving debt, distribution of leaving debt for 1997 and 2004 by characteristics, for those who left study in 1997 and 2004.

Table 3. Student Loans and Allowances, times series of borrowers and allowance recipients from 2000 to 2005 by characteristics for those who borrowed or received an allowance in any year 2000 to 2005. Includes number of borrowers and allowance recipients, average and median figures. Figures are provided for the following subgroups:

- A. People who studied and borrowed only.
- B. People who studied and received an allowance only.
- C. People who studied AND borrowed AND received an allowance.
- D. People who studied AND borrowed OR received an allowance.

Table 4. Debt and Income, by characteristics shown for year of leaving study. Includes leaving debt, debt five years post-study, income one year post-study and income five years post-study.

- Leaving debt figures are available for students who left from 1992 to 2004.
- Debt five years post-study is available for student who left from 1992 to 2000.
- Income one year post-study is available for students who left from 1995 to 2004.
- Income five years post-study is available for student who left from 1992 to 2000.

Table 5. Overseas vs. New Zealand level of debt, by characteristics. Includes time series for the number of borrowers, and the average and median debt for those who borrowed in any year 1997 to 2004 and are resident overseas or in New Zealand.

Table 6. Full repayment, at point of leaving study and five years post-study for student who left , by characteristics. Includes time series for the number of students who had fully repaid their debt at the point of leaving study, and five years post-study.

Full repayment at point of leaving study information is available for student who left from 1992 to 2004.

Full repayment five years post study information is available for students who left from 1992 to 2000.

See List of supplementary tables for more details.

## Policy list

Here is a list of recent Government policies that relate to student loans and allowances.

Date	Policy
1 April each year	Parental income thresholds will be adjusted annually for inflation (with the initial adjustment for inflation occurring on 1 April 2005).
1 April each year	Student Allowance rates are reviewed.
1 January each year	Accommodation Benefit rates are reviewed.
1989	Income-tested student allowances were introduced to help people from low-income families meet their living costs while they studied, replacing the former tertiary grants scheme.
1992	<p>Student Loan Scheme began. Students could draw down total amount including fee costs, in one lump sum at beginning of study. This was later changed to pay fee costs direct to tertiary providers, and only pay the living costs fortnightly.</p> <p>The age at which eligibility for student allowances was subject to a parental income test was increased from 20 to 25 years.</p> <p>A maximum amount of \$1,000 was imposed on how much a student loan borrower could borrow for course-related expenses.</p>
1994	Data has been supplied electronically at a unit record level by public tertiary education institutions since 1994, but by PTEs only since 2000.
1992–1997	Student loans managed by the Student Loan Account Manager (SLAM) and Inland Revenue. Previously named SLM (Student Loan Management).
Since 1997	MOE data available electronically.
1998–2000	The average tuition fee of equivalent full-time student (EFTS) in public tertiary education institutions increased by 29 percent between 1998 and 2000. This was a reflection of the reduction in funding rates during this period.
1999	<p>Administration of student allowance transferred from the Ministry of Education to the student services division of the Department of Work and Income – which was subsequently renamed StudyLink and absorbed into the Ministry of Social Development.</p> <p>The maximum amount that a student loan borrower could borrow for course-related expenses was changed to \$500 for this year.</p>

2000	<p>The maximum amount that a student loan borrower could borrow for course-related expenses was increased to \$1,000.</p> <p>Interest free while in study for full-time, full-year study and part-time, part-year study earning under an income threshold (\$24,596 in 2001 tax year – 2000 academic year).</p>
Since 2000	The management of the Student Loan Scheme was shifted from the Student Loan Account Manager (SLAM) to the StudyLink division in the Ministry of Social Development.
Since 2001	<p>Fee stabilisation policy implemented. This is part of the Government's commitment to help keep tertiary education affordable for students.</p> <p>The move to zero or reduced fees in some providers, especially in polytechnics and wānanga.</p>
2001–2003	The Government's fee stabilisation policy helped contribute to the average tuition fee per equivalent full-time student in public tertiary education institutions falling by 24 percent.
Since 2004	The fee/course cost maxima (FCCM) policy replaced the fee stabilisation policy.
2005 budget	The sixth-year medical students' trainee medical intern grant was increased by \$10,000. This will reduce the student loan borrowing by providing a living allowance for all sixth-year medical students.
2005 budget	Bonded, merit-based scholarships for New Zealand's most academically capable students were introduced.
2005	Step Up scholarships introduced to provide fees support for students who study in some fields of study at certain levels and who meet age-related and income criteria.
21 January 2005	<p>The lower student allowance parental income threshold was raised from \$28,080 to \$33,696.</p> <p>For students living away from home, the lower student allowance parental income threshold was raised from \$50,752 to \$62,148.</p> <p>Parental income limits were adjusted annually in line with the CPI from 1 January 2005.</p>

<p>From 1 January 2005</p>	<p>Part-time, part-year students studying a course load of 0.3 equivalent full-time student (EFTS) units or more can apply for a student loan for their tuition fees. The government is allowing students studying between 0.25 and 0.3 EFTS and enrolled in a course that meets vocational conditions and be in employment or studying for a qualification that lead to employment to access student loans for tuition fees from 1 January 2005.</p> <p>The \$6,500 cap on Student Loan Scheme tuition fee borrowing at private training establishments was removed. Instead, students' tuition fee borrowing entitlement will be limited to the amount charged by the provider or the relevant fee maximum, whichever is the lesser.</p>
<p>From 1 January 2006</p>	<p>Personal and joint income thresholds for student allowances were increased. Previously students whose earnings were over the income limit were not eligible for a student allowance, whereas now the allowances entitlement will be reduced/ abated by one dollar for every dollar earned over the income limit.</p> <p>The student allowance parental income threshold adjustment for families with more than one student and introducing a student allowance parental income threshold adjustment for separated parents was increased.</p>

<p>From 1 April 2006</p>	<p>Student loan borrowers living in New Zealand for 183 or more consecutive days (about 6 months) are exempted from paying interest on their loans. During that 183-day qualifying period, borrowers can go overseas for up to 31 days in total and still be eligible for an interest free student loan.</p> <p>A borrower can be absent from New Zealand for up to 183 days and still retain interest free status. The 31 day rule only applies if a borrower has been out of New Zealand for 184 or more consecutive days and is in a qualifying 183 day period back in New Zealand. If the borrower left New Zealand for more than 31 days during this qualifying period, then a new 183 day qualifying period would start on their return to New Zealand.</p> <p>Exemptions can be applied for by borrowers in certain circumstances:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unexpected delay returning to New Zealand</li> <li>2. Unplanned absence</li> <li>3. Employment or occupational absence</li> <li>4. Government service overseas</li> <li>5. Voluntary or working for token payment with a charitable organisation</li> <li>6. Post-graduate study</li> </ol> <p>Borrowers who are overseas because their partner is affected by 3–6 can also be exempted and have their loan remain interest free.</p>
<p>From 1 April 06 to 31 March 07</p>	<p>An amnesty on student loan late payment penalties administered by Inland Revenue.</p> <p>A borrower is eligible for the amnesty if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Non-resident for tax purposes</u> on 31 March 2006, and have student loan arrears and penalties at the start of the amnesty period (1 April 2006), or</li> <li>• Overseas on 31 March 2006, but haven't advised IR that they have left, and have student loan non-resident arrears and penalties, when they correct residency status is established.</li> </ul>
<p>30 November 2006</p>	<p>Refund policy introduced – repayments made prior to 01/04/04, can no longer be refunded.</p> <p>Excess repayments for the 2005 and 2006 tax periods refunded where hardship does not apply, will not be entitled to interest free write-off (that is the increase in the loan balance as a result of a refund will subject to interest that will not be written off under the interest free policy).</p>

## Student loan interest rates, thresholds and due dates

Student loan interest rates, thresholds and due dates		
Year ended 31 March	Interest (percent)	Repayment threshold (\$)
2007	6.90	\$17,160.00
2006	7.00	\$16,588.00
2005	7.00	\$16,172.00
2004	7.00	\$15,964.00
2003	7.00	\$15,496.00
2002	7.00	\$15,132.00
2001	7.00	\$14,768.00
2000	7.00	\$14,716.00
1999	8.00	\$14,716.00
1998	8.20	\$14,560.00
1997	8.40	\$14,300.00
1996	9.00	\$13,884.00
1995	7.00	\$13,520.00
1994	7.20	\$13,104.00
1993	8.20	\$12,670.00

## Understating ethnic identification

Here is an example from the 2001 Census that shows the degree to which ethnic identification may be understated by the use of prioritised ethnicity data. The 2001 Census recorded ethnicity using a 'total response' approach, where an individual could identify with more than one ethnic group. Consequently, the total of all ethnicities collected is greater than the total population because up to six ethnicities were recorded for each individual.

Total response ethnicity data is sometimes referred to as 'unprioritised' ethnicity data, in contradistinction to 'prioritised' ethnicity data, which assigns each individual to one ethnic group only. Prior to 2000, data on student loan borrowers sourced from the MoE assigned students to one ethnic group only. Where a student identified with more than one ethnic group, this allocation was based on the following order of priority: Māori, Pacific peoples, Asian, Other, European. For example, if a person identified as both Samoan and European, then they were assigned to the Pacific peoples ethnic group. The integrated dataset on student loan borrowers is unusual in combining both prioritised and unprioritised ethnicity data, as described in these Technical notes. This is done for practical purposes, because prior to 2000 unprioritised ethnicity data was not available from the existing administrative data sources. Without using prioritised ethnicity data a large proportion of students who had borrowed in at least one year between 1997 and 2005 would have been recorded with unknown ethnicity.

The use of prioritised ethnicity data will tend to undercount the number of people in certain ethnic groups. The table below gives an example from the 2001 Census of the degree to which ethnicity is understated by prioritised ethnicity data. It shows the percentage by which the number of people identifying with each ethnic group is understated when individuals are assigned to one ethnic group only using the same order of priority applied in the pre-2000 student loan data.

## Percentage of ethnicities understated by prioritised ethnicity data

Order of priority	Ethnicity	Age group (years)								
		15	15–19	20–24	25–29	30–34	35–39	40–44	45+	Total
1	Māori	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	Asian	11	5	5	5	4	3	2	3	5
4	Other	14	8	8	6	3	5	4	4	8
5	European	24	17	15	12	9	7	6	3	10
2	Pacific peoples	30	19	14	9	6	6	6	3	16

The number of Māori is not understated at all, because Māori is the first ethnic category in order of priority. Yet Pacific peoples, the second in order of priority, is most understated (14 percent overall).

The table also shows that the number of younger people, particularly those under 25 years, tends to be understated more because they are more likely to identify with multiple ethnic groups.

This suggests that while results for Māori will be unaffected by the use of prioritised ethnicity data in the student loan dataset, in the earlier years (pre-2000) the number of people in other ethnic groups will be understated – particularly European and Pacific peoples in the younger age groups. Tables which span the 1997 to 2005 period and include a combination of prioritised and unprioritised ethnicity data are likely to be affected to a lesser extent.

Further information is available from the Statistics New Zealand website at:

<http://www.stats.govt.nz/analytical-reports/review-measurement-ethnicity/papers.htm>

## More information

For more information, follow the [link](#) from the Technical notes of this release on the Statistics New Zealand website.

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### Next release

*Student Loans and Allowances: 2006* will be released on 28 February 2008.

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## Tables

The following tables can be downloaded from the Statistics New Zealand website in Excel 97 format. If you do not have access to Excel 97 or higher, you may use the Excel file viewer to view, print and export the contents of the file.

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