



## Bulletin – Tertiary Students (Domestic)

14<sup>th</sup> May, 2020

### Ensuring continuity and adequacy of student support

The Government's Budget announcements today include further support for students who have been under pressure during the COVID-19 crisis, including through losing income as a result of losing part time work.

We have put in place a number of measures to provide immediate support to learners as well as a Technology Access Fund to help make digital devices and internet connections available to eligible learners.

In Budget 2020, government is establishing a \$20 million *Hardship Fund for Learners* for tertiary education students, to be paid out through their provider.

The \$20 million 2020 Hardship Fund for Learners recognises that there is not a one-size fits all approach to meeting the financial needs of students so we need to provide a safety net for learners who don't benefit from the initial support package. This fund will be available by the end of May through tertiary education organisations.

For students facing particular or unique costs to engage in study immediate help is available from [MSD](#) for urgent or unexpected costs.

The Government will continue looking at ways to support students as it responds to the impact of COVID-19.



### **How does this initiative support the response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic?**

The \$20 million Hardship Fund for Learners provides temporary financial assistance for currently enrolled full-time and part-time tertiary learners who are facing hardship from the impacts of COVID-19. Learners will be able to receive money to pay for necessary expenses like food and rent, or access resources purchased on their behalf.

### **Who is eligible to access this hardship fund?**

Most domestic tertiary learners facing hardship from COVID-19 are eligible to receive this funding through this initiative. Learners should contact their provider to discuss what support they may require and be eligible for.

Industry trainees are not eligible for this specific fund. Support for industry training has been announced through the *Trades and Apprenticeships Training Package*. Students in Employer-led Workplace Literacy and Numeracy is also excluded.

### **How can learners access this money?**

The fund will be allocated across tertiary education providers to support learners who are facing financial pressure due to COVID-19. Learners should contact their provider about what support they require.

### **When will this additional support be available?**

We anticipate paying the funding to TEOs before the end of May. Where providers already have hardship funds, learners are already able to access support and learners should not hesitate to access these existing support services if they need to. It may take a little longer for some providers to distribute the funding. TEOs will be permitted to use the funding for costs that have been incurred through existing hardship processes from 23 March 2020 on the condition that it meets the fund's eligibility and use requirements.

### **What can this money be used for?**

This money can be used to cover basic living costs that currently enrolled learners are unable to meet such as food, utilities, rent or other unexpected expenses. This money cannot be used by providers to subsidise accommodation they provide. For costs related to transitioning to online learning should be met through the *Technology Access Fund for Learners*.

### **How will this initiative be implemented?**

The money will be distributed between providers based on a formula. It will be based on the existing funding received by a provider, and will account for the socio-economic background of learners at the provider, to help adjust for the fact that different learner groups have different experiences.

### **Why have tertiary education organisations been chosen to manage the money?**

This allows learners to receive the funding quickly as most providers have the infrastructure already in place to identify need and provide support. Providers are also best placed to understand the hardship needs within their student populations, which enables them to prioritise the funding effectively. This approach also supports learners to maintain their relationship with providers during this challenging time.

### **What safeguards will be in place to ensure tertiary education organisations/providers have distributed the Hardship Fund for Learners appropriately?**

Tertiary education providers will report to the Tertiary Education Commission on how the funding is distributed, as they do with any funding they receive. Providers will need to keep sufficient records to account for direct cash distributions and items purchased. We will publish a list of providers who receive the money and any funding not spent will be returned.

### **Things change quickly so stay up to date by following the links below:**

For health advice, refer to the Ministry of Health's website

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

For official Government information about COVID-19 (novel coronavirus), including health advice and travel restrictions visit the All-of-Government website <https://www.govt.nz/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/>

For more advice for students, visit the Ministry of Education website

<http://www.education.govt.nz/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-3/>