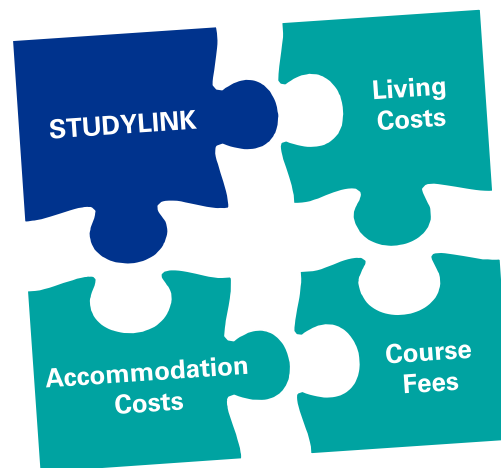


Piecing the tertiary puzzle together

Student loans + allowances



StudyLink - what do they do?

They are the missing piece of the puzzle that helps most of us fund our tertiary education.

StudyLink is the Government entity responsible for Student Loans and Allowances which are available to fund course fees and general living while studying.

Course fees are paid upfront at the start of each year, while living costs are paid weekly. The amount and type of funding received by a student is calculated based on that student's parents income.

University structure

When you first attend university as an Undergraduate to complete a Bachelors Degree. These vary from 3 - 5 years in length.

Degrees are achieved by passing a certain amount of papers with a full-time student sitting 3 - 4 papers a semester. There are two semesters a year, typically a student will sit 6 - 8 papers per year.

Course fees are based on the quantity and type of papers you sit, so each student will incur different costs in getting their degree.

Allowance - you **DO NOT** have to repay this | **Loan** - you **HAVE** to repay this

Allowance or Loan?

Student Allowance –

This is the one everyone wants because you don't have to pay it back. You are normally eligible if you're a full-time student and your parents' joint earnings before tax are less than \$127,701.81 p.a. if you live with them while studying or \$137,187.86 p.a. if you don't.

These limits apply whether you are deemed to have one or two parents, however, income deductions are available if your parents are supporting other students aged 16-23.

The amount of Allowance starts to diminish from the maximum weekly payment (after tax) of \$277.72 if you're living with parents, or \$323.33 if you aren't, when parent earnings exceed \$69,935.32 p.a.

Student Loan –

This is the most common, but you have to pay it back. The positive is they're currently interest-free if you stay in New Zealand.

Full-time students can put their course fees on their Loan and have access to \$1,000 of Course-Related Costs each year. In addition to this students can receive up to \$323.43 per week for living costs e.g. hall fees or rent.

If you receive less than the full allowance, you can top up your weekly living costs with Student Loan, up to \$323.43 per week.

If you do qualify for the Student Allowance there is an additional accommodation benefit available for students who are studying away from home, up to \$60 per week. This does not need to be repaid.

Final Year Free

Broadly, if you're a New Zealander who will finish school during 2025, you qualify for a year of fees-free provider-based tertiary education or two years of industry training. If you qualify the government will fund fees up to \$12,000 for study in your final year. To access this, all you have to do is enroll in an eligible qualification, course or programme and the fees will be paid direct to the tertiary education provider upon completion of your degree.

Halls of residence

Halls of residence are the most common accommodation type for first year students. Most halls offer a single bedroom, communal wet rooms, social common rooms and catering. In Dunedin there are 15 halls, with all of them being fully catered, owned and operated by the University. In 2025 the cost per student for one of these halls was \$19,988 + a \$949 Entry & Activities Fee. This fee level is common across the rest of the country at other universities. At Otago they offer three payment structures for hall fees. For 2025 these were:

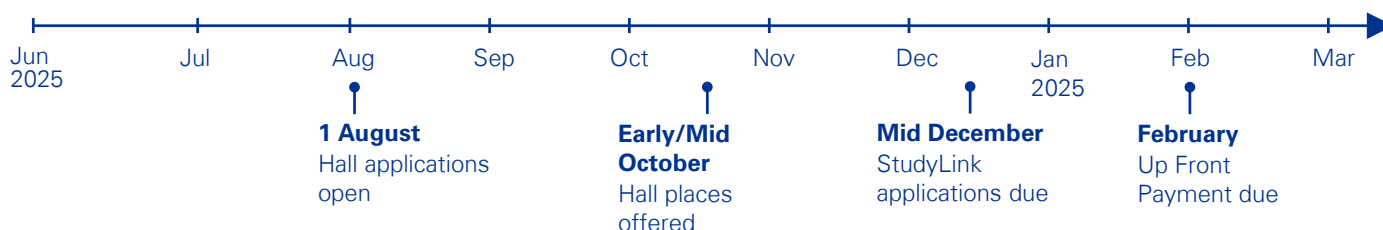
	Payment Structure	Amount	Due Date
Option One	1 x Lump Sum	\$19,988	1 Feb 2025
Option Two	1 x Up Front Payment 3 x Instalments	\$5,586 \$4,734	1 Feb 2025 16 Apr, 18 Jun & 13 Aug 2025
Option Three	1 x Up Front Payment 36 x Consecutive Weekly Payments	\$10,988 \$250	1 Feb 2025 26 Feb 2025 to 29 Oct 2025

While you can place Course Fees on your Loan, you cannot with hall fees. Option Three above is designed to work with StudyLink payments with the \$250 being less than weekly amount available to students. However, the Up Front Payment still needs funded outside of this.

Time needs to be given to research the available payment structures for different halls, as these do vary across the Universities.

The timeline

Below are the major dates relate to your applications for Courses, Halls of Residence and StudyLink.



It is recommended that you have applications into StudyLink by early to mid December to give them time to process the application before university starts in February. If your Loan is not approved in time, you may not be able to put your course fees on it for that year.

This document provides a high level overview of the basic concepts. Each Student Loan or Allowance is accessed by StudyLink on a case by case basis, with a new assessment/application required each year of study. It is the Loan or Allowance holders responsibility to keep StudyLink updated if circumstances change during the year.

Source: StudyLink.govt.nz, Otago.ac.nz + KPMG Analysis



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