



## Easyread Bulletin – Tertiary Students (Domestic)

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

### **Ensuring continuity and adequacy of student support**

This government is absolutely committed to the place and role of education in supporting our recovery and rebuild.

We understand that the COVID 19 crisis has put pressure on students.

We have already put in place [a number of measures](#) to provide immediate support to learners.



This also includes a [Technology Access Fund](#) so that learners can have the digital devices and internet connections they need to continue with their studies. (Talk to your education provider if you need help staying connected.)

In Budget 2020, a \$20 million *Hardship Fund for Learners* is being set up for tertiary students.

The *Hardship Fund for Learners* provides a safety net for learners as there is not a one-size fits all approach to meeting the financial needs of students.

Students who are facing hardship can access this fund from their providers from the end of May.

For students facing particular or unique costs to engage in study or meet their living expenses 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.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

**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 but support for industry training has been announced through the *Trades and Apprenticeships Training Package*. Students in Employer-led Workplace Literacy and Numeracy are 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?**

Education providers should be able to start getting this fund to learners by the end of May.

It may take a little longer for some providers to distribute the funding.

If you need to access this fund, talk to your education provider.

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

This money can be used to cover basic living costs such as food, utilities, rent or other unexpected expenses.

For costs related to transitioning to online learning, talk to your provider about how you can access the *Technology Access Fund for Learners*.

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

The money will be distributed between providers based on a formula that sets the funding provider already receive from government.

This takes in to account the socio-economic background of learners that each provider has, as different learner groups have different experiences and needs.



## **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 in the best position to understand the hardship needs within their student populations, and 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 (TEC) 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

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