



Briefing Note: Students working while studying

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	21 September 2021	Priority:	Medium
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Messaging seen by Communications team:	Yes	Round Robin:	No

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this paper is for you to:

Note the analysis of work intensity for young New Zealand domestic tertiary students who were working while studying and the association between their work intensity and course completion rates in 2019.

Agree that this Briefing will be proactively released.

Agree

Disagree

Summary

- We have analysed the work intensity of 157,149 young New Zealand domestic students (under 25 years of age) while studying in 2019 and the association between their work intensity and their course completion rates.
- For full-time young domestic students, there might be a trade-off between work intensity and academic success at high levels of intensity (approximately just over 20 hours per week on the minimum wage in 2019).
- However, for part-time young domestic students, higher work intensity was generally associated with higher course completion rates.
- These findings will help to inform ongoing work on the affordability of tertiary education, which focuses on students' living costs and their access to employment and/or government financial support while studying.

- The Ministry will publish the report on the Education Counts website on 7 October 2021



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Te Ara Kaimanawa
21/09/2021



Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

14 /10/ 2021

Proactively Released

Background

1. Tertiary students at all stages and levels of study commonly undertake paid employment during the academic year.
2. Paid employment helps students to cover their living expenses and reduce student loan debt by borrowing less. It also gives young students real-life work experience which enables them to gain additional skills and knowledge.
3. Concerns remain, though, whether work time may displace study time which in turn may negatively impact on students' academic achievement.
4. The purpose of the report is to examine (1) work intensity while studying among young New Zealand domestic tertiary students and (2) the association between work intensity and students' course completion rates.
5. We utilised students' employment monthly income (wage/salary and self-employed) as a proxy for work intensity as there is no data on the number of hours that an individual student worked.

High level findings

6. In 2019, there were 157,149 young New Zealand domestic students (under 25 years of age) enrolled in a formal qualification at a tertiary provider.
7. For every month during the typical study periods (March–June and August–October), around 50% of all students, 48% of full-time students, and 57% of part-time students worked in paid employment.
8. Part-time students were more likely to work and were more likely to work at higher intensity than full-time students.
9. Students who studied at degree and postgraduate levels were more likely to work, but more likely to work at lower intensity than those who studied at levels below degree level.
10. Female students at degree and post graduate levels were more likely to work than male students.
11. European students were the most likely to combine work with their studies, particularly at levels below degree level.
12. At degree and postgraduate levels, Asian students were the least likely to combine work with their studies.
13. At levels below degree level, Māori and Pacific Peoples students were the least likely to combine work with their studies.
14. For full-time students, higher work intensity was initially associated with higher course completion rates, but when the work intensity reached the high level (approximately just over 20 hours per week on minimum wage in 2019), the course completion rate declined slightly. This association seems similar for different levels of study, gender, and ethnic group.

15. For part-time students, higher work intensity was generally associated with higher course completion rates.

Next Steps

16. Data from 2019 was used in this analysis as 2019 was before the impacts of COVID-19. It gives a baseline year that can be compared in the future to determine if working while studying patterns have returned to pre-COVID levels.
17. Findings from the study will be used to inform policy work on the affordability of tertiary education. The study tells us that before COVID-19 almost half of young domestic students (under 25 years of age) work while they study. A previous study undertaken by Universities New Zealand tells us that almost one-third of all domestic university students work in hospitality or retail – two of the most affected industries impacted by COVID-related job losses.

Proactive Release

18. We recommend that this Briefing is proactively released as per your expectation that information be released as soon as possible. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

Annex 1. Students Working While Studying

The full report is attached with this Briefing for your reference.