




14 April 2021



Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your email of 11 March 2021 to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority that was subsequently transferred to the Ministry of Education requesting the following information:

- 1. The total fee amount collected by NZQA from the students stranded overseas who have not been allowed to return after 1 year.*
- 2. How is the money being used while the students are not attending the colleges?*
- 3. What are the plans by NZQA, to allow the return of these students, if any*
- 4. The students are forced to pay the cost of living expenses while stranded overseas to support their belongings in New Zealand including vehicles, insurances, and visa fees. Has NZQA made any efforts to help such students?*

Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

For your response, I have assumed you are asking for information relating to tertiary students. I have answered each of your questions in turn below.

Question 1

The Ministry does not collect or hold information relating to fee amounts collected by NZQA from overseas students. As such, I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(g) of the Act, as the information requested is not held within the Ministry.

However, the Ministry of Education does collect information about tertiary students' enrolments and fees collected by tertiary providers and whether the students are studying in New Zealand or at a New Zealand provider while staying overseas. Enrolment data for 2020 enrolments are currently being processed and will be published on the Education Counts website before June 2021 at [Statistics | Education Counts](#). Data for 2021 enrolments will be collected over the 2021 year and made available around the same time (before June) in 2022.

Question 2

The Ministry has no information about how the tertiary education organisations use the fees paid by students. If a student has refunds owed to them by their tertiary providers, they should approach the provider directly. Students are also able to approach NZQA for assistance to recover these fees. More information about making a complaint against an education provider can be found at NZQA's website [Student complaints about an education organisation » NZQA](#).

I am therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(g) of the Act, as the information requested is not held within the Ministry.

Question 3

The New Zealand borders are currently closed to almost all travellers to help stop Covid-19 from spreading into our communities. The borders remain open to New Zealand citizens and residents. More information about New Zealand's border restrictions can be found at the [Unite Against Covid-19 Website](#).

The Government has made specific exemptions to allow some eligible international students to return to New Zealand. Full details of the Government's border exception announcements can be found at education.govt.nz/covid-19.

On 12 October 2020, the Government announced a border exception class that allows 250 international PhD and postgraduate students to enter New Zealand. To be eligible students needed to hold or have held a valid visa to study in New Zealand in 2020, be enrolled in a PhD or Masters' qualification prior to border closure (19 March 2020), and studying towards a qualification that involves practical components that cannot be progressed or completed offshore. Tertiary providers are responsible for identifying and nominating students under this exception class

On 14 January 2021, the Minister of Education announced another exception class that allows 1,000 students undertaking degree or post-graduate study to return to New Zealand to continue their courses. Tertiary providers are currently in the process of identifying and nominating the students able to return to New Zealand within this exception class.

While it is not possible at this time to advise when the current border restrictions for international students might be eased more broadly, allowing these students to travel to New Zealand is a positive step for the international education, and underscores the Government's commitment to the sector. We remain committed to reviewing other possible exceptions when it is safe and there is capacity to do so.

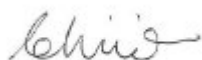
Question 4

Individual tertiary institutions are responsible to provide help and support to their overseas students and should be approached directly for this type of information.

Please note, the Ministry now proactively publishes OIA responses on our website. As such, we may publish this response on our website after five working days. Your name and contact details will be removed.

Thank you again for your email. You have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review this decision. You can do this by writing to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Nāku noa, nā



Belinda Himiona
Group Manager International Education
Te Ara Kaimanawa