

**Media
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Attention: Education and
Political reporters
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Graduates will continue to leave if loan scheme doesn't change

The New Zealand University Students' Association (NZUSA) is calling on the government to overhaul the student loan scheme in light of increasing evidence that it is forcing many graduates to leave the country.

Research released yesterday by the New Zealand Medical Students' Association shows that 80% of medical students are likely to take their training overseas within two years of graduating. This corresponds with research conducted by NZUSA earlier this year that showed 66% of teaching graduates had considered going overseas because of their student loan debt.

"We agree with Steve Maharey's comments on Breakfast TV this morning that the whole system needs to be changed. The immediate introduction of a universal living allowance would be a good start, given that 66% of students are currently ineligible for allowances," said NZUSA Co-President Andrew Campbell.

"Student loan debt will reach five billion dollars next year. Professional graduates are looking to leave the country in droves and the government is not doing anything about it. There is a student debt crisis and only a major revamp of the current system will fix it," said Campbell.

"Next year is an election year and all political parties should be thinking about how they are going to deal with the student debt crisis," said Campbell. "It is clear that another three years of tinkering at the edge of the loan scheme will not be enough to keep graduates here or to convince voters."

ENDS

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