



**TE MANA ĀKONGA**  
National Māori Tertiary Students' Association



# **National Student Action Plan on COVID-19**

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# Overview

The students' associations and councils party to this plan are supportive of the Government's approach to reducing the spread and transmission of COVID-19 in New Zealand. However, we do not believe that the needs of tertiary students, across universities polytechnics and wānanga, have been adequately met by the Government or their respective tertiary institutions.

This does not just relate to uphold the health of students and their communities, but the health and safety of wider New Zealand public as well.

There are currently over 400,000 students in New Zealand. Their study is fundamental to the future of New Zealand's economy, research and design, health care and environment. This document does not contain radical requests. It contains simple requests of the Government and our tertiary institutions to ensure that students can continue studying during a time of great uncertainty.

The urgency of this request arises from the inconsistency across tertiary institutions, which has created confusion among students. It also arises from the failure of the Government to support students during this time, given that there was no direct financial support for students in the Government's \$12.1 billion COVID-19 economic package.

The National Student Action Plan on COVID-19 has been designed by students for students. It is supported by 42 students' associations, councils, and groups across Aotearoa.

## **The purpose of this National Student Action Plan on COVID-19 is to:**

- Outline the key issues that tertiary students face in light of COVID-19, and
- Identify the assistance that tertiary students need from the Government and individual tertiary institutions during this public health crisis.

## **The Action Plan is divided into four areas:**

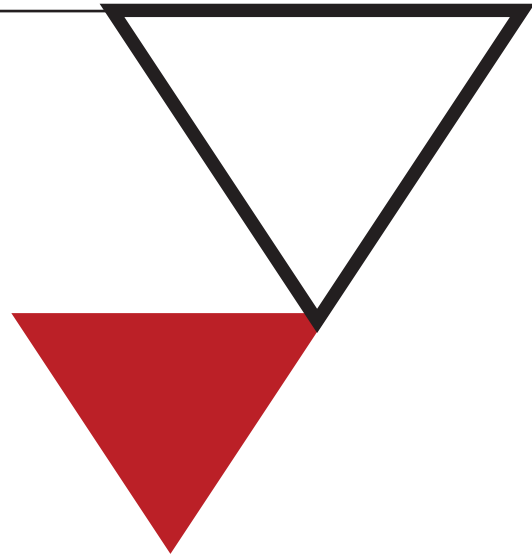
- Financial support (provided by Government)
- Non-financial support (provided by Government)
- Financial support (provided by tertiary institutions)
- Non-financial support (provided by tertiary institutions)





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# General Principles:



## **Consistent and clear communication**

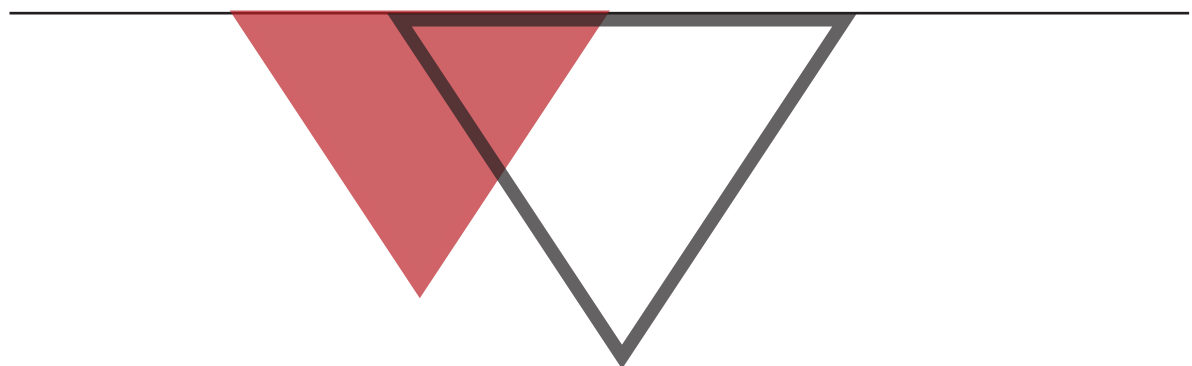
- We support a consistent and united approach being taken by tertiary institutions across New Zealand to avoid confusion among students.
- We support the Government and tertiary institutes ensuring there are clear communication channels to students.

## **Collaboration and partnership**

- We support the Government supporting tertiary institutions to deliver tertiary institution specific requests.
- We support tertiary institutes and the Government working with local and national student representatives. This ensures the needs and experiences of students.

## **Equity**

- We acknowledge that there are students, especially tairā Māori, who will be disproportionately affected by COVID-19. We support models of response and delivery that are equitable.



### **Financial Support (provided by the Government)**

All financial support provided by Government should be available to these domestic tertiary students:

- Full time and part time students
- Undergraduate and postgraduate students
- Students who currently receive StudyLink payments, and should include a grace period for students, not currently receiving StudyLink payments, to register for StudyLink.

### **Temporary Universal Student Allowance**

- The Government should implement a Temporary Universal Student Allowance available to:


#### **COVID-19 Hardship Fund**

- The Government should implement a temporary COVID-19 Hardship Fund.
- This should provide relief for tertiary students seeking cover for emergency COVID-19-related costs, including but not limited to:
  - Emergency transport costs;
  - Bereavement costs;
  - Emergency technology costs, including the cost of device and internet packages (if tertiary students do not currently have access to a device or internet at home), and;
  - Rental relief for private rental accommodation and tertiary provider accommodation (e.g. halls of residences).

#### **Winter Energy Payment**

- The doubling of the Winter Energy Payment, included in the COVID-19 Economic Package, should extend to tertiary students.
- Tertiary students will be spending far more time at home, in their flats, and require financial assistance in order to keep their flats warm and dry.

#### **Mental Health**

- The Government should increase the mental health support for tertiary students and young people, in a period where poor mental health is exacerbated by social isolation and uncertainty. This includes the period after the heightened COVID-19 response subsides.
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## **Non-Financial Support (provided by the Government)**

### **Employment information**

- The Government should create targeted employment rights information for tertiary students and disseminate this information through Employment NZ channels, including social media, websites and phone lines.

### **StudyLink Eligibility**

- Given that COVID-19 is undoubtedly going to have negative impacts on the academic performance of students, the Government should relax the eligibility for StudyLink payments for semester two 2020 and 2021. This would allow tertiary students to continue studying if they face an unexpected drop in academic performance as a result of COVID-19.



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### **Financial Support (provided by tertiary institutions)**

#### **Employment**

- Tertiary institutions should keep paying all students employed as staff, including lab assistants, tutors, research assistants, and residential assistants, even if they are unable to continue working during this period.
- The remuneration of Residential Assistants (employed by a tertiary institution) should reflect the extra hours that they work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Flu Vaccinations**

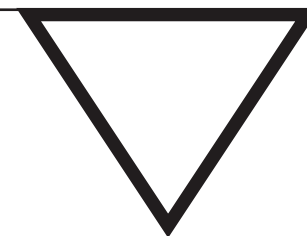
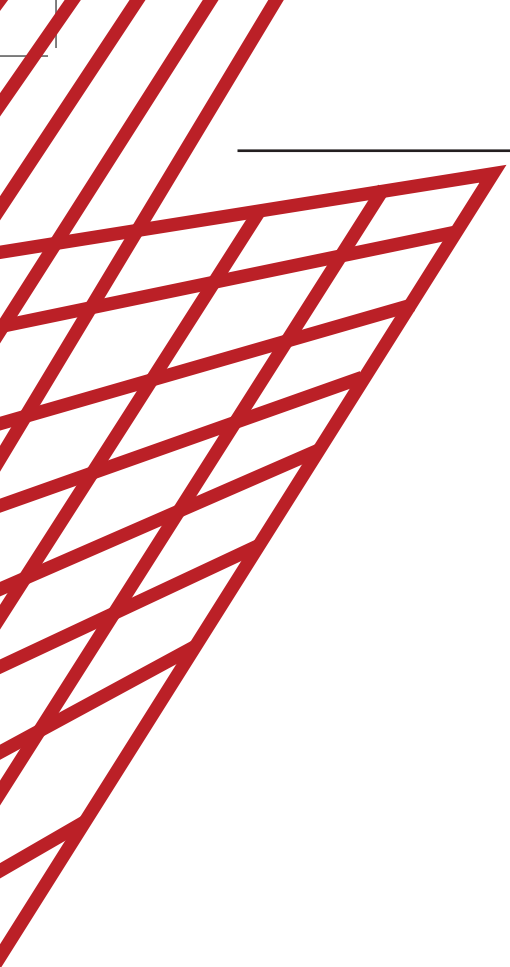
- Tertiary institutions should work with the Government, to ensure that all immunocompromised tertiary students receive free flu vaccinations.

#### **Scholarships**

- Tertiary institutions should allow flexible extensions to research time for postgraduate students and for scholarships.
- This includes reinstatement of university scholarships to those whose scholarships have recently lapsed.

#### **Hardship Funds**

- Tertiary institutions should increase the availability of hardship funding for their students. Increased information about the Hardship Funds should be made available. Applications and inquiries to the Hardship Fund should be moved online.



**Non-Financial Support (provided by tertiary institutions)**

**Online and recoded courses**

- As an urgent and temporary measure, all tertiary courses (lectures, classes, tutorials, workshops, seminars) should be recorded and made available online. Where this is not possible, tertiary institutions should make urgent alternative arrangements.

**Assessments**

- As a temporary measure, tertiary institutions should implement alternative assessment arrangements (for example, take home tests as an alternative to examinations).
- Tertiary institutions should view aegrotats and pass/fail grades should only be used as a last resort.

**Student support facilities**

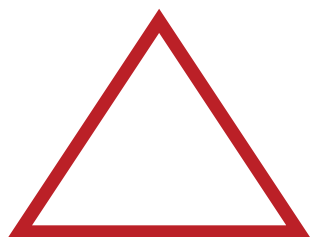
- Student support facilities, including health services and student advocacy services should remain available to students online.

**Accommodation:**

- Tertiary institutions should ensure that all institution-owned or institution-managed accommodation remains open, with current services (including catering) continuing.

**Health**

- Tertiary institutes should provide up to date information to students of where they can go to get medical attention if they are experiencing flu like symptoms.
- They should also provide information to students of where they can access health services for existing and new health conditions, outside of COVID-19.



## Signed by

New Zealand Union of Students' Associations  
Taura Pasifika  
University of Otago Pacific Island Students Association  
Lincoln University Students Association  
Massey University Students' Association  
Albany Students' Association  
Students Association of Wintec  
Student Association of Nelson-Marlborough Institute  
Younited (Eastern Institute of Technology)  
Massey Albany Pasifika Students' Association  
Unitec Student Council  
Massey University Pasifika Students' Association  
Victoria University of Wellington Pasifika Students' Council  
Waikato Student Union  
New Zealand Tongan Tertiary Students Association  
Post-graduate group at CoCA (Massey Wellington)  
Te Tira Akonga  
Te Roopū Māori  
Manawatahi  
Kokiri Ngatahi  
Te Akatoki  
University of Canterbury Students' Association

Te Mana Ākonga  
Auckland University Students' Association  
Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association  
Otago University Students' Association  
Massey Wellington Students' Association  
Otago Polytechnic Students' Association  
New Zealand Chinese Students' Association  
Auckland University Pacific Islands Students' Association  
Manukau Institute of Technology Student Council  
Fale Niu AUT Pacific Island Student Association  
Eastern Institute of Technology Pasifika Students  
Pacific Island Students of Ara  
Lincoln University Pacific Island Students' Association  
Niuean Tertiary Students' Association New Zealand  
Tuluma Tokelauan Students' Association  
Titahi ki Tua  
Ngā Taura Māori  
Te Waiora  
Ngāi Taura  
Te Roopū Tautoko  
Te Awhioraki