



3 June 2022

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request, transferred from the Ministry of Social Development on 6 May 2022. You requested the following information:

How many students have applied for a break in student loan repayments since 2019, inclusive.

I'd like this information package quarterly, if possible, per the initial request date.

I'd also like to see a split between students living in, and outside of, New Zealand.

Inland Revenue has a number of relief options for student loan customers (customers) who are having difficulty meeting their student loan repayment obligations. A list of the relief options can be found at <https://www.ird.govt.nz/student-loans/managing-my-student-loan/hardship-and-defaulting-on-my-student-loan>. Customers can apply for a repayment deduction exemption, a temporary repayment suspension or a special deduction rate. Customers can also apply for financial relief from their loan and tax obligations if they have non salary and wage income or are based overseas.

Appendices A to C provide an explanation of each relief option and a table showing the number of customers who have been granted this form of relief, as at 19 May 2022. These are listed by financial years (1 July to 30 June) and into quarters.

Due to the upgrade to our software systems, I am only able to easily gather special deduction rate data from 1 April 2020 (for quarter 4, of the 2019/20 financial year).

Data on repayment deduction exemptions for periods prior to 1 April 2019 is not available at an aggregate level and would require manual collation from individual customer's account.

As such, the above data is refused under section 18(f) of the OIA, as the data cannot be made without substantial collation.

We have considered whether charging or extending the timeframe for responding to your request would help, as required by section 18A of the OIA. However, due to the volume of customer's accounts to search through this would be a big impact to the department's other operations.

Right of review

If you disagree with my decision on your OIA request, you can ask an Inland Revenue review officer to review my decision. To ask for an internal review, please email the Commissioner of Inland Revenue at: CommissionersCorrespondence@ird.govt.nz.

Alternatively, under section 28(3) of the OIA, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision. You can contact the office of the Ombudsman by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Publishing of OIA response

Please note that Inland Revenue regularly publishes, on its website, responses to requests that may be of interest to the wider public. Your personal details or any information that would identify you will be removed prior to it being published.

I trust that this information satisfies your request.

Yours sincerely



Rebecca McStay
Segment Management Lead
Customer and Compliance Services, Individuals

Appendix A: Repayment Deduction Exemption

The repayment deduction exemption (RDE) provides customers with an exemption from student loan repayment deductions from their salary and wages if they are studying full time in New Zealand and earning under the annual repayment threshold. The RDE is an option for New Zealand-based customers.

Customers can apply for an RDE when their income varies over the year. More information on RDE can be found here: <https://www.ird.govt.nz/student-loans/managing-my-student-loan/hardship-and-defaulting-on-my-student-loan>.

The volumes below are based on the start date of the RDE for the customer. This information is only available, in an aggregate level, from 1 April 2019.

Year / Quarter	Customers
2019	1,428
Quarter 4	1,428
2020	3,557
Quarter 1	586
Quarter 2	1,186
Quarter 3	433
Quarter 4	1,352
2021	6,151
Quarter 1	700
Quarter 2	2,555
Quarter 3	1,140
Quarter 4	1,756
2022	4,525
Quarter 1	836
Quarter 2	1,630
Quarter 3	1,130
Quarter 4	929
Total	15,661

Appendix B: Temporary Repayment Suspension

The temporary repayment suspension (TRS) is a one-off suspension (up to 12 months) giving overseas-based customers a break from making repayments towards their loan. This was formerly known as a repayment holiday. The TRS is not an interest suspension and interest will still be charged for the duration of the suspension.

Volumes below are based on the start date of the TRS. Customers may have multiple start dates for this suspension so could be included more than once.

Year / Quarter	Customers
2019	2,871
Quarter 1	676
Quarter 2	522
Quarter 3	765
Quarter 4	908
2020	1,530
Quarter 1	647
Quarter 2	390
Quarter 3	463
Quarter 4	30
2021	653
Quarter 1	98
Quarter 2	175
Quarter 3	195
Quarter 4	185
2022	200
Quarter 1	132
Quarter 2	68
Quarter 3	<i>Not available*</i>
Quarter 4	<i>Not available*</i>
Total	5,254

**Data for quarters 3 and 4 is not available due to the amount of time (180 days) a customer is required to be away from New Zealand before they're listed as an overseas-based customer.*

Appendix C: Special deduction rates

There are two types of special deduction rates (SDR):

1. Customers who have multiple sources of income may qualify for an Unused Repayment Threshold Special Deduction Rate (URT SDR). The URT SDR allows the unused repayment threshold from a customer's main source of income to be applied to their secondary sources of income.
2. When a customer is in hardship, and requests to reduce the student loan repayments that are deducted from their salary or wages, they may be granted a special deduction rate. The hardship special deduction rate (HRD SDR) reduces the amount deducted from the customer's salary or wages by their employer(s) or, if a 0% special deduction rate is granted, repayment deductions are stopped.

Customer volumes in this list are limited to one item per customer, as some people have multiple employers and therefore, multiple applications. This table has also been filtered to show only those customers who have been granted SDR's at 0% as anything else would result in payment being made.

Due to the upgrade to our software systems, this information is only available from 1 April 2020.

Year / Quarter	Customers
2020	1,125
Quarter 4	1,125
2021	8,015
Quarter 1	1,620
Quarter 2	3,207
Quarter 3	1,781
Quarter 4	1,407
2022	5,798
Quarter 1	1,360
Quarter 2	1,808
Quarter 3	1,668
Quarter 4	962
Total	14,938

In addition to the above, there will be customers who are self-employed or have other non-salary and wage taxable income who have requested hardship relief.