



Ref: OI/19/00697

25 June 2019

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9(2)(a)

Dear 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your request, received on 16 May 2019, for the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

Recently Minister of Finance, Grant Robertson claimed that the Fee Free policy “stopped the decline in student numbers”.

Do you have a way of measuring whether that is true or not, how many students were “stopped”?

IDI does not have 2018 enrolment, so we can't provide any analysis on this. MOE has not published anything on 2018 enrolments. So the only option I can see is to approach you.

The way I would approach is to follow cohort of school leavers who have UE qualification and see whether there was an increasing trend in the proportion of school leavers with UE enrolling into formal tertiary programmes. It is possible that Fee Free policy discouraged longer break between high school and tertiary.

On 27 May 2019 following your conversation with Fraser Sloane, Team Leader Innovation, you agreed to refine your request accordingly:.

We are looking at possible impact of Fee Free policy on enrolment and continuation of university studies for young New Zealanders.

I know that it is earlier days to measure the impacts and it is possible that we will not be able to see the impact of policy easily.

However, we would like to see whether on aggregate level, there the pattern of enrolments changed.

I have mocked up the table (attached) as a guide for your data analysts; I hope it will help them to answer this request.

I am providing you with the information requested in the attached tables in Appendix A.

The data provided is based on the Student Achievement Component fund (SAC) enrolments in the first or second year after leaving school as at 5 June 2019. Retention data for 2018 enrolments is not available until 2020. Please note that if a student enrolls in one year at one university and the next year at another university they will be reported for each enrolment year.



In order to protect the privacy of individuals I am withholding enrolment information where there were less than five learners. This decision complies with section 9(2)(a) of the Act.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

The TEC intends to publish its response to this request on our website with your personal details removed. Consistent with the Act, we are publishing responses in the interests of transparency and accountability, and to improve access to official information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tim Fowler', with a long, wavy flourish extending to the right.

Tim Fowler
Chief Executive
Tertiary Education Commission

Appendix A: Information released under the Official Information Act (1982)

Table one:

Cohort group		Level 7 degree at Universities		
Enrolment year	Left School		Number of school leavers who are retained in study after one year	Number of school leavers enrolled in a university
2014	2013		12,841	15,433
	2012		1,850	2,349
2015	2014		12,602	14,987
	2013		2,025	2,539
2016	2015		13,101	15,622
	2014		2,100	2,636
2017	2016		12,504	14,948
	2015		2,127	2,640
2018	2017		-	15,307
	2016		-	2,775

Table two:

Cohort group		Level 4 to 7 (non degree) at Universities		
Enrolment year	Left School		Sum of Learners retained in first year	Sum of Learners in first year retention cohort
2014	2012		9	10
	2013		22	24
2015	2013		<5	<5
	2014		19	28
2016	2014		5	7
	2015		14	19
2017	2015		<5	<5
	2016		7	8
2018	2016		0	<5
	2017		0	17