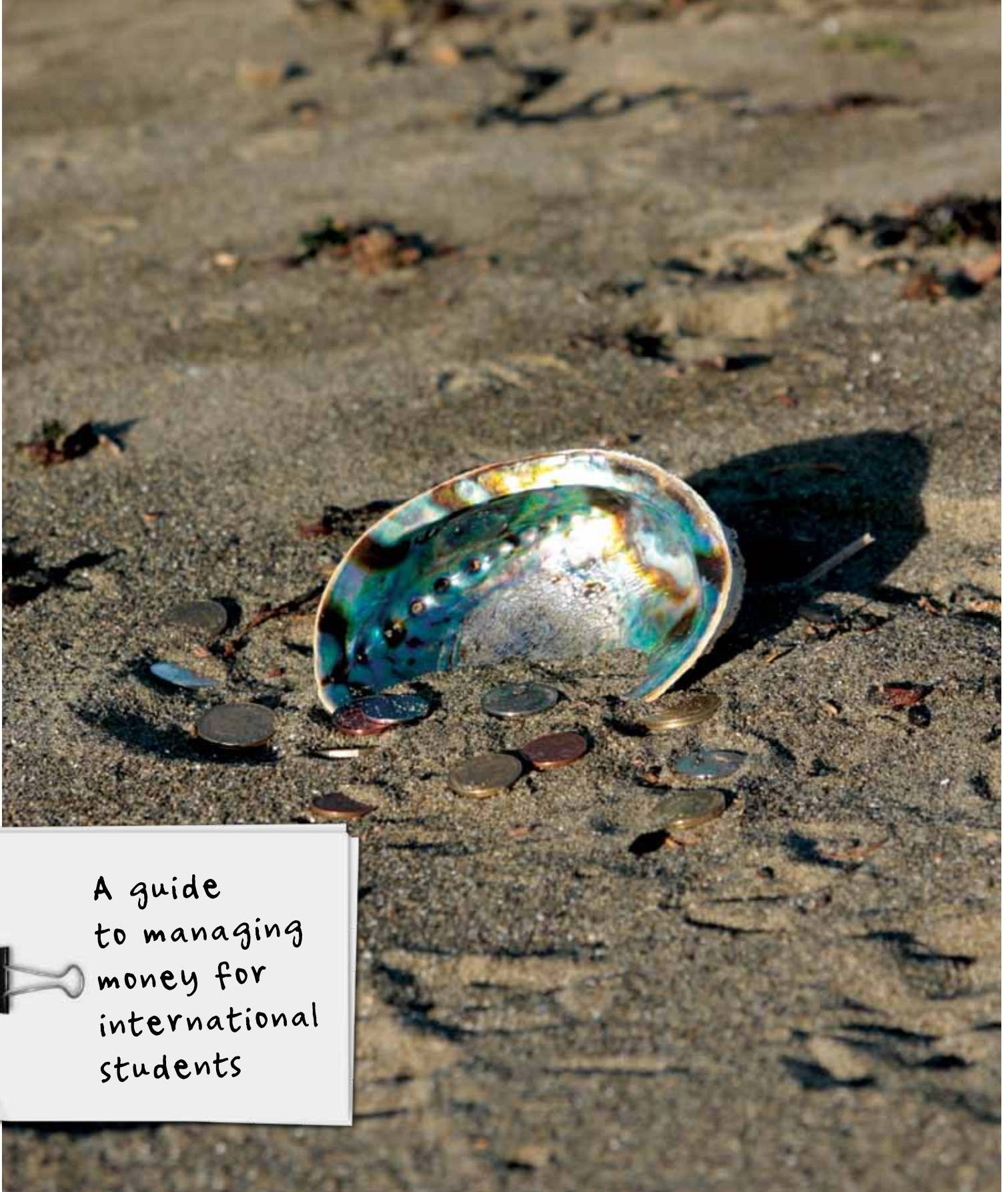


# INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' FINANCIAL SURVIVAL GUIDE



A guide  
to managing  
money for  
international  
students



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# A word from the Financial Support and Advice Team

Managing money is not easy for most people.

It is important to be careful with your course choices, your study time and your money.

The reality for many students is that after paying the bills there is never much money left to have fun. Often there's not even enough to pay the bills! We see students every day who are struggling to cope with this. However, it is possible, with some planning, to pay the bills and have a bit of lifestyle fun - and it's our job to show you how. So don't stress trying to sort it out on your own, come and see us!

Maria, Laura and Nicky

Comments from students who used our financial support and advice service in 2011-2012

Thank you very much for all your help and advice. It helped me so much to talk to someone who knew what to do.

It was interesting and very beneficial to talk to someone who was completely impartial and could provide budget advice in a way I hadn't considered before.

Your advice has been invaluable and has helped to drastically improve my situation.

You have been a great help and you have made a real difference in a student's endeavour to 'survive' in Wellington.

It is probably the best service the university offers for dealing with one of the hardest, yet frequently experienced, aspects of university life: finances.

Professional advisers with empathy for my situation, and friendly and respectful service. Highly recommended!

# What does it cost to live in Wellington?



The amount you will spend on living costs depends a lot on your needs and habits. There is a wide range of lifestyles.

The following amounts are in New Zealand dollars and based on 40 weeks (two trimesters) in Wellington:

Essential living costs (keeping it basic, but comfortable)	\$18,000
Generous living costs (allowing for weekend trips and enjoying the night life)	\$27,000

We estimate that single students spend the following amounts per year:

For 40 weeks	Between \$18,000 and \$22,000
For 52 weeks	Between \$23,000 and \$28,000



# Example Budget

Here is an example budget in New Zealand dollars for a student living in a Hall of Residence for 40 weeks (two trimesters)

WEEKLY COSTS:		TWO TRIMESTERS (40 WEEKS)	
Catered room	\$ 313	Holiday travel (see page 16)	\$ 2,000
Electricity	\$ -	Large items (bicycle, laptop, bed, vehicle)	\$ 1,300
Phone/internet	\$ -	Accommodation deposit	\$ 500
Cellphone	\$ 10	Textbooks, materials, field trips	\$ 1,000
Groceries/toiletries	\$ 7	Haircuts (\$30-\$100 per haircut)	\$ 180
Transport	\$ 10	Clothes/shoes	\$ 700
Sports/gym/clubs	\$ -	Special occasions	\$ 250
Appliance rental	\$ -	Sports/gym/clubs (yearly)	\$ 290
Debts	\$ -	Medical/dental/optical	\$ 250
Personal spending	\$ 60	Bank fees	\$ -
<b>WEEKLY TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$ 400</b>	Emergency (\$1,000-plus recommended)	\$ 1,000
<b>TOTAL FOR 40 WEEKS</b> (\$400 x 40)	<b>\$16,000</b>	<b>→</b>	<b>\$ 16,000</b>
		<b>TOTAL LIVING COSTS</b>	<b>\$ 23,470</b>
		Tuition fees	\$ 21,450
		Non-tuition fees	\$ 674
		Insurance	\$ 560
		Visa application, medical	\$ 550
		Airfare	\$ 2,500
		<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>	<b>\$49,204</b>

There is a worksheet on the inside back cover for you to make a similar budget for your situation



# Cost of living - Hall of Residence

Halls of Residence can be a convenient option because:

- They can be arranged in advance so you have somewhere to stay when you arrive. With sharing a house, people usually want to meet potential flatmates in person before committing.
- You only have to pay for the trimesters that you are studying. With sharing a house, people are often committed to a 12-month lease—even if you plan to go home over summer, you are responsible for paying rent during that time.

Halls of Residence vary as to whether they are catered (food is included) or self-catered (provide your own food). Some rates include electricity, internet, local phone calls, bedding, and laundry, and for others, these are additional costs. Here are a couple examples from 2012:

---

<b>Te Puni</b>	\$313 per week	→ Includes three meals, power, local phone calls, internet, laundry.
<b>Education House</b>	\$240 per week	→ Includes power, local phone calls
		→ You have to pay for internet and laundry facilities provided
		→ Residents provide their own food.

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For further information on Halls, see: [www.victoria.ac.nz/accommodation/halls](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/accommodation/halls)

NOTE: International students are required to pay the full Hall fees for each trimester in advance.



# Cost of living - in a flat

“Flatting” means living in a house or apartment (“flat”) shared with other people (“flatmates”).

The cost of living in a flat can vary depending on the distance from the city centre, the number of people sharing, and the size and quality of the rooms. Cheap flats are often very cold over winter!

Some useful resources about flatting:

- Useful flatting guide: Flatting 101, on [www.dbh.govt.nz/flatting-101](http://www.dbh.govt.nz/flatting-101)
- Victoria University Accommodation Service: [www.victoria.ac.nz/accommodation](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/accommodation)

## Finding a flat

You can find a group of people you would like to live with and then go looking for a house that will suit your group, or you can look for an existing house that has a room available.

Popular ways to find flats:

- The Accommodation Service’s online Accommodation Finder:  
[www.victoria.ac.nz/accommodation/private-housing/finder.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/accommodation/private-housing/finder.aspx)
- TradeMe (online auction site): [www.trademe.co.nz/property](http://www.trademe.co.nz/property)
- Friends and connections

The earlier you look for a new flat, the easier it is to find a reasonably priced one. This may mean paying rent for a few weeks before your course starts.

## Lease agreements

“Fixed term” lease agreement means that both the landlord and tenants have committed to the term of the lease (usually 12 months). With “periodic” leases, anybody can end the contract at any time, but tenants have to give three weeks’ notice (landlords have to give longer notice).

Everyone who signs the lease agreement as a tenant is legally responsible for paying the rent and for ensuring damage does not occur to the property. It is recommended to have all flatmates sign the lease agreement. If one person moves out and another person moves in, you can get the lease agreement changed to remove the old flatmate and add the new one.

*Tip: If you are the head tenant, and your flatmate(s) have not signed the Lease, protect yourself by getting them to sign a flat sharing agreement. For detailed information on tenancy issues, including all the relevant forms to download, go to [www.dbh.govt.nz](http://www.dbh.govt.nz)*

## Letting fee

If you find a flat through an agency, there is often a one-off letting fee equivalent to one week’s rent (though it could be more or less).



## Bond

The landlord can ask for up to four weeks' rent as bond, but two weeks is the average. The law requires that the bond is lodged with the Tenancy Services Centre. You must complete a bond lodgement form. This is signed by you and the landlord or property management company.

Ideally everyone in the flat signs the lease agreement and everyone lodges their own share of the bond directly with Tenancy Services. This makes it easier when one person moves out. That person's name comes off the lease and the new person is added. The person leaving completes the Bond Refund or Bond Transfer form and Change of Tenant form.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Students often move into an existing flat and pay the bond to the person moving out, which means you have no guarantee of getting your bond back. In these cases we strongly recommend that you get a written receipt for the payment. If you pay it by direct bank transfer, identify it as bond on the payment details. It's also a good idea to sign a flat sharing agreement. Your name should not be added to the lease if you are not paying the bond to the landlord or Tenancy Services Centre directly.

## Advance rent

Landlords are not permitted to ask for more than two weeks' rent in advance. Once the advance rent runs out, more rent is due.

**TOTAL COST OF MOVING IN** Based on a weekly rent of \$160:

Conservative	Mid-range	High
\$640 - Two weeks' bond and two weeks' rent.	\$960 - Three weeks' bond, two weeks' advance rent and letting fee (one week's rent).	\$1,120 - Four weeks' bond, two weeks' advance rent and letting fee (one week's rent).

- TIP: Saving your bond money from one flat to pay for the next flat is a good idea.*
- > Tenancy Services will hold on to your bond for as long as needed.
  - > You give the Bond Transfer form to the new Landlord.
  - > If the new bond is less, you get a refund; if it's more, you pay the extra amount owing.

## Insurance

International students on the Student Safe policy are covered for flat liability.

## Furnishing a flat

Some flats are advertised as "unfurnished": oven is provided, but no fridge, no washing machine, no dishes, no beds, no furniture. "Furnished" flats are usually more expensive but would provide these appliances/furnishings. There are also "partially furnished" flats which provide some of these.

Some flats rent appliances and/or furniture, but it is often cheaper to buy second-hand. The Salvation Army stores and TradeMe (online auctions) are good sources of second-hand goods. But you will also need to think about transporting the goods to your flat!

# Bills

## EXAMPLE BILLS FOR A FLAT OF FOUR PEOPLE

Product	Usage	Average per month	Per person, per week
Electricity/ Gas		\$350	\$21.88
Phone	Simple monthly plan (free local calls)	\$40	\$2.50
Internet	30 GB per month broadband (with phone)	\$44	\$2.75
Appliances	Hiring fridge, washing machine, microwave	\$80	\$5.00
Pay TV	50 channels	\$46	\$2.88
<b>Total:</b>		<b>\$560</b>	<b>\$35</b>

### TIPS:

- You don't have to pay for water or local property taxes – the landlord pays that from the rent.
- Most bills are charged at the end of a month's usage. Some (especially appliance rental) are charged weekly or fortnightly.
- Power companies often allow weekly or fortnightly set payments (average over the year, rather than paying more in winter and less in summer).
- Some flats put one person in charge of each bill, who collects the money from other flatmates at the end of the month.
- Many flats have a flat bank account where each flatmate deposits their weekly amount for rent and bills. At the end of the month, bills are paid from that bank account.
- Some utilities may require a deposit (especially for electricity). Often it can be waived if you arrange to have the payment direct-debited from your bank account.
- Some broadband services require you to have a landline (telephone) connection as well.
- Make sure that the power meter is read on a regular basis. Every second month is normal. If the meter reader hasn't been to the flat, you can usually call the power company and provide them with the meter reading yourself.
- Before choosing a phone/internet company, shop around. You may be able to find a deal that doesn't require a connection/disconnection fee. Sometimes they'll throw in a free modem too!
- Some flats put a bar on toll calls from the telephone. If people want to make toll calls, they can use phone cards or cellphones. This prevents the situation of a very large phone bill and you can't figure out who made all those calls! It can cost money to put a bar on tolls after you already have the phone line, but it may be free if you ask for it from the start.
- If you are going to make international phone calls, compare the rates offered by the telephone company, calling cards, and VOIP services (such as Skype). You might save yourself a lot of money.

Electricity and Gas suppliers in Wellington include:

- Genesis Energy 0800 300 400 [www.genesisenergy.co.nz](http://www.genesisenergy.co.nz)
- Empower 0800 340 000 [www.empower.co.nz](http://www.empower.co.nz)
- Contact Energy 0800 809 000 [www.contactenergy.co.nz](http://www.contactenergy.co.nz)
- Meridian Energy 0800 496 496 [www.meridianenergy.co.nz](http://www.meridianenergy.co.nz)

# Food

Weekly food costs can vary:

\$30 per week	All meals prepared at home, only the cheapest ingredients (little if any meat), cheapest supermarkets, using the Sunday fruit/vege markets
\$80 per week	All meals prepared at home, supermarkets close to town, varied diet.
\$150 per week	Many meals prepared at home. Some shopping from supermarkets, some from local convenience stores, six meals per week from cafés or takeaways.
\$250 per week	No cooking. All meals bought.

We have a detailed shopping list and matching recipes on our website:  
[www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/finadvice/surviving/flataccounts.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/finadvice/surviving/flataccounts.aspx)

## BUYING GROCERIES ONLINE

If you and your flatmates are too busy to go to the supermarket and/or don't have convenient transport, consider ordering your groceries online at [shop.countdown.co.nz](http://shop.countdown.co.nz)

You can choose your delivery day and time, and the cost is \$13.25 for orders from \$100 to \$199.99 (cheaper for larger purchases). It can be a cost-effective way of doing the shopping. The service is available in central Wellington and most suburbs. Payment is by debit/credit card or you can set up a direct debit from the flat account.

Students who have used this service have told us it works really well and saves the flat money.

## Money-saving tips:

- > you can get fruit and vegetables at excellent prices at the Sunday Markets (7am to noon) at the carpark on Willis Street opposite Ustay McKenzies and at Waitangi Park, next to Te Papa. There is also a Saturday market in Newtown.
- > Shop wisely - buy what's on special and stick to the essentials.
- > Buy enough at the supermarket to cover your basic needs - a list is helpful.
- > visits to fish or dairies are expensive.
- > Eating on campus is expensive. You can save money by bringing a lunch from home. - There are microwaves at some places around campus to heat up your food.



Cook! you will save money  
and fuel your brain



# Flat account

If you are flatting, you will have to think about how to set up the flat account so that the rent and bills get paid on time and everyone is paying their share.

## WE RECOMMEND

- On a weekly basis put aside the rent money, as well as money towards the power and phone accounts. If the rent is \$160 per week, put aside at least \$190 per week.
- Think about setting up a separate account that all flatmates pay into on a weekly basis. The rent gets paid to the landlord out of this account by automatic payment and the power and phone bills get paid by internet or phone banking. Any other shared bills such as SKY and internet can be budgeted for and paid the same way.

For example, if you bank with The National Bank you can set up a second current account as a joint account with one or two of your flatmates (it will have no monthly account, transaction or automatic payment fees). A suggestion is to request a new account number to keep your personal and flat account information separate. We recommend you set up the new account so that at least two signatures are required to make any cash withdrawals. This will provide better control over the account and two signatures are a safer option.

- One of the account holders should take responsibility: paying the power and phone bills on time, and checking that everyone is making their weekly payments. Put the flat account bank statement on the fridge.

## WHY THIS SYSTEM WORKS

- With everyone paying the rent into one account, you can check that no one is missing their rent payment. Landlords don't always check their accounts promptly and you can find out six weeks later that someone wasn't paying their share. This can become a problem for the whole flat.
- It can be hard to find \$50 or \$100 from one week's income to put towards bills, and it's no fun chasing up flatmates to do the same.
- With everyone paying their share of power/phone/internet on a weekly basis, it's less of a problem if someone moves out unexpectedly. You won't be left out of pocket.

Many banks offer completely free "online" bank accounts. If your bank doesn't offer an account to suit the needs of your flat, ask around to different banks!



# Cost of living for a family

Students who have a spouse/partner or children often want to bring their family with them when they come to study in New Zealand. Some find it easier to focus on study with the support network that their family provides.

Some students think it will be affordable if sacrifices are made—living further from the city, getting a part-time job, buying the cheapest food—but it tends to be more expensive than people expect.

		Single person	Two adults, one baby, one primary school child
<b>Weekly</b>	Rent	\$160	\$450
	Bills	\$32	\$120
	Cellphone	\$5	\$10
	Transport (bus)	\$32	\$80
	Groceries (including nappies)	\$70	\$240
	Activities, snacks, entertainment	\$50	\$150
	Childcare	-	\$120
	<b>Weekly total:</b>	<b>\$349</b>	<b>\$1,170</b>
	<b>WEEKLY COSTS FOR THE YEAR (Weekly total x 52)</b>	<b>\$18,148</b>	<b>\$60,840</b>
	Accommodation set-up costs	\$750	\$2,880
	Furnishings	\$300	\$1,500
	Clothes	\$300	\$1,500
	Text books, stationery, school fees	\$1,000	\$1,500
	Medical/dental/optical	\$250	\$1,000
	Special occasions	\$200	\$1,000
	<b>TOTAL FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>\$20,948</b>	<b>\$70,220</b>

PLUS... the cost of the visas, medical exams, and flights—and a car? (see page 15).

A student's spouse is often permitted to work in New Zealand, but there is no guarantee of finding work. Sometimes highly skilled people have to get jobs as cleaners on nightshift, for example. Often people try very hard but cannot find any job at all. So unless your spouse has a legitimate job lined up before coming, you need a plan well for how you could survive without any work.

We have seen many cases where the time and effort needed to get the student's family to New Zealand, plus looking after them in a foreign country, and the financial stress, mean that the student does not focus well enough on their study. Sometimes this means it takes longer to complete ... and the scholarship runs out, leading to further financial trouble.

So we encourage students with families to plan carefully and consider the consequences. If you are not absolutely sure that you have enough money to support your family in New Zealand, contact a Finance Adviser to review your situation (contact details page 24).

# The Basics

## GST

GST stands for Goods and Services Tax, which is 15%. Prices are almost always shown inclusive of GST.

## BANKING

Detailed information on personal banking in New Zealand is available at:

[www.victoria.ac.nz/international/current-students/banking.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/international/current-students/banking.aspx)

## EFTPOS (Debit Bank Card)

EFTPOS stands for Electronic Funds Transfer at Point Of Sale. Most New Zealand shops have an EFTPOS machine at the checkout, and it is a very simple and popular way to pay for things directly out of your bank account. In paying for items using this method it is important to keep track of how much you are spending by adding up your daily totals or regularly looking at your bank statements. Decide in advance what you can afford to pay for by EFTPOS, and stick to it.

## CELLPHONES

Pre-paid cellphones are popular in New Zealand.

The three largest providers in New Zealand are:

- 2degrees [www.2degreesmobile.co.nz](http://www.2degreesmobile.co.nz)
- Vodafone [www.vodafone.co.nz/mobile](http://www.vodafone.co.nz/mobile)
- Telecom [www.telecom.co.nz/mobile](http://www.telecom.co.nz/mobile)

In New Zealand, the person making a call or sending a text message pays. It is free to receive a call or text message. Phone calls can be expensive, and many students avoid calls, preferring to text instead. Networks often have special deals for a set number of text messages per month.

Internet access on cellphones is available in New Zealand but can be expensive. Check out the rates with the cellphone provider to ensure the costs fit within your budget before you choose to sign up for this option.

## INTERNET

Most internet service providers (ISPs) for homes have a cap on the number of GBs of traffic per month. Some plans will slow down speed beyond this point but not charge any extra fee. Others will continue to provide the same service but charge for the amount used beyond the cap.

Some of the popular ISPs in Wellington are:

- Telecom [www.telecom.co.nz](http://www.telecom.co.nz)
- Telstra Clear [www.telstraclear.co.nz](http://www.telstraclear.co.nz)
- Slingshot [www.slingshot.co.nz](http://www.slingshot.co.nz)
- Orcon [www.orcon.net.nz](http://www.orcon.net.nz)



# Personal spending

- Prepaid international telephone call cards around \$20 for 5-6 hours to many countries
- Takeaway meal \$7-\$20
- Coffee \$4; soft drink \$2; beer \$7
- DVD hire \$8; cinema \$14
- Backpackers \$30 (dorm bunk) per night
- Theatre performance \$25
- Taxi from airport to city (in Wellington) \$40
- Bus/cable car from the University to city \$2; taxi \$12
- Swimming pool entry \$5.50

## What kind of spender are you?

DAVID	LINH	YUAN	TINA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Fast food every day (Subway, Burger King, kebabs, sushi, fish and chips)</li> <li>→ Energy drinks every day</li> <li>→ Drinks at a bar on Saturdays</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Two coffees a day (Monday-Friday)</li> <li>→ Muffin, snack most days</li> <li>→ Movie on Tuesday</li> <li>→ Drinks on Friday night</li> <li>→ Café lunch on Sunday</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Two coffees a week</li> <li>→ Friday night gig and two drinks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Café snack once a week</li> <li>→ One drink on Saturday night</li> <li>→ Cheap DVD rental</li> </ul>
<b>WEEKLY SPEND:</b>			
<b>\$200</b>	<b>\$120</b>	<b>\$40</b>	<b>\$20</b>
<b>OVER TWO TRIMESTERS:</b>			
<b>\$7,600</b>	<b>\$4,560</b>	<b>\$1,520</b>	<b>\$760</b>

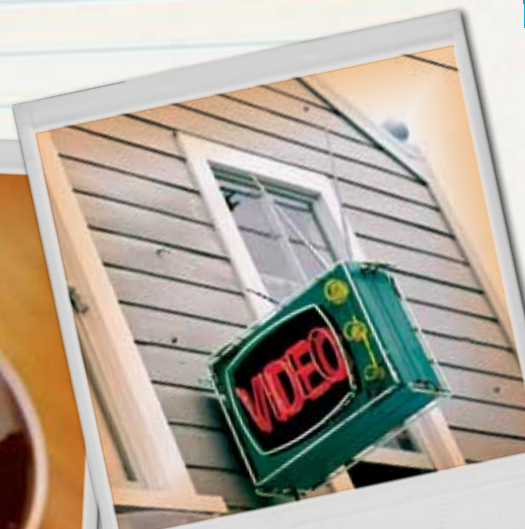
## What's essential for you to enjoy yourself?

### PER WEEK:

Coffee/soft drinks	\$
Takeaways/snacks	\$
Movies/DVDs	\$
Gigs/clubs	\$
Music downloads	\$
Café meals/restaurants	\$
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>

For most of us, taking control of our money means leaving the EFTPOS card behind and putting a small amount of cash, which your budget allows, in your wallet for the week to cover personal spending on snacks, drinks and entertainment.

Decide in advance how much you can afford to spend on extras and which treats to allow yourself!



# Transport in Wellington

Wellington is a compact city, and if you live close to the centre it is easy to get around by walking (but the Kelburn and Karori campuses are uphill!). Wellington also has public transport options:

## Cable Car

Wellington's famous Cable Car runs between Lambton Quay (central city) and Kelburn (where the main campus is located).

They offer discounted student rates:

Single ticket (student fare)	\$1
10 trip ticket	\$9
20 trip ticket	\$17
30 trip ticket	\$24*

\*Best deal—savings of \$6 over single tickets.

Many people choose to ride the cable car up the hill to Kelburn Campus and walk down the hill.

## Buses

Buying a single ticket is always the most expensive option.

For regular users we recommend a monthly pass or the Snapper Card.

Wellington city bus fares

ZONES	SINGLE FARE	SNAPPER CARD
1	\$2.00	\$1.60 (or \$1.50 in "City zone")
2	\$3.50	\$2.58
3	\$4.50	\$3.44

When transferring between buses in Wellington, you must pay for a new fare.

Travel from the Railway Station up to Kelburn Campus is one zone. Travel from the Railway Station through the central city to Courtenay Place is the "City zone". Travel in Wellington city (from Johnsonville south) is never more than three zones. Zones 4–6 apply to travel from Wellington to, for example, the Hutt Valley.

### FREE BUS TICKETS!

If you have classes at two different campuses on the same day, VUWSA (a student association) provides free bus passes to get between classes!

You can find details at [www.vuwsa.org.nz/support-and-advice/free-bus-passes](http://www.vuwsa.org.nz/support-and-advice/free-bus-passes)

### GO WELLINGTON 30-DAY PASS

There is a special fare of \$140 for unlimited travel on GO Wellington buses in the three zones closest to the city. For many students living in suburbs on the fringes of the city, this is the best deal.



A free snapper card is included in your arrival bag from Victoria International!. If you lose it, they cost \$10 to replace. This is worth it if you use the bus as it will save you money in the long run.



## Trains

Tranz Metro train fares

FROM/TO	TEN TRIP	MONTHLY
Petone and Lower Hutt/Wellington	\$36.80	\$115.80
Upper Hutt/Wellington	\$68.00	\$204.00
Porirua/Wellington	\$47.20	\$141.60

Monthly tickets can be ordered online, usually three days prior to month end. Tranz Metro offers a free text message service called Metro Alert to advise of delays of more than 15 minutes.

**For more information, contact Tranz Metro: 0800-801-700, [www.tranzmetro.co.nz](http://www.tranzmetro.co.nz)**

## Cars

There are many expenses associated with owning a car. For most students, using public transport is significantly cheaper than maintaining, running, and parking a car. Here are some example costs for owning a car:

- Initial purchase: \$2,000 for a simple, older second-hand four-seat car. \$10,000 for a reliable newer second-hand car (1998-2008). \$28,000+ for average new car.
- Petrol: \$2.19 per litre (as of 24 April 2012)

### REQUIRED:

- Vehicle Licence (registration): 12 month licence \$287.75
- Warrant of Fitness (WOF) checks (required every six months for most vehicles): \$55
- Routine maintenance (tire replacement, brake pads, etc.): \$250 per year minimum
- Mechanical repairs: These are very variable and can be very expensive. Budget for at least \$1,000 per year for older vehicles, \$400 per year for newer vehicles.

### STRONGLY RECOMMENDED:

- Insurance: third-party (\$190+ per year), first-party (up to \$1,500 per year). If you do not have at least third party insurance and have an accident that causes damage to someone else, it could cost you thousands.

### PARKING COSTS

Parking on most streets close to University campus requires a coupon if you are parking for more than two hours. The coupon parking areas are clearly signposted. Coupons cost \$7.50 per day and can be purchased from most convenience stores and New World Supermarkets.

Most inner city suburbs require a residents parking permit to park on the street which costs \$115 per year. You can get one from the City Council offices in Civic Square.

VUWSA offers a limited number of student carparks. The cost was \$235 per trimester in 2012.

*IMPORTANT NOTE: It is difficult to find parking on campus and the parking wardens police the streets constantly. You will be ticketed for going over the two-hour parking limits without a coupon. If your registration or WOF have expired, you will be fined.*

## Scooters

Scooters and Mopeds with an N-class registration (under 50cc, can be ridden on car licence) can be an economical means of transport. Registration, petrol, and maintenance are cheaper than for a car, and parking is normally free. However, you also need to consider the costs of special clothing, insurance, and safety as well! Learn about scooters at [www.scootersurvival.co.nz](http://www.scootersurvival.co.nz)

# Travelling within NZ

Prices quoted here are based on options currently available in May 2012. They are not guaranteed to be available in the future.

Many students come to study in New Zealand for a unique experience, and like to visit other parts of the country during breaks and holidays. If this is something you plan to do, it is important to budget for it.

## ACCOMMODATION

The cheapest accommodation is staying with people you know! Other cheap options include camping in a tent (approximately \$10 per night) or staying at a backpackers (hostel), where a bunk in a shared dorm room costs \$25-\$35 per night. Backpackers have shared cooking and bathroom facilities and living spaces. Hotels in popular centres start at \$90 per night.

## HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

- |                                      |        |
|--------------------------------------|--------|
| → Bungee jumping in Queenstown       | \$180  |
| → Swim with the dolphins in Kaikoura | \$170  |
| → Museum entry                       | \$0-20 |
| → Hot springs entry                  | \$18   |

## TRANSPORT AROUND THE COUNTRY

- |  |              |
|--|--------------|
| → Passenger ticket on the ferry between the North Island and South Island              | \$55-\$65    |
| → Bus pass around the South Island   | \$269+       |
| → Flight between main centres (Wellington, Christchurch, Auckland)                     | \$50-\$200   |
| → Flight between a main centre and regional centre (Whangarei, Gisborne, Invercargill) | \$100-\$350  |
| → Cheap rental car   | \$50 per day |



# Doctors, dentists, optometrists

## Health services

The University's Student Health Service provides a high standard of quality primary health care with a fully qualified and experienced team of General Practitioners and practice nurses, and specialist clinics such as dermatology, endocrinology, psychiatry, and dieticians.

Detailed information regarding costs and insurance reimbursement is available from [www.victoria.ac.nz/studenthealth/costs/international.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/studenthealth/costs/international.aspx)

### **Will the Studentsafe-University insurance policy cover a pre-existing condition?**

You are not automatically covered for pre-existing medical conditions. These are medical conditions or physical conditions that you have before you enrol in the plan and can extend to conditions you were aware of but did not seek treatment for. This is a general exclusion applying to any party to this insurance and includes family members. For example, if a parent or close relative dies while you are in New Zealand and you are required to travel home, cover will not apply if that person died of a pre-existing medical condition.

However, cover can be arranged in certain circumstances on application to Vero. If you require cover for a pre-existing medical condition you can apply for cover by completing a medical risk assessment form. Please contact the Insurance Advisor at [vi-insurance@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:vi-insurance@vuw.ac.nz) to request the form.

Please note: Costs associated with pre existing conditions can also include medical fees, laboratory and radiology investigations, medication and other treatment.

### **What will be the ongoing cost of my medications while studying here?**

Medication can be expensive, and pharmacists will expect payment before dispensing medication. Generally the costs of any medication related to pre-existing conditions will not be reimbursed through the Student-safe insurance policy. However, the costs associated with treatment of new illness and events will generally be covered.

## Dental services

Discounted dental care is available for Victoria students at Symes de Silva & Associates and Capital Dental. They charge around \$60 for an examination, polish and basic x-ray and offer a 20% discount after the first appointment. You need to show your student ID.

Studentsafe-University insurance only covers injury to teeth, or treatment of sudden, acute pain (consultation, antibiotics, painkillers, and extractions). The maximum is \$500 in a year.

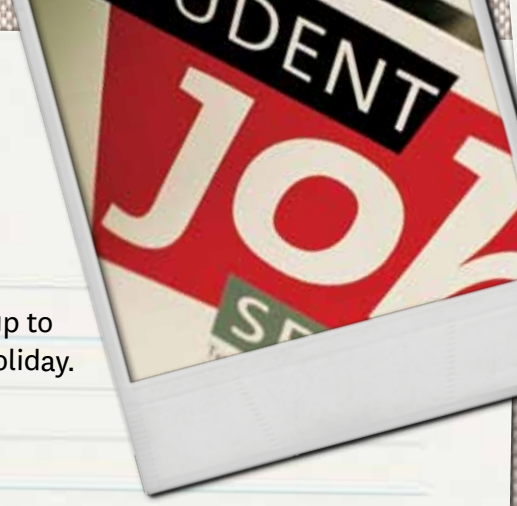
## Optometrist services

Spec Savers offers some of the cheapest glasses around Wellington, and they have a large range of products. See their website for prices and locations: [www.specsavers.co.nz](http://www.specsavers.co.nz)

Studentsafe-University insurance can provide up to a maximum of \$300 per year if your glasses have been lost, stolen, or damaged or you need new glasses due to a change in your vision.



# Part-time Work



New Zealand student visas usually allow full-time degree students to work up to 20 hours per week during the year and up to 40 hours during the summer holiday. The minimum wage in New Zealand is \$13.50 before tax:

- 10 hours at \$13.50 per hour = \$116.25 after tax
- 20 hours at \$13.50 per hour = \$236.25 after tax

Study abroad or exchange students attending Victoria for one trimester only are not eligible to work.

## HELP IN FINDING WORK

**VIC CAREERS** - [www.victoria.ac.nz/careers/students/international\\_students.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/careers/students/international_students.aspx)

Vic Careers is one of Victoria's Student Support Services. Their office can provide advice on how to seek and find part-time work as an international student.

**STUDENT JOB SEARCH** - [www.sjs.co.nz](http://www.sjs.co.nz)

Student Job Search helps students find part-time work during term time and summer vacation. You can sign up online. Job offers come in from employers all the time and your chances of getting a job are better if you visit the site often.

**IMPORTANT:** There is no guarantee of finding part-time work in Wellington. If you plan to cover part of your living costs through wages, you need to have a back-up plan in case you do not find work.

## PAYING TAX

Inland Revenue (IRD) is New Zealand's tax department.

To work in New Zealand, you need an IRD number. We strongly recommend you apply for an IRD number as soon as possible after arrival. You will need to fill out an application form (IR595) at a PostShop or Automobile Association (AA) Driver Licensing Agent.

For most international students, the documents you will need to show are:

- Your passport with student visa (with photocopied pages showing your photo and student visa)
- New Zealand Student ID card OR a letter confirming registration as a student in New Zealand.

If you have a spouse with you on a work permit, he/she will need the following to apply for an IRD number:

- Their passport with work permit (with photocopied pages showing photo and permit)
- A drivers' licence (might need an official English translation) OR an "offer of employment" letter from their employer.

For more information about getting an IRD number and to download a PDF of the form, see [www.ird.govt.nz/how-to/irdnumbers/](http://www.ird.govt.nz/how-to/irdnumbers/)

If you need assistance with determining which tax code to declare or how to claim a tax refund, contact the Financial Support and Advice Service - one of their advisers will be happy to help you.

selected Postshops and AA Agents in central Wellington (for getting your IRD number):  
The Terrace Postshop, 105 The Terrace  
Manners Street Central Post Shop, 2 Manners Street  
Lambton Quay Postshop, 94 Lambton Quay  
AA Centre - Wellington City, 342-352 Lambton Quay

# Cash Flow

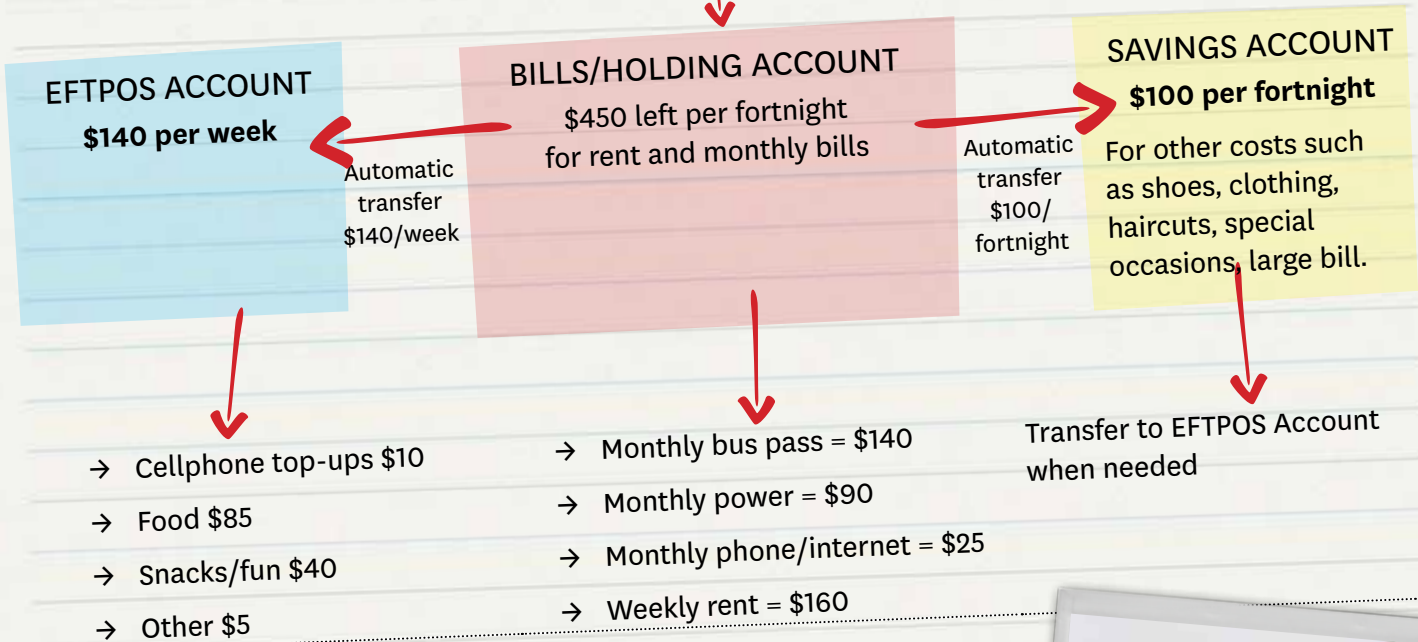
It is important to make a plan for how you will cover all of your costs. And if you set up your bank account to match your plan, you will not have to worry about how you will pay for bills. The money will be waiting when the bill comes in.

## Fortnightly Fred

Fred is studying towards his Master's in Education. He has a scholarship through the New Zealand Aid Programme, which provides \$830 per fortnight (two weeks) for ongoing living expenses.

He has set up his finances on a fortnightly schedule:

\$830 FORTNIGHTLY STIPEND



It can be useful to pay yourself weekly so you don't overspend your budget.



# Lump-sum Lucy

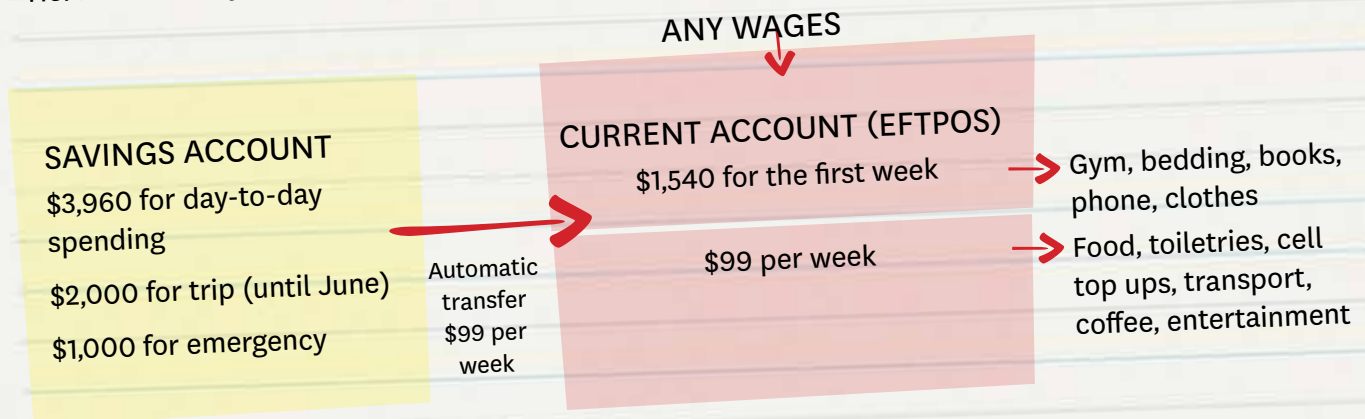
Lucy is coming for her first year of study toward a BCom.  
She will only be in New Zealand for the academic year (February to November).

Money for living costs (40 weeks)	\$17,000
Accommodation (including power, phone, internet)—paid before arrival.	-\$8,500
A few large purchases: bedding (\$250), winter clothes (\$300), books (\$500), a cellphone (\$200), and a one-year membership to the Rec Centre (\$290).	-\$1,540
Goal: South Island bus tour with a friend in the break between trimesters	-\$2,000
Reserves for emergency or laptop replacement if needed	-\$1,000
<b>Remaining</b>	<b>\$3,960</b>
Divided over 40 weeks	\$99 per week

Lucy calculated that to be sure she can afford everything, including her South Island trips, she can't spend more than \$99 per week for day-to-day costs like food, toiletries, cellphone top ups, transport, entertainment, coffees, etc. Things will be tight until she gets part-time work, but at least she can be sure she can pay for the basics until the end of the year AND have her South Island tour.

## BANKING

Here is how Lucy set up her banking:



# Monthly Mark

Mark has a Victoria PhD scholarship, which pays his tuition fees, plus \$23,500 per year toward living costs. But he needs to pay for non-tuition fees and insurance himself. He already paid for the first year, but needs to save up for the second year. Mark receives scholarship payments monthly: \$1958.33 per month.

*TPP: know your scholarship! some scholarships pay your tuition fees but not your non-tuition fees and insurance, which can be around \$1,500 per year.*

Mark lives alone, and his total regular basic costs are **\$229 per month** plus **\$310 per week**, comprising:

Rent	\$200 per week
Power	\$130 per month (average)
Internet	\$70 per month
Cellphone	\$29 per month
Food/toiletries	\$80 per week
Transport	\$10 per week
Ju-jitsu class	\$20 per week

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** one of the dangers of monthly income is that students often plan to pay four weeks of rent per month. But most months are a little longer than four weeks, and you may need to budget for an extra rent payment in some months!

He set up his monthly costs (power, internet, cellphone) to be paid each month just after his scholarship is received. But the weekly costs are difficult because some months will require four rent payments, and some will require five. He fixed the problem by planning for five weeks every month.

\$1,958.33 (monthly scholarship)  
 -\$229.00 (monthly bills)

**\$1,729.33 for weekly costs**

$\$1,729.33 \div 5 \text{ weeks} = \$345.87 \text{ per week}$  (\$310 for basics plus \$35 for other spending).

Over the year, he will have saved up the equivalent of eight extra weeks of \$345 (\$2,760 total). That will cover his non-tuition fees and insurance and leave some extra in case there are any large, unexpected expenses that come up.

\$1958.33  
per month



**HOLDING ACCOUNT**

- \$200 weekly AP for rent
- Monthly direct debit for power
- Monthly direct debit for internet
- Monthly direct debit for cellphone

automatic transfer \$145 per week



**EFTPOS ACCOUNT**

- Food
- Transport
- Ju-jitsu
- Entertainment
- Clothes
- Gifts
- Snacks



# Survival

## True stories we can tell

(names have been changed)

**Minh** signed a term lease for her flat at the beginning of Trimester 1. The lease end date was 20 February of the following year. During the year two flatmates moved out. Their names were not on the lease. It wasn't easy to find replacement flatmates and it took longer than expected. Minh had to work extra hours to pay the extra rent during that time and this affected her studies badly.

**Moral:** Everyone should sign the lease and be clear on their commitment; or the head tenant should make sure the others in the flat sign a flat sharing agreement to reduce his/her risk.

**Emilio** gets money for living costs deposited into his bank account every two weeks. He always manages to pay the rent and bills. But occasionally, he runs into trouble when big costs come up, like the costs for renewing his visa or the costs of materials for his industrial design projects at the end of each trimester. When he doesn't have enough, he has to borrow from friends, and he struggles to pay them back by the time the next big costs hit.

**Moral:** Anticipate the infrequent costs and make a system to ensure that you have money for them when they come up.

**Nadia** came to Wellington with \$20,000 for her living expenses for her first year of study. She paid all her hostel fees (which included meals) up front. She still had almost \$8,000 left over so she bought a second-hand car and a laptop. She thought that the rest of the money would be enough. After four months, she was dangerously low on money due to expensive car repairs and couldn't afford to pay for her car insurance, parking, petrol, books, cellphone use, laundry, etc. She had to sell the car (at a loss).

**Moral:** Make sure you have enough for essential costs and emergencies and do not over-commit your income.

**Ruiheng** was starting his second year of study. His friend Li was also a second-year international student. Li had a job to support him during his study but still needed \$15,000 to show to get his Student Visa renewed. Ruiheng lent him the money temporarily. Li got his visa, but then he lost the money through gambling. Ruiheng was very upset. When it became clear that he wasn't going to get his money back, Ruiheng had to return home because he did not have enough money available and there was no way that he could support himself through his study.

**Moral:** Be very careful with your money! If you lend money to fellow students, be fully aware of the risks you are taking.

**Azreen** was accepted to do a PhD in Psychology, but she didn't get the Victoria PhD Scholarship that she was hoping to get. She was told that it might be possible to get it in her second year, especially once her topic was finalised and her official proposal was accepted. She had enough money to come to Wellington to begin the programme. Unfortunately, she did not get the scholarship for the second year and did not have enough money to continue. She had to stop studying.

**Moral:** Scholarships (and also jobs) are not guaranteed. You need a backup plan, or you may be wasting your time and money.

**Jen** failed a couple of papers in her first trimester of study. But she couldn't tell her parents because they had sacrificed so much so send her to university. To make it up, she enrolled for extra papers in the second trimester. But it was too hard, and she failed all of them. Her parents still didn't know, and she borrowed money from a friend and enrolled for a couple of summer papers as well as working as much as she could to cover the extra cost. Again, it was too much, and she failed. After three years, Jen has only finished 1/3 of her degree, but her parents think she is about to finish. She is ashamed and depressed, and she has borrowed money off a lot of friends that she cannot afford to pay back.

**Moral:** Ask for help! Student Learning Support Service might have been able to help Jen to study better. Counselling Services might have been able to help her see that taking on extra work and study would only make the problem worse.

**Stephen** had a Victoria PhD scholarship. He left his wife and two children behind in his home country. After three months, they used their savings to move the rest of the family over to New Zealand. The children studied at New Zealand schools and his wife looked for work in a biochemistry lab. She didn't find work in her field and only found bits and pieces of cleaning and childcare work. The family struggled to afford even basic expenses and eventually Stephen's wife and kids had to return home. This caused significant stress and financial loss.

**Moral:** Most scholarships with living expenses are intended to support one person. There is no support available for international students' families, and nobody is guaranteed to find work. Therefore, the decision to bring a family must be carefully planned and well financed.

## Got a Financial Problem?

### HARDSHIP FUND

The Hardship Fund is an emergency fund paid for by a levy at enrolment. The Fund aims to help students facing financial difficulties. The Fund helps many students each year. Grants are available for a wide range of problems including: medical/dental/optical costs; high course-related costs; high transport costs; flatting problems; childcare costs.

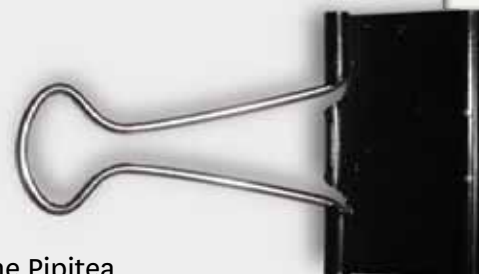
The Advisers at Financial Support and Advice administer the Fund. For an appointment call 04-463 7474. Further details are available on the website [www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/finadvice/fund](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/finadvice/fund)

### VICTORIA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (VUWSA)

VUWSA runs a foodbank. The service is based on hardship. If you are in need, go to their reception on Level 2 of the Student Union Building, Room G08 at the Pipitea Campus, next to the Student Common Room in Karori, or phone 04-463 6716. See website for locations.

VUWSA also organises free bread on Wednesday and Friday mornings – get there early, at 9am.

[www.vuwsa.org.nz/support-and-advice/food](http://www.vuwsa.org.nz/support-and-advice/food)





# Contact details

TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT PHONE 04-463 7474

## THE STUDENT FINANCE ADVISERS ARE AT

Kelburn Campus	Hunter Building, ground level Hours: 9am–5pm, Monday to Friday, all year
Pipitea Campus	Railway Station, West Wing, Level 2 Hours: 9am–5pm, Monday and Thursday, all year
Te Aro Campus	Ground Floor, 139 Vivian Street Hours: 12 noon–3pm, Tuesday, during trimester
Karori Campus	Go to Karori Connect in the Karori library

## FOR GENERAL QUERIES AND INFORMATION:

<b>Phone</b>	04-463 6644 or 04-463 6658
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:student-hardship@vuw.ac.nz">student-hardship@vuw.ac.nz</a>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.victoria.ac.nz/finadvice">www.victoria.ac.nz/finadvice</a>

Here to help you

Kei konei mātou hei awhina i a koe

# My budget

(see Page 4 for an example budget.)

## WEEKLY COSTS:

Room	\$
Electricity	\$
Phone/internet	\$
Cellphone	\$
Groceries/toiletries	\$
Transport (see page 14)	\$
Sports/gym/clubs	\$
Appliance rental	\$
Debts	\$
Personal spending (see page 13)	\$

**WEEKLY TOTAL:** \$

**TOTAL FOR \_\_\_ WEEKS** \$

1 trimester = 20 weeks  
2 trimesters = 40 weeks  
Full year = 52 weeks

## OTHER COSTS

Holiday travel (see page 16)	\$
Large items (bicycle, laptop, bed, vehicle)	\$
Accommodation deposit	\$
Textbooks, materials, field trips	\$
Haircuts (\$30-\$100 per haircut)	\$
Clothes/shoes	\$
Special occasions	\$
Sports/gym/clubs (yearly)	\$
Medical/dental/optical	\$
Bank fees	\$
Emergency (\$1,000-plus recommended)	\$

→ **Transfer total weekly costs** \$

**TOTAL LIVING COSTS** \$

Tuition fees	\$
Non-tuition fees	\$
Insurance	\$
Visa application, medical check	\$
Airfare	\$

**TOTAL COSTS** \$

MY NOTES:

**Financial Support and Advice**

Phone 04-463 6644  
Fax 04-463 5427  
Email [student-hardship@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:student-hardship@vuw.ac.nz)  
Website [www.victoria.ac.nz/finadvice](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/finadvice)

**Accommodation Service**

Phone 04-463 5896  
Fax 04-463 9974  
Email [accommodation@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:accommodation@vuw.ac.nz)  
Website [www.victoria.ac.nz/accommodation](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/accommodation)

**Victoria International,**

Level 2, Easterfield Building  
Kelburn Campus  
Online Support Centre  
<http://victoria-help.custhelp.com>  
Phone 04-463 5350  
Fax 04-463 5056  
Website [www.victoria.ac.nz/international](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/international)