

# International Students' Financial Survival Guide

2018





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# MANAGING YOUR MONEY

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**MANAGING MONEY IS NOT EASY FOR MANY PEOPLE. IF YOU ARE SERIOUS ABOUT YOUR STUDIES, IT IS IMPORTANT TO MANAGE YOUR COURSE CHOICES, YOUR STUDY TIME AND YOUR MONEY.**

This guide is designed to help future students plan for the costs of studying and also to help current students manage money as well as possible.

Victoria University's student finance advisers meet students in a range of situations and are here to help.



## LIVING COSTS

The amount you will spend on living costs depends a lot on your needs and habits. There is a 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 most single students spend the following amounts per year:

- For 40 weeks: between \$18,000 and \$25,000
- For 52 weeks: between \$23,000 and \$29,000.

## EXAMPLE BUDGET

This is an example budget, in New Zealand dollars, for a student living in a hall of residence (university student accommodation).

There is a worksheet on page 20 for you to make a similar budget for your situation.

Weekly costs	
Catered room (electricity and internet included)	\$385
Mobile phone/international calls	\$10
Toiletries	\$10
Transport	\$5
Personal spending	\$50
<b>Weekly total</b>	<b>\$460</b>
<b>Total for 40 weeks (\$460 x 40)</b>	<b>\$18,400</b>

Occasional costs (40 weeks)	
<b>Essentials</b>	
Holiday travel	\$2,000
Large items (bicycle, laptop, room furnishings)	\$1,200
Accommodation deposit	\$620
Textbooks, materials	\$800
Haircuts (\$30-\$100 per haircut)	\$200
Clothes/shoes	\$700
Sport/gym/clubs (yearly)	\$500
Miscellaneous	\$400
Emergency (\$1,000-plus recommended)	\$1,000
<b>Two trimester total</b>	<b>\$7,420</b>
<b>Total living costs</b>	<b>\$25,820</b>

Initial costs	
Tuition fees	\$27,192.67 (full-time Commerce student)
Non-tuition fees	\$780
Insurance	\$620
Visa* application, medical	\$550
Airfare	\$2,500
<b>Total costs</b>	<b>\$31,642.67</b>

\* Medical and police certificates for immigration do not usually have to be repeated until they are 36 months old. If you will be studying for longer than three years, this is an extra expense to budget for. Note that this figure is an estimate as it will depend on which clinic you go to and what medical checks are required.

Most visa application fees range between \$110 and \$277, depending on the type of visa and method of application. If you have to renew your passport, you will also need to pay \$110 to transfer your visa to your new passport. Make sure your passport is valid for as long as possible to avoid the extra cost and inconvenience.

» VICTORIA UNIVERSITY'S  
STUDENT FINANCE ADVISERS  
ARE HERE TO HELP.



# LIVING IN A HALL OF RESIDENCE

Halls of residence (university student accommodation) have some advantages over other types of accommodation.

You can organise your room in advance so you have somewhere to stay as soon as you arrive in Wellington. In contrast, if you hope to share private accommodation with other people, they usually want to meet you in person before confirming. It could take a number of weeks to find suitable private accommodation.

You have to apply only for the trimester in which you are studying. With sharing a house or apartment (see right), people are often committed to a 12-month contract, which means they are responsible for paying rent for the whole period even if they do not live there in the summer.

Halls of residence vary as to whether they are catered (food is provided) or self-catered (purchase and cook your own food—see page 8). Some rates include electricity, internet, local phone calls, bedding and laundry. For others, these are additional costs. Here are a couple of examples from 2017.

Te Puni	\$385 per week	Includes three meals, power, local phone calls, internet and laundry
Education House	\$290 per week	Includes power, local phone calls and internet. You have to pay for laundry and food

[www.victoria.ac.nz/halls](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/halls)

» **INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO PAY THE FULL HALL FEES FOR EACH TRIMESTER IN ADVANCE. FEWER OPENINGS AT HALLS ARE AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS AFTER THEIR FIRST YEAR AT UNIVERSITY.**

# LIVING IN A FLAT

Flattening means living in private accommodation (a 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.

## Example weekly budget (single person in a shared flat)

Rent*	\$210
Bills	\$38
Food	\$80
Transport	\$37
Personal spending	\$75
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$440</b>

\* The above rent is based on triple occupancy. If you are looking to rent a flat or apartment by yourself, you could pay anywhere from \$250 to \$400. You can check the market rent rate for different suburbs on the tenancy website ([www.tenancy.govt.nz/rent-bond-and-bills/market-rent](http://www.tenancy.govt.nz/rent-bond-and-bills/market-rent)).

## FINDING A FLAT

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

These are popular ways to find flats:

- Victoria Accommodation's online accommodation finder [www.victoria.ac.nz/private-accommodation](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/private-accommodation)
- on TradeMe, an online auction site (but beware of scams; see page 13) [www.trademe.co.nz/property](http://www.trademe.co.nz/property) and [www.trademe.co.nz/flatmates-wanted](http://www.trademe.co.nz/flatmates-wanted)
- through friends and connections.

Some flats are advertised as 'unfurnished'. An oven is provided, but not a fridge, washing machine, dishes, beds or furniture. 'Furnished' flats are usually more expensive but do provide these appliances/furnishings.

Tenancy Services has official forms and a guide, *Flattening 101*.

[www.tenancy.govt.nz](http://www.tenancy.govt.nz)

Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association (VUWSA) also has a flattening guide to help you know your rights when going flattening.

[www.vuwsa.org.nz/flattening-guide](http://www.vuwsa.org.nz/flattening-guide)

» **THE EARLIER YOU LOOK FOR A NEW FLAT, THE EASIER IT IS TO FIND A REASONABLY PRICED ONE. THIS MAY MEAN PAYING RENT IN YOUR NEW FLAT FOR A FEW WEEKS BEFORE YOUR COURSE STARTS.**

## LEASE AGREEMENTS

A lease agreement (or tenancy agreement) is the contract for renting a property.

A 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 that all flatmates sign the lease agreement. If one person moves out and another person moves in, you can change the lease agreement by removing the old flatmate and adding the new one.

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.tenancy.govt.nz](http://www.tenancy.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 plus GST (although it could be more or less).

## BOND

A landlord can ask for up to four weeks' rent as bond, but two weeks' rent is the average. The law requires that the bond is lodged with Tenancy Services. You must complete a bond lodgement form, which 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 is removed from the lease and the new person is added. The person leaving completes the Bond Refund or Bond Transfer form and the Change of Tenant form.

Students often move into an existing flat and pay the bond to the person moving out, which means they have no guarantee of getting their 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 a 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 directly to the landlord or Tenancy Services.

## 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 weekly rent of \$210:

**Conservative:** \$840—two weeks' bond and two weeks' rent.

**Mid-range:** \$1,291.50—three weeks' bond, two weeks' advance rent and letting fee.

**High:** \$1,501.50—four weeks' bond, two weeks' advance rent and letting fee.

Add shifting costs and furnishings (bed, desk, drawers, kitchen things). The set-up costs will vary greatly, depending on how much you may already have. If you need to buy most items and are happy to get second-hand goods, \$500 to \$1,000 will get you the basics.

## BILLS

Most bills are charged at the end of a month's usage. Some (especially appliance rental) are charged weekly or fortnightly.

Some flats put one person in charge of each bill, and that person collects the money from other flatmates at the end of the month. Other flats pay the bills from the flat account (see next page).

Some power companies or other services may require a deposit. It may be waived if you arrange to have the payment direct debited from your bank account.

Some services may have minimum contract periods (for example, 12 months). If you might use the service for a shorter period, find out what would be involved in breaking the contract.

You do not have to pay for water or local property taxes—the landlord pays those from the rent.

## Electricity/gas

Make sure that the power meter is read on a regular basis. Many properties have smart meters that make readings automatically. But with older meters, it is normal for somebody to come to read the meter every month or two. Sometimes, if there hasn't been a reading for many months, people are surprised by a large bill.

Check out Powerswitch ([www.powerswitch.org.nz](http://www.powerswitch.org.nz)), which compares different electricity and gas plans.

You can prepay your electricity with Powershop ([www.powershop.co.nz](http://www.powershop.co.nz)), which means you won't get caught with a bill you can't afford.

Not only is it annoying to get your power disconnected because of unpaid bills, it can also be expensive—for example, you may have to pay an \$80 disconnection fee plus an \$80 reconnection fee.

The biggest use of power is water heating. To keep the bill low, keep showers short (less than five minutes) and use cold water for washing clothes. Check out EnergyWise ([www.energywise.govt.nz](http://www.energywise.govt.nz)) for additional tips to save money on your electricity bill.



## Phone and internet

Some broadband services require you to have a landline (telephone) connection.

Some may charge connection fees or charge for a modem. In other cases, they are free.

If you are going to make international phone calls, compare the rates offered by telephone companies, calling cards and services such as Skype, WeChat, WhatsApp or Viber. You might save yourself a lot of money.

With mobile phones, pre-pay is generally cheaper and safer than signing up for a contract. A usage cap on your mobile phone service can be useful for avoiding an unexpectedly large bill.

Wellington city has free Wi-Fi access in the most central parts of town, and Victoria University has free Wi-Fi access for students at all its campuses.

Example bills for a flat of four people

Product	Usage	Average per month	Per person, per week
Electricity/gas		\$380	\$23.75
Internet	80 GB per month broadband	\$75	\$4.69
Appliances	Hiring fridge and washing machine	\$100	\$6.25
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$555</b>	<b>\$34.69</b>

» **“ALL THE ADMINISTRATORS HAVE TO DO IS CHECK ONCE A WEEK THAT THE PAYMENTS HAVE COME THROUGH. THIS WAY WE HAVE OUR BILLS PAID ON TIME, NEVER ACCIDENTALLY SPEND BILLS MONEY ON FOOD AND NEVER RUN OUT OF CASH.”**

## FLAT ACCOUNT

If you're flatting, you'll have to think about how to set up the flat account so that the rent and bills get paid on time and everyone pays their share.

Our recommendations:

- Set 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 internet bills get paid by internet banking. Any other shared bills such as TV can be budgeted for and paid the same way.
- Set up a joint account under the names of several flatmates and make it so cash withdrawals require at least two signatures (for safety's sake). Many banks will let you set up a new online only account for free.
- On a weekly basis, everybody puts in money for rent as well as power and internet accounts. For example, everybody puts in \$35 for expenses in addition to their share of the rent.
- One of the account holders takes responsibility for paying the power and internet bills on time, and checking that everyone is making their weekly payments.
- Put the flat account bank statement on the fridge door or email it to everyone.

### 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 could find out six weeks later that someone didn't pay their share. This can become a problem for the whole flat.
- It can be hard to find \$50 or \$60 from one week's income to put towards bills, and it's no fun chasing flatmates to do the same.
- With everyone paying their share of power and internet on a weekly basis, it's less of a problem if someone moves out unexpectedly. You won't be left out of pocket.

The student finance advisers can help you and your flatmates set up your flat budget, discuss the flat account and give you practical advice on a range of issues.

## INSURANCE

International students on the Studentsafe–University insurance policy are covered for accidental damage to property (for example, broken windows, kitchen fire).

▶ [www.victoria.ac.nz/international-insurance](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/international-insurance)

# 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—such as living further from the city, getting a part-time job or buying the cheapest food—but it tends to be more expensive than people expect.

Weekly	Single person	Two adults, a baby, a primary-school child
Rent	\$195	\$500
Bills	\$38	\$120
Mobile phone	\$5	\$10
Transport (bus)	\$37	\$80
Groceries (including nappies)	\$80	\$240
Activities, snacks, entertainment	\$75	\$150
Childcare	\$-	\$180
<b>Weekly total</b>	<b>\$430</b>	<b>\$1,280</b>
<b>Weekly costs for the year (weekly total x 52)</b>	<b>\$22,360</b>	<b>\$66,560</b>
Accommodation set-up costs	\$1,169	\$3,000
Furnishings	\$300	\$1,500
Clothes	\$700	\$1,500
Text books, stationery, school fees	\$800	\$1,500
Medical/dental/optical	\$250	\$1,000
Special occasions	\$200	\$1,000
Insurance (2018 premiums)	\$620	\$1,550
<b>Yearly total</b>	<b>\$26,368</b>	<b>\$77,532</b>

This table doesn't include the cost of visas, medical exams, flights or a car (see page 10).

A student's spouse may be permitted to work in New Zealand, but there is no guarantee of finding work. Sometimes, highly skilled people are only able to get jobs as cleaners on nightshift, for example. Often people try very hard but are unable to find any job at all. Unless your spouse has a legitimate job organised before coming to New Zealand, you need a plan for how you could survive without any income from their work.

There have been many cases where the time and effort taken to get the student's family to New Zealand and the financial stress and responsibility of looking after them in a foreign country have distracted students from their studies. Sometimes this means it takes longer to complete their study and their scholarship runs out, leading to further financial trouble.

We encourage students with families to plan carefully and consider the consequences. If you are not absolutely sure you have enough money to support your family in New Zealand, contact a student finance adviser to review your situation before you bring your family to New Zealand (contact details inside back cover). We also encourage you to not have your family accompany you to New Zealand in your first trimester of study, as you will need this time to settle into academic life.

# FOOD

Weekly food costs can vary. Below are some typical examples.

**\$40 per week:** All meals prepared at home in advance, using the cheapest ingredients (little, if any meat) from the cheapest supermarkets, and shopping at the weekend fruit and vegetable markets.

**\$80 per week:** Most meals prepared at home, ingredients from an inner-city supermarket, 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.

Use your money wisely by following these recommendations:

- You can get fruit and vegetables at excellent prices at the weekend markets. The Saturday markets (7am–2pm) are in Newtown and the Cathedral of St Paul in Thorndon (8.30am–12.30pm). The two Sunday markets (7am–12 noon) are held at the corner of Willis and Vivian Streets and at Waitangi Park, next to Te Papa. There is also a market in the Tim Beaglehole Courtyard at the Kelburn campus. This market runs every Wednesday from 10am to 6pm during Trimesters One and Two.
- Shop wisely: buy what's on special and stick to the essentials.
- Buy enough at the supermarket to cover your basic needs. A list of what you need is helpful.
- Shopping at supermarkets or markets is cheaper than shopping at convenience stores.
- Eating on campus is expensive. You can save money by bringing lunch from home. There are microwaves available in the Student Union building: in the Bubble on Level 2 and in the VUWSA office on Level 4.

## FRUIT AND VEGETABLE CO-OP

Victoria's fruit and vegetable co-op supplies healthy produce at affordable prices each week. It was launched in March 2017 and is a non-profit social enterprise. For \$12 (paid in advance) you will receive one bag of fruit and one of vegetables, comprising six to eight varieties. These bags of fresh, seasonal food represent great value. You can order as many bags as you need each week. Go to the website for further details and information on how to order.

▶ [www.victoria.ac.nz/fruit-and-vege](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fruit-and-vege)

## 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. Students who've used this service have told us it works well and saves money.

Countdown ([www.shop.countdown.co.nz](http://www.shop.countdown.co.nz)) delivers to most parts of Wellington. You may even be able to find discount codes to save on your total bill or to make delivery cheaper.

Thorndon New World ([www.newworld.co.nz/online-shopping](http://www.newworld.co.nz/online-shopping)) delivers to some suburbs near Thorndon.



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»» **COOK! YOU WILL SAVE MONEY  
AND FUEL YOUR BRAIN.**

# TRANSPORT

Wellington is a compact city and, if you live close to the city centre, it is easy to get around by walking. 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). You'll need to present your Student ID card to get a discounted student rate.

Single ticket	\$2
10-trip ticket	\$14
25-trip ticket	\$28

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

## BUS

Wellington buses charge a fare for every trip. Paying cash is always the most expensive option. For regular users, we recommend using a Snapper card or maybe a 30-day pass, depending on your use.

### Wellington city bus fares

Zones	Single fare	Snapper card
1	\$2.00	\$1.66
2	\$3.50	\$2.73
3	\$5.00	\$3.63

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

Travel from the Railway Station to Kelburn campus is one zone. Travel in Wellington city (from Johnsonville south) is never more than three zones. Travel from Wellington to the Hutt Valley or Porirua areas is four to six zones.

### Free bus passes

If you have classes at two different campuses on the same day, VUWSA provides free bus passes to get between classes.

▶ [www.vuwsa.org.nz/bus-passes](http://www.vuwsa.org.nz/bus-passes)

### GO Wellington 30-day pass

For \$150, you can travel on GO Wellington buses as much as you want within Zones 1–3 for 30 days (allows for transfers and getting on and off the same route). That comes to \$37 per week. Think about how many trips you will take each week and work out how much it will cost. Would you save money by using a 30-day pass? These can be purchased from Snapper outlets.

Metlink  
☎ 0800 801 700  
🌐 [www.metlink.org.nz](http://www.metlink.org.nz)

### Snapper cards

When you pay your bus fare with a Snapper card, you'll save around 20 percent compared with a cash fare. Snapper cards are available to purchase online, from a number of retailers around the city or from the VUWSA office on Level 4 of the Student Union building on the Kelburn campus.

▶ [www.snapper.co.nz](http://www.snapper.co.nz)

## TRAIN

### Metlink train fares

From/to	Ten trip	Monthly
Petone and Lower Hutt/Wellington	\$40.80	\$122.40
Upper Hutt/Wellington	\$71.80	\$215.40
Porirua/Wellington	\$49.80	\$149.40

Monthly passes are issued for a calendar month and can be ordered online. Online ticket sales for the following month close on the twentieth of the preceding month to allow time for your pass to be posted to you. Metlink offers a free text message service, with a My Metlink account, to advise of delays of more than 15 minutes.

Metlink  
☎ 0800 801 700  
🌐 [www.metlink.org.nz](http://www.metlink.org.nz)

## CAR

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-seater car; \$10,000 for a reliable newer second-hand car (2001–2012); \$28,000+ for an average new car.
- Petrol: \$2.05 per litre (as at 20 September 2017).

These costs are compulsory:

- vehicle licence (registration): 12-month licence \$120 to \$295
- warrant of fitness (WOF) checks (required every six months for most vehicles): \$50 to \$70
- routine maintenance (tyre replacement, brake pads, etc.): \$300 per year minimum
- mechanical repairs: these are variable and can be very expensive. Budget for at least \$1,000 per year for older vehicles, \$400 per year for newer vehicles.

It's recommended that you have insurance: either third-party (\$190+ per year) or 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 of dollars.

➤ **SNAPPER CARDS COST \$10 TO BUY, BUT THEY WILL SAVE YOU A LOT OF MONEY IF YOU USE THE BUS FREQUENTLY.**

# TRAVELLING IN NEW ZEALAND

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## Parking costs

Parking on most streets close to Kelburn 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 Vic Books on Kelburn campus, some convenience stores and New World supermarkets. Be aware that the number of these parks is limited. There are also 125 park and display parks along Waiteata Road. Prices range from \$3 an hour to \$10 a day.

Most inner-city suburbs require a residents' parking permit, which costs \$115 a year. You can get one from the Wellington City Council offices in Civic Square.

VUWSA offers a limited number of student carparks at the Kelburn campus. The cost was \$245 per trimester in 2017. There is no student parking at the Te Aro and Pipitea campuses.

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» **IT IS VERY HARD TO FIND PARKING ON CAMPUS AND PARKING WARDENS POLICE THE STREETS CONSTANTLY. YOU WILL BE TICKETED FOR GOING OVER THE TWO-HOUR PARKING LIMITS. IF YOUR REGISTRATION OR WARRANT OF FITNESS HAS EXPIRED, YOU WILL BE FINED.**

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## » SCOOTER

Scoters and mopeds with an N-class registration (under 50cc, which can be ridden on a car licence) can be an economical means of transport. Scooter 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 and insurance, as well as safety. The cost of owning a motorcycle is similar to the cost of a car.

## » BICYCLE

Cycling to university may be one of the cheapest forms of transport (after walking). There are bicycle stands at all Victoria campuses. The Greater Wellington Regional Council ([www.gw.govt.nz/cycling](http://www.gw.govt.nz/cycling)) has information on cycling in the region, including a journey planner.

Prices quoted here are based on options available in 2017. 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 to \$40 per night) or staying at a backpackers (hostel), where a bunk in a shared dormitory room costs \$25 to \$35 per night. Backpackers have shared cooking and bathroom facilities and living spaces. Hotels in popular centres start at \$110 (share twin) per night.

## HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

Here are some example prices for holiday activities in New Zealand:

- bungee jumping in Queenstown: \$195 to \$275
- swimming with dolphins in Kaikoura: \$175
- museum entry: free or up to \$25
- hot springs entry: \$22
- daily ski pass: \$135.

## TRANSPORT AROUND THE COUNTRY

Here are some example prices of transport around New Zealand:

- passenger ticket on the ferry between the North and South Islands: \$53 to \$73
- bus pass around the South Island: \$500+
- flight between main centres (Wellington, Christchurch, Auckland): \$40 to \$200
- flight between a main centre and a regional centre (for example, Whangarei, Gisborne, Invercargill): \$75 to \$360
- cheap rental car: \$55 per day.

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» **ONLINE SPECIALS FOR ACCOMMODATION AND ACTIVITIES CAN BE FOUND AT [WWW.TREATME.CO.NZ](http://WWW.TREATME.CO.NZ) AND [WWW.GRABONE.CO.NZ](http://WWW.GRABONE.CO.NZ)**



# PERSONAL SPENDING

Here are some examples of costs in Wellington:

- pre-paid international telephone call cards: about \$20 for five to six hours of calls to many countries
- takeaway meal: \$7 to \$20
- coffee \$4+, soft drink \$2, beer \$8
- cinema ticket: \$10 to \$18
- backpackers: \$30 per night (dormitory bunk)
- theatre performance: \$14 to \$38
- taxi between Wellington airport and the city: \$40
- taxi between the University and the city: \$12
- bus between the University and the city: \$2
- swimming pool entry \$6.

## SPENDING STYLES

David	Linh	Yuan	Tina
Fast food every day (filled rolls, burgers, kebabs, sushi, fish and chips)	Two coffees each weekday	Two coffees a week	Café snack once a week
Energy drinks every day	Muffin or snack most days	Concert and one drink on Friday night	Cheap lunch in town with friends on Sunday
Drinks at a bar on Saturdays	Movie on Tuesday		
	Two drinks on Friday night		
	Café lunch on Sunday		
<b>Weekly spend</b>			
<b>\$200</b>	<b>\$120</b>	<b>\$40</b>	<b>\$20</b>
<b>Over two trimesters =</b>			
<b>\$8,000</b>	<b>\$4,800</b>	<b>\$1,600</b>	<b>\$800</b>

## Your spending

Per week	
Coffee/soft drinks	\$
Takeaways/snacks	\$
Movies	\$
Concerts/clubs	\$
Music and apps	\$
Café meals/restaurants	\$
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>

You may take control of your money by leaving your 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.

# THE BASICS

## BANKING

Information about money and banking in New Zealand is available.

▶ [www.victoria.ac.nz/international-banking](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/international-banking)

## EFTPOS

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 way to pay for things directly out of your bank account. When using this method, it is important to keep track of how much you are spending by adding up your daily totals or looking at your bank statements regularly. Decide in advance what you can afford to pay for by eftpos, and stick to it.

## GST

GST stands for goods and services tax, which is 15 percent. Prices are almost always shown inclusive of GST.

## MOBILE PHONES

Pre-paid mobile phones are popular in New Zealand.

The four largest providers in New Zealand	
2degrees	<a href="http://www.2degreesmobile.co.nz">www.2degreesmobile.co.nz</a>
Skinny	<a href="http://www.skinny.co.nz">www.skinny.co.nz</a>
Spark	<a href="http://www.spark.co.nz/shop/mobile">www.spark.co.nz/shop/mobile</a>
Vodafone	<a href="http://www.vodafone.co.nz/mobile">www.vodafone.co.nz/mobile</a>

In New Zealand, the person making a call or sending a text message pays. It is free to receive a call or text message. Many students use a monthly pre-paid package; for example, \$19 for 100 minutes of calls and unlimited text messaging within New Zealand and 500 MB of mobile data. Outside a package deal, calls and data can be expensive.

## SCAMS

There are a lot of scams on the internet and some scammers may target international students. An example of a scam is when you apply for a room in a flat advertised online and are asked to pay a bond without even seeing the room. Later, you find out that the room doesn't exist and the advertiser has taken your money. To protect yourself, look out for the warning signs of scams ([www.consumeraffairs.govt.nz/scams](http://www.consumeraffairs.govt.nz/scams)) and remember, if something looks too good to be true, it may well be a scam.

➤ **DECIDE IN ADVANCE HOW MUCH YOU CAN AFFORD TO SPEND ON EXTRAS AND WHICH TREATS TO ALLOW YOURSELF.**

# FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

## HARDSHIP FUND

The Hardship Fund is an emergency fund paid for by a levy at enrolment. It is an emergency fund that helps students facing financial difficulties and it helps many students each year. Grants are available for a range of issues, including:

- flatting problems
- high course-related costs
- high transport costs
- medical, dental and optical costs.

The student finance advisers administer the Fund. To make an appointment, call 0800 VICTORIA (842 867) or visit the Victoria Info Ihonui counter in the Hunter building foyer at the Kelburn campus.

▶ [www.victoria.ac.nz/hardship-fund](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/hardship-fund)

## STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

The Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association (VUWSA) is a student representative association that runs the Community Pantry (for free food parcels) and provides free bread as well as other welfare services.

▶ [www.vuwsa.org.nz](http://www.vuwsa.org.nz)

» **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.**

# PART-TIME WORK

New Zealand student visas usually allow full-time students to work up to 20 hours per week during the year. During scheduled holidays and summer breaks, students are allowed to work full time, which can be between 35 and 40 hours per week. It is important to read the exact wording on your visa to determine your work rights.

The minimum wage in New Zealand is \$15.75 before tax; so for 10 hours' work you'll earn \$138.78 after tax (M code) and for 20 hours' work you'll earn \$274.35 after tax

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

## FINDING WORK

These services can assist you to find part-time work.

### Careers and Employment

This is one of Victoria's student support services. Their staff can provide advice on how to seek and find part-time work.

▶ [www.victoria.ac.nz/international-working](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/international-working)

### Student Job Search

Student Job Search helps students find part-time work during term time and summer break. 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.

▶ [www.sjs.co.nz](http://www.sjs.co.nz)

### Paying tax

Inland Revenue is New Zealand's tax department. Before you start working in New Zealand, you need an IRD number from Inland Revenue. Your income and tax payments are linked to this. Apply for the number before you need it, as it can take a while to process.

▶ [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 student finance advisers (see inside back cover)—an adviser will be happy to help you.





# HEALTH SERVICES

## STUDENT HEALTH

The University's Student Health service provides a high standard of quality primary healthcare with a fully qualified and experienced team of general practitioners and practice nurses, and specialist clinics such as dermatology, endocrinology, psychiatry and dieticians.

Go to the website for detailed information regarding costs and insurance reimbursement.

▶ [www.victoria.ac.nz/health-costs](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/health-costs)

## STUDENTS SAFE-UNIVERSITY INSURANCE

You are not automatically covered for pre-existing medical conditions. These are medical conditions that you have before you enrol in the insurance plan and can extend to conditions you were aware of but did not seek treatment for. Costs associated with pre-existing conditions can also include medical fees, laboratory and radiology investigations, medication and other treatment. 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 the insurance company. If you require cover for a pre-existing medical condition, you can apply for cover by completing a medical risk assessment form. Contact the insurance adviser at [vi-insurance@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:vi-insurance@vuw.ac.nz) or visit the team at Victoria International on Level 2 of the Easterfield building at Kelburn campus to request a form.

## MEDICATION COSTS

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 Studentsafe-University 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 and Associates and Capital Dental. They charge around \$60 for an examination, polish and basic X-ray and offer a 20 percent discount after the first appointment. You need to show your student ID.

Symes de Silva and Associates 97-99 Courtenay Place Phone 04-801 555	Opening hours Mon to Fri, 8.30am-9pm Sat and Sun, 9am-5pm
Capital Dental (The Terrace) 164 The Terrace Phone 04-212 6834 or 04-499 9360	Opening hours Weekdays 8.30am-5pm
Capital Dental (Newtown) 125-129 Riddiford Street Phone 04-389 8880	Opening hours Weekdays 8.30am-5pm
Capital Dental (Petone) 272 Jackson Street, Petone Phone 04-920 0880	Opening hours Weekdays 8.30am-5pm

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

## OPTOMETRIST SERVICES

### Specsavers

Specsavers offers some of the cheapest glasses, and has a range of products. See its website for prices, locations and special deals (such as 25 percent off for students).

▶ [www.specsavers.co.nz](http://www.specsavers.co.nz)

### Mr Four Eyes

Mr Four Eyes is a local optometrist based in Hataitai. It offers prescription lenses for a single price of \$100 for all students. You can post or drop off your frames and they'll be fitted with new prescription lenses, including anti-reflective, anti-scratch and UV coatings, quickly and easily. For every pair of glasses purchased, a pair is donated to a New Zealand child in need.

▶ [www.mrfoureyes.co.nz](http://www.mrfoureyes.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 if you need new glasses due to a change in your vision.

# CASH FLOW

It is important to make a plan for how you will cover all of your costs. 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.

» IT CAN BE USEFUL TO  
PAY YOURSELF WEEKLY  
SO YOU DON'T OVERSPEND  
YOUR BUDGET.

## FORTNIGHTLY FRED

Fred is studying towards a Master of Science. He has a scholarship through the New Zealand Aid Programme, which provides \$960 per fortnight (two weeks) for ongoing living expenses.

He has set up his finances on a fortnightly schedule.

## LUMP-SUM LUCY

Lucy is coming for her first year of study towards a Bachelor of Commerce. She will be in New Zealand only for the academic year (February to November). She had \$15,000 for her living costs, but \$10,222 went straight to accommodation at Education House (including bills), leaving \$4,778 for all her other costs.

To figure out how much she could safely spend each week, she estimated her major costs for the year and also allocated \$1,000 to be kept for emergencies. This leaves \$69 per week that she can safely spend. 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.

Funds available for 40 weeks (not including accommodation)	\$4,778
Large purchases bedding (\$200), winter clothes (\$300), books (\$500)	-\$1,000
Reserves for emergency	-\$1,000
Remaining	\$2,778
Divided over 40 weeks	÷ 40
<b>Remainder for other spending per week</b>	<b>\$69</b>

## MONTHLY MARK

Mark has a Victoria Doctoral Scholarship that provides \$23,500 per year toward living costs, but he needs to pay for non-tuition fees and insurance himself. He has already paid for the first year, but plans to save up for the second year. He receives \$1,958.33 from the Scholarship each month.

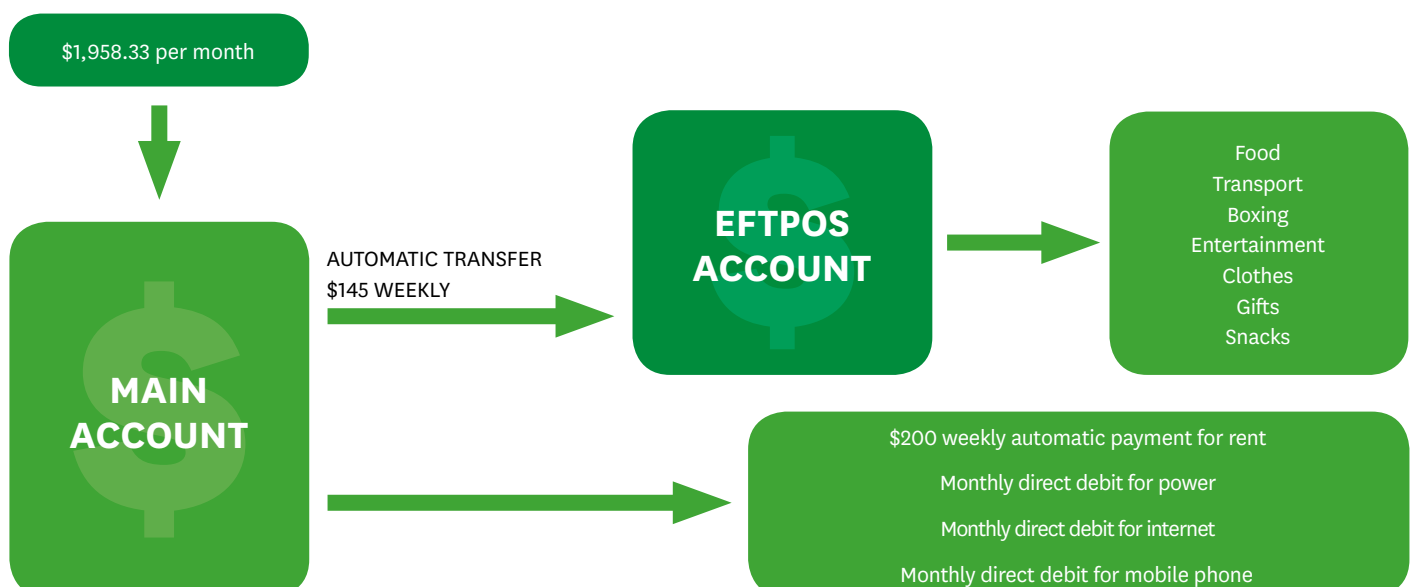
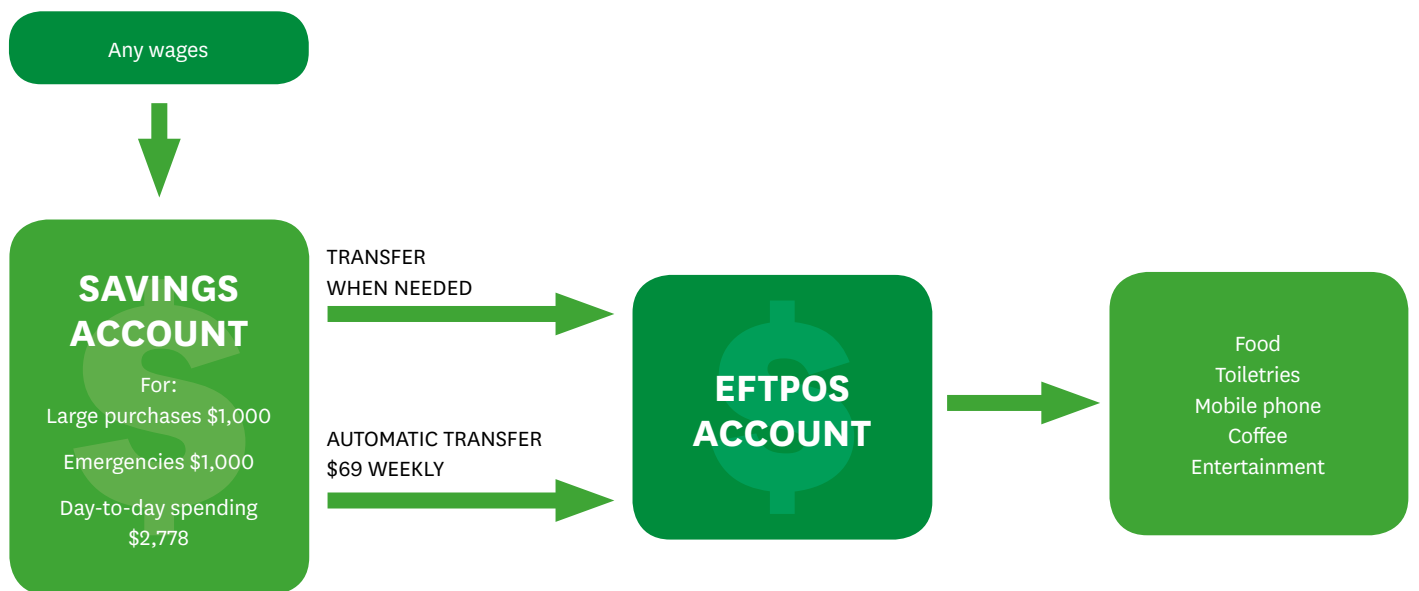
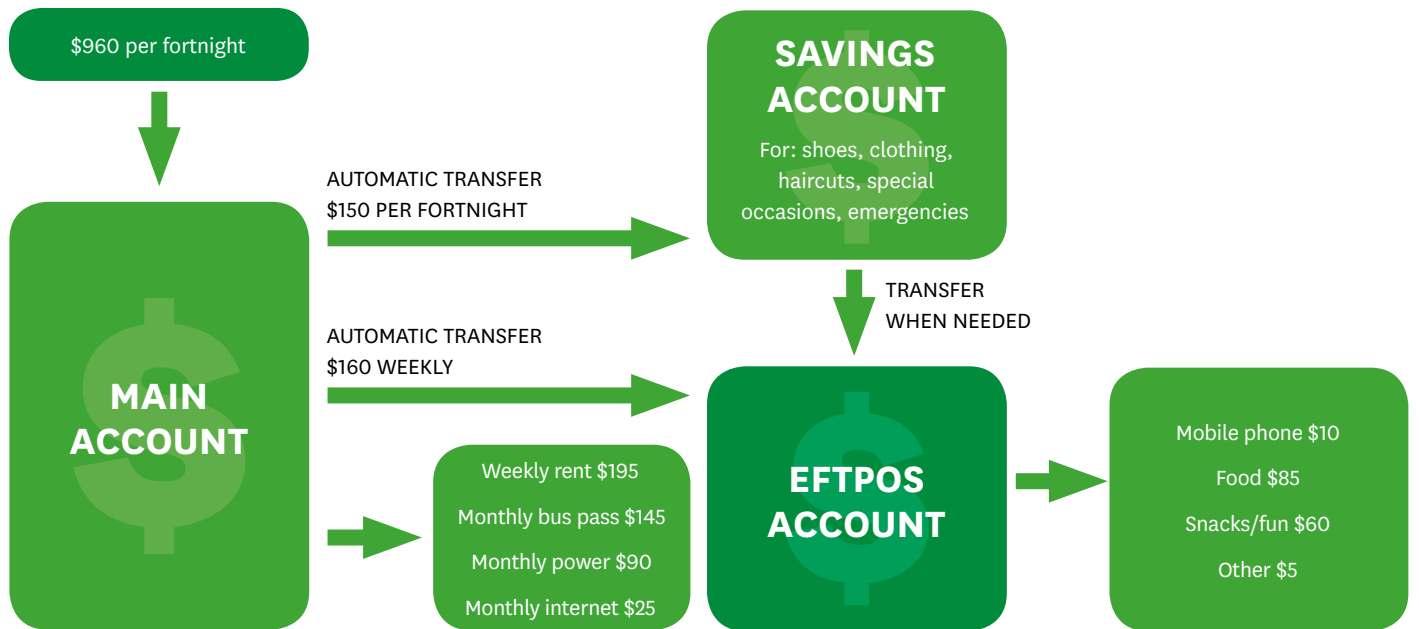
Mark lives alone, and his total regular basic costs are \$229 per month plus \$310 per week:

Rent	\$200 per week
Power	\$130 per month (average)
Internet	\$70 per month
Mobile phone	\$29 per month
Food/toiletries	\$80 per week
Transport	\$10 per week
Boxing class	\$20 per week

He has set up his monthly costs (power, internet, mobile phone) to be paid 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.

Monthly Scholarship	\$1,958.33
Minus monthly set costs	-\$229.00
Remaining funds for weekly costs	= \$1,729.33
Divided by 5 weeks: cost per week	= \$345.87
Minus weekly set costs	-\$310
<b>Remainder for other spending per week</b>	<b>= \$35.87</b>

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.



# SURVIVAL

## EXAMPLES FROM STUDENTS

**Minh** signed a term lease for her flat at the beginning of Trimester One. 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.

*Lesson learnt: 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. Occasionally, he runs into trouble when big costs come up, such as the cost for renewing his visa or the cost of materials for his industrial design projects at the end of each trimester. When he doesn't have enough, he sometimes borrows from friends and may struggle to pay them back by the time the next big cost hits.

*Lesson learnt: Anticipate 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) in advance. 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 low on money due to expensive car repairs and couldn't afford to pay for her day-to-day living costs and had to sell the car, at a loss.

*Lesson learnt: 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 to show he had \$15,000 in his bank account for living costs as part of the application to renew his student visa. 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.

*Lesson learnt: 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 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.

*Lesson learnt: Scholarships (and jobs) are not guaranteed. You need a back-up plan, or you may be wasting your time and money.*

**Jen** failed a couple of courses in her first trimester of study. She couldn't tell her parents because they had sacrificed so much to send her to university. To make up for failing, she enrolled in extra courses in her second trimester. Unfortunately, Jen found the extra courses too difficult and she failed most of them. Her parents still didn't know, and she borrowed money from a friend and enrolled for a couple of summer courses 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 a third of her degree, but her parents think she is about to finish. She is ashamed and depressed, and she has borrowed money from many friends that she cannot afford to pay back.

*Lesson learnt: Ask for help! The Student Learning support service might have been able to help Jen to study better and Student Counselling 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 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 found only casual cleaning and childcare work. The family struggled to afford even basic expenses and eventually Stephen's wife and children had to return home. This caused significant stress and financial loss.

*Lesson learnt: 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 planned carefully and well financed.*

## COMMENTS FROM STUDENTS

Students provided the following comments about student finance advisers.

“The student finance adviser I dealt with was absolutely fabulous and made sure I had a session with her to discuss balancing my finances, as she could tell I was struggling.”

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“Being in a financial struggle has a huge impact on university life and stress. Going to the student finance advisers has helped me greatly, especially at a time when I was struggling.”

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“I wish to say that I am greatly impressed and I appreciate the financial support and advice I am receiving from Victoria.”

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“Thank you so much for your help. I have used your advice about managing my accounts now.”

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“Thank you very much for seeing me. Afterward I was able to enjoy a good week at uni with considerably less stress over what I would eat and how I would get there.”

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“You and your colleagues have really got me out of such a bind and allowed me to get back to focusing on my exams and final week of classes.”



# BUDGETING WORKSHEET

(See page 3 for an example budget.)

## EXPENSES

Weekly costs	
Room	\$
Electricity	\$
Phone/internet	\$
Mobile phone	\$
Groceries/toiletries	\$
Transport	\$
Sports/gym/clubs (if paid weekly)	\$
Appliance rental	\$
Debts	\$
Personal spending	\$
<b>Weekly total</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Total for __ weeks</b>	<b>\$</b>
One trimester = 20 weeks	
Two trimesters = 40 weeks	
Full year = 52 weeks	

Occasional costs	
Holiday travel	\$
Large items (bicycle, laptop, bed, vehicle)	\$
Accommodation deposit	\$
Textbooks, materials, field trips	\$
Haircuts (\$30-\$100 per haircut)	\$
Clothes/shoes	\$
Special occasions	\$
Sport/gym/clubs (yearly)	\$
Medical/dental/optical	\$
Bank fees	\$
Emergency (\$1,000+ recommended)	\$
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>

Study costs	
Tuition fees	\$
Non-tuition fees	\$
Insurance	\$
Visa application, medical check, etc.	\$
Airfare	\$
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Grand total (add the total for all three sections):</b>	<b>\$</b>

## MY NOTES

# CONTACTS

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The student finance advisers are available to meet with students at the Kelburn and Pipitea campuses. Please check the website for details.

To make an appointment, phone 0800 VICTORIA (842 867) or go to the Victoria Info Ihonui counter in the Hunter building foyer.

## Financial queries and information

### Student Fees Advisers

📞 04-463 5484

✉ [student-finance@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:student-finance@vuw.ac.nz)

### Student Finance Advisers

📞 0800 VICTORIA (842 867)

✉ [student-hardship@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:student-hardship@vuw.ac.nz)

🌐 [www.victoria.ac.nz/student-finance-advisers](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/student-finance-advisers)

## General queries and information

### Student Recruitment and Orientation

📞 0800 VICTORIA (842 867) or 04-463 5374

✉ [course-advice@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:course-advice@vuw.ac.nz)

🌐 [www.victoria.ac.nz/study](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/study)

### Victoria Accommodation

📞 04-463 5896

✉ [accommodation@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:accommodation@vuw.ac.nz)

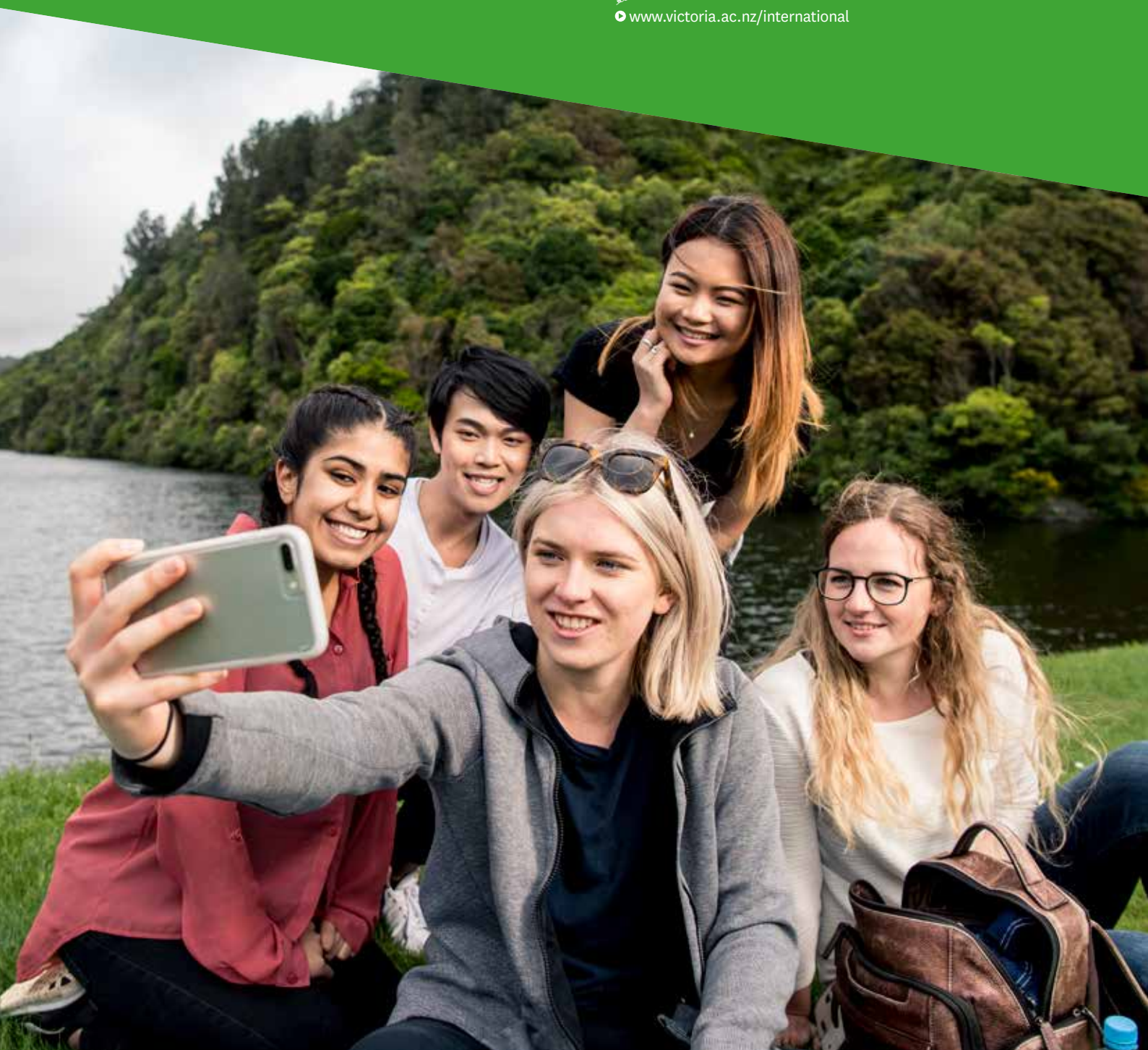
🌐 [www.victoria.ac.nz/accommodation](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/accommodation)

### Victoria International

Level 2, Easterfield Building, Kelburn Campus

📞 04-463 5350

🌐 [www.victoria.ac.nz/international](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/international)





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