

STUDYLINK NEWS

A RESOURCE FOR EDUCATION PROVIDERS AND STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS

APRIL 2012

Welcome to the first edition of StudyLink News for 2012.

It's great to be here at StudyLink and to have experienced our peak application season during my first few months. The range of online integrated services, the way we work together across the sector and a committed team here at StudyLink make a real difference in managing the large volumes of applications. Its exciting to see students now well into their study and reflect on how the assistance that we all provide has helped them take this important step.

The 2011/2012 peak season has gone very smoothly. Our emphasis on online services means we have continued to see 97% of Student Loan and 99% of Student Allowance applications completed online.

More significant is the increase in students accessing and updating their information online using MyStudyLink. With nearly 2.3 million logins and 490,000 updates since 1 July 2011, these are 20.4% and 2.8% increases respectively when compared with this time last year.

Building our understanding of collective priorities and taking a system and sector view in all that we do is increasingly important to achieve results. Cross-sector collaborations deliver better services for both clients and Government, and working closely together is now standard practice.

StudyLink welcomed Susan Kosmala to the role of General Manager in January.

Susan previously held the roles of Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer at Careers New Zealand.

Susan worked for the Ministry of Social Development for eight years prior to this.



There are a number of great examples of cross-sector work that are included in this edition including the implementation of changes from the Student Loan Scheme Act and the igovt project.

With so much in the pipeline we are gearing up for a busy 2012. I look forward to working with and getting to know more of you in the process.

**Regards
Susan Kosmala**



PAGE 1 OF 5

STUDENT LOAN SCHEME ACT 2011

As outlined in the last StudyLink News, the passing of the Student Loan Scheme Act 2011 means there will be changes to the way Student Loans are managed, repaid and administered from April 2012.

For education providers there will be no changes with the way they deal with StudyLink. StudyLink will still make fee payments and education providers will still send Verification of Study (VoS) information and fee refunds to StudyLink.

Since April 2012 StudyLink has been transferring Student Loan information to Inland Revenue on a daily basis. This will enable borrowers to see a consolidated view of their loan balances through Inland Revenue's secure online services. Borrowers will need to register with Inland Revenue's online services for this.

Inland Revenue will also be responsible for sending all loan statements to borrowers. For current students, this means they will no longer be able to check their loan balance with StudyLink or request loan statements through MyStudyLink.

StudyLink will still be responsible for managing Student Loan applications and making loan payments.

Other changes brought by the Act include:

- Borrowers who earn salary or wages in New Zealand need to add 'SL' to their tax code, unless they are exempt.
- Full-time students who expect to earn below \$19,084 in the tax year can apply for a repayment deduction exemption from March 2012.
- A \$40 annual administration fee will be charged on a borrower's account if they have a Student Loan balance of \$20 or more with Inland Revenue, until their loan is fully repaid. This will not apply to borrowers who have been charged a StudyLink establishment fee in the same tax year.

StudyLink and Inland Revenue are working closely together to ensure borrowers are aware of the changes. A letter and flyer was sent to loan applicants in February advising them of the changes.

MORE INFORMATION ON THE CHANGES is available on Inland Revenue's website www.ird.govt.nz/studentloans

IGOVT LOGON

StudyLink is changing the way students log into its online services. As of 18 June 2012 StudyLink will be using igovt as its logon service.

igovt is an all-of-government shared service to manage the logon process for online services of participating agencies. The igovt logon service is implemented and managed by the Department of Internal Affairs and it provides an end to end logon function including user registration, logon and password resets.

There are many benefits of using the igovt logon service. Students will no longer need to use a passphrase when logging in, and will also be able to use the "Forgot your username" and "Forgot your password" functions that will allow them to reset their own password, and have a reminder email sent to them.

As a result, students will no longer need to contact StudyLink to reset usernames, passwords and passphrases.

Students will have a one-off linking process to complete as part of the transition across to igovt. This involves linking their existing online account to their new igovt logon.

New students or students that don't have a MyStudyLink account who submit online applications will create an igovt logon as part of the process.

As part of this work, StudyLink has recently completed student usability testing. The testing focused on existing MyStudyLink users and the linking process, to ensure students experience a smooth transition from using their StudyLink username and password to using the igovt logon service.

Overall, the students were positive about StudyLink using the igovt logon service. Having the opportunity to complete this testing gave us some good insights into how the students expected the experience to work, which has allowed us to look at some of our existing screens and how these can be enhanced with the introduction to igovt.

TAKING MYSTUDYLINK MOBILE

Mobile internet is becoming more accessible for New Zealanders. An increasing number of New Zealanders already own smart phones and numbers are forecast to grow over coming years as the devices continue to become more affordable. Studies have shown that web access via a mobile phone will soon exceed that via conventional PCs.

StudyLink is now developing a mobile application that will be piloted with 1000 students to test the technology as well as the design of the application. The trial will run from April through to mid June.

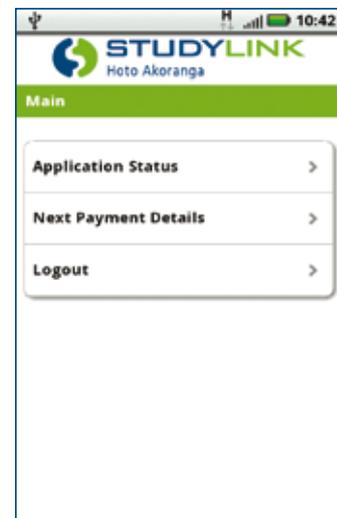
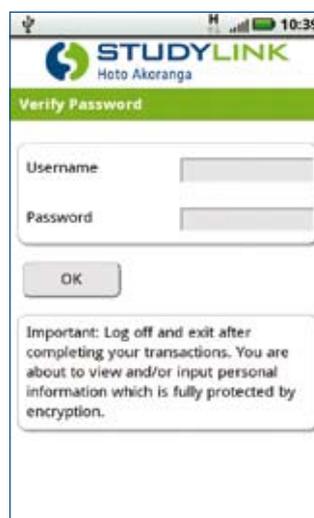
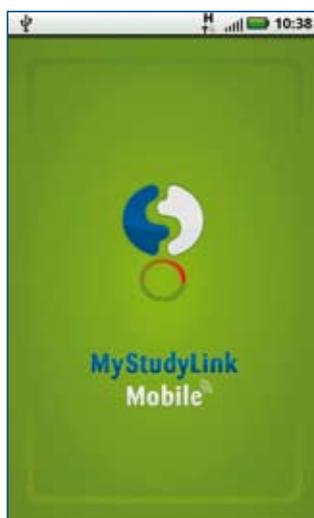
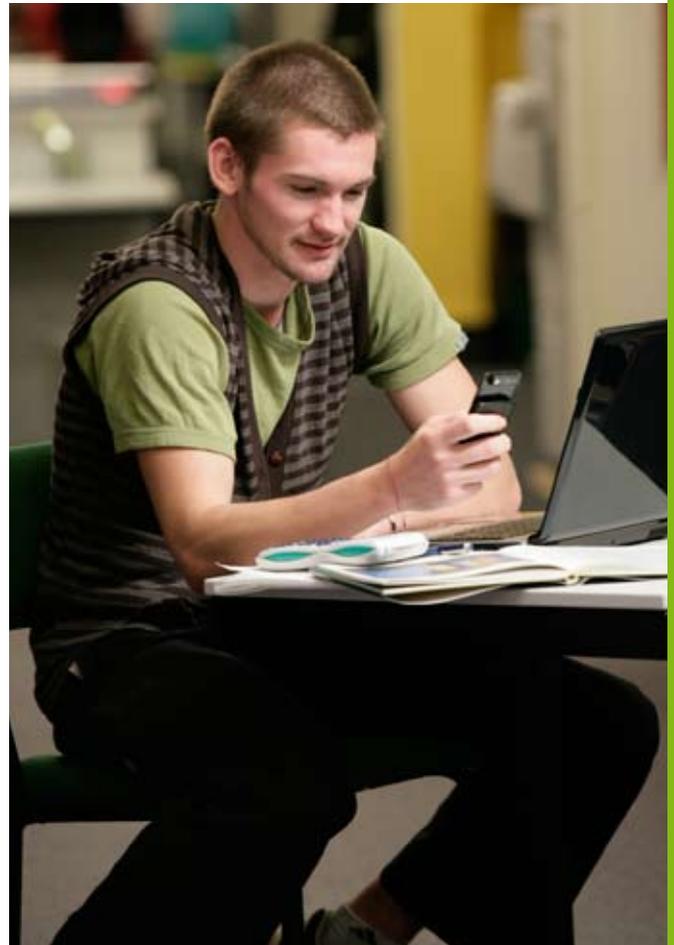
The application will be available on iPhones, Android devices, Java based phones and iPod touch. It will have view-only functions that allow users to:

- view details of their next payment(s)
- check the status of their application(s)
- find out what they need to provide to complete their application.

We have invited users through an email campaign and the first 1,000 students that responded get to take part.

Following the pilot the test group will evaluate their experience with the application and the feedback will be used to inform the development of an interactive application.

We look forward to updating you on our progress.



SUSSED

In the last edition of StudyLink News, we told you about the Sussed programme that guides prospective students through the things they'll need to consider if they're going onto tertiary study.

The programme is presented in schools, but the Sussed tools that help with planning are available on the StudyLink website, and are helpful for not only school leavers, but for anyone entering tertiary study for the first time.

As 2011 was our first year presenting Sussed in secondary schools, we asked school Careers Advisors and students what they thought about the programme. The results were extremely positive, with 98% of Careers Advisors who attended a presentation telling us that the information in the presentation was "Very" or "Extremely Valuable" for students. 92% of students surveyed who had attended a presentation rated it "Valuable" or "Really Valuable".

We're pleased that this programme has proven to be such a helpful tool for prospective students, helping them to plan study life and finances for their futures in tertiary education.

Remember that you can refer students who need some advice on budgeting and finances to the Sussed 'Reality Check' online at www.studylink.govt.nz.

We also have some web tiles available, which you could use on your web pages to link directly to the tools. If you are interested in these, please email us at studylink_communications@msd.govt.nz.



ONLINE SERVICES UPDATE

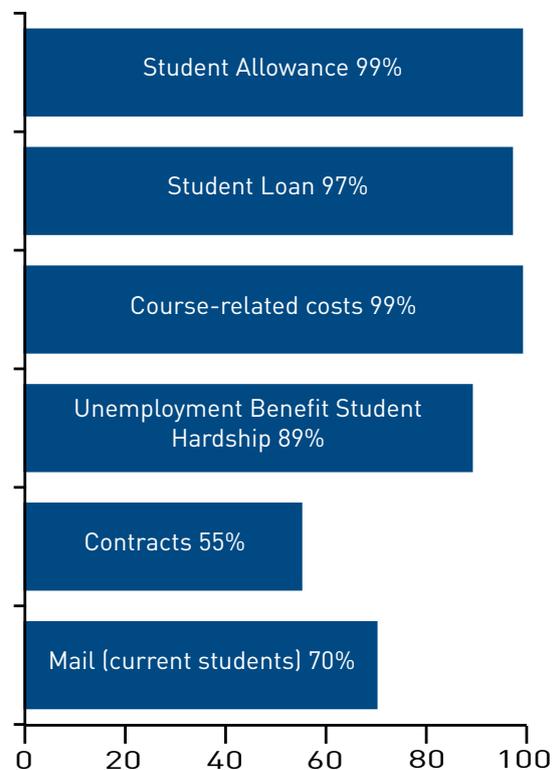
On 10 March 2012 we reached our 2 millionth login to MyStudyLink for the 2011/2012 year.

Between 1 July 2011 and 10 April 2012 students completed nearly 490,000 updates using their MyStudyLink accounts. Those updates included over 32,000 address changes, more than 16,500 bank account changes, 30,500 income changes, and 177,000 applications for course-related costs.

Since 1 July 2011, we have recorded over 70,000 registrations for mail online. This means we now have 72% of current students receiving their mail online who have read more than 887,000 pieces of mail online in the 2011/2012 year.

To 10 April 2012, nearly 95,000 students have signed up to receive their contract through our contracts online service that is available to returning students.

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STATUS REPORTS

Status Reports are a valuable way for education providers to monitor the status of fee payments being made by Student Loan.

Status reports are available through our VOS Online service or by fax, and can currently be produced on a daily, bi-daily, weekly or monthly basis. This allows providers to keep track of Student Loan applications that their students have made to pay their fees. Email notifications are sent out to VOS Online users when each report is available.

From 1 May 2012, we'll be producing all of these reports on a daily basis. This will ensure that each time you view a Status Report, you'll have the most up-to-date information StudyLink is able to provide. You don't have to view the report each day, but you will have the information you need, when you need it, so you can monitor Student Loan application progress.

We anticipate that this enhanced service will save you time and reduce the need for you to have to call to check the status of applications.

IF YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS about Status Reports or how we can customise them to your needs please contact the **StudyLink Helpline** on **0508 885 885**.



TAMAKI COMMUNITY CAREERS EXPOS

The Tamaki Transformation Programme is part of Auckland City's growth management strategy. It is the largest urban regeneration programme in New Zealand and is unique in its commitment to achieve partnerships between the community, central and local Government agencies and private investors.

StudyLink contributes to this programme through the Tamaki Tertiary Study project by delivering community based information sessions with other key agencies such as the Ministry of Education and local education providers, to ensure the community understand the opportunities in tertiary education.

On 29 February, we attended a Careers Expo run by Tamaki College attended by around 350 students and parents, where we provided them with information on ways to fund their futures in tertiary study, as well as how and when to apply.

On 15 February, we also ran an expo for residents of the Tamaki community of all ages, who were interested in study and required more information to help them with their decisions. The event included a presentation of StudyLink's Sussed programme, which received extremely positive feedback.

Representatives from Work and Income, Inland Revenue, CareersNZ, and four local education providers also attended, providing an opportunity for prospective students to engage with other agencies who can help them with their career and study plans.

The event received such positive feedback that we aim to hold another one in May. We will be talking to local education providers about this soon.