Listed below are the questions we hear most often from QUT students. If you would like more help or further information about Centrelink, please contact a QUT Counselling Services Welfare Officer.

Q  How do I know if I am eligible for any income support from Centrelink?
A  Anyone has the right to test their eligibility for income support. Contact Centrelink on 13 24 90 or at www.centrelink.gov.au. Due to recent changes in legislation, students may now be eligible for income support for the first time or be eligible to receive a higher rate of payment. A complete range of fact sheets are available at www.deewr.gov.au.

Q  How do I apply for Centrelink benefits?
A  Apply on-line by registering as a client. Once you have been granted a payment, you can continue to use the online service to check information about your payments and register your work income per fortnight. When communicating with Centrelink, always obtain a receipt number as a record of the information you have been given.

Q  What documentation will I need to supply with my claim?
A  You will need to provide a Tax File Number (TFN), bank account details, and proof of your enrolment, identity and any income you receive. Depending on your circumstances, you will also need to provide your partner's or parents'/guardians' income. This documentation will need to be submitted within 14 days of your initial claim if you are to be paid from the date you claimed.

Q  How will I know if my claim is successful?
A  Centrelink will send you a letter advising you of the outcome of your claim. If you are eligible, the letter will outline when your payment will start and how much you will receive.
Q  Can I receive a lump sum payment?
A  You may be eligible for an advance payment of up to $500. This is paid back by deductions from your allowance over the following 6 months. Contact Centrelink to apply for a lump sum advance payment.

Q  I have received a Scholarship payment from Centrelink, however I am unsure if I will continue to study this semester. If I withdraw from full-time study, will I need to repay this scholarship?
A  Students need to stay enrolled in their course for 35 calendar days after qualifying for the scholarship. If you withdraw from full-time study before this date, you will incur a debt with Centrelink.

Q  I am unhappy with a Centrelink decision. What are my rights?
A  If you believe the decision is incorrect, you may request a review by an Authorised Review Officer. If you are still unhappy with the decision, you can submit the matter to the Social Security Appeals Tribunal. You can also seek independent advice from Welfare Rights on 1800 358 511 or go to www.wrcqld.org.au

Q  What is the impact of changing my study load upon my Centrelink payments?
A  Generally to receive and maintain Youth Allowance, Austudy or Abstudy you will need to be enrolled in an approved course and studying full-time. This is usually defined as at least 75% of your full-time study load. At QUT this is generally 36 credit points. Approved concessional study loads may be applied in some circumstances. Contact Centrelink for further information.

Q  What is allowable time?
A  Allowable time is the maximum time allowed for you to continue to receive Centrelink payments while you are studying. There are different rules for allowable time and this is dependent on a number of circumstances and the payment you are eligible for. To find out more contact Centrelink.

Q  What do I need to tell Centrelink to keep my payment and avoid a debt?
A  Notify Centrelink of any change of circumstances. eg living situation, work load or income within 14 days of the change occurring. Check with Centrelink if you are unsure if you need to notify them of the change. If Centrelink requests information from you, you are also required to reply by the date specified.

Remember to test your eligibility by making a claim with Centrelink. For more comprehensive information and full details about Centrelink go to www.centrelink.gov.au or phone 13 24 90

Disclaimer: While every effort has been made to ensure the information in this publication is correct, no responsibility can be taken for any errors or omissions. Please contact Centrelink for further details, updates and changes.