

As we step into 2026, many students and educational users of AI tools wonder about the availability of a **ChatGPT Plus student discount**. With OpenAI's evolving subscription landscape, especially for its popular ChatGPT product line, it's crucial to navigate between *ChatGPT Free* use and Plus plan upgrades intelligently. In this article, we'll break down whether the student discount is active or if it **expired in May 2025**, explore pricing variations across devices, demystify tax and VAT implications, and clarify the elusive trial paths offered by OpenAI.

Quick Summary: ChatGPT Plus Student Discount Status in 2026

- OpenAI's official **ChatGPT Plus price** remains at **\$20/month** (list price in the US web checkout).
- The chatgpt student discount expired May 2025 and is currently not offered directly by OpenAI globally.
- Some regional pilot programs such as *student pilot Australia Colombia* ran in 2024 but didn't translate to ongoing discounts.
- Third-party verification platforms like *SheerID Student Plus* cooperated previously but their active offers with OpenAI have largely ceased.
- Prices differ notably across checkout channels: web vs iOS vs Android, mainly due to platform fees and VAT/GST rules.
- No annual ChatGPT Plus plan is available yet, affecting how long-term discounts or commitments can be structured.
- Trial pathways vary — OpenAI has at least six different routes for trying Plus features, all based on limited-time offers or regional experiments, not universal free trials.

ChatGPT Plus: Understanding the List Price vs Real Cost

The flagship upgrade to ChatGPT [suprmind](#) Free, known as ChatGPT Plus, is priced publicly at **\$20/month** in the US for direct web subscriptions. However, the *real cost* a user pays can vary significantly depending on:

- **Value-added tax (VAT), goods and services tax (GST), and other local sales taxes** depending on the user's billing address.
- **Checkout channel** — subscribing via the OpenAI website versus native iOS or Android apps.

Price Example: VAT and Tax Effects

Country	List Price (USD)	VAT/GST Rate	Estimated Price After Tax
United States	\$20.00	0% (varies by state; often exempt online)	\$20.00
United Kingdom	\$20.00	20%	\$24.00
Australia	\$20.00	10%	\$22.00
Germany	\$20.00	19%	\$23.80

Note: Pricing above is converted to USD for comparison. Local currency billing will apply in most cases.

Why VAT and Tax Matter

OpenAI, like many SaaS providers, bills tax according to the customer's location. When students look for a "discount," they often only see list prices without considering these additional taxes, which can bump the monthly cost significantly. Transparency on pricing pages is occasionally lacking, which is a common pain point in subscription services.

Comparing ChatGPT Plus Pricing Across Devices

Subscribers face a notable decision: should they buy ChatGPT Plus via the web checkout, the iOS app store, or the Android Play Store? Each channel has different implications:

- **Web Checkout (OpenAI Direct):** Typically the base \$20/month plus VAT/GST but no app store fees. You can often manage—or even cancel—your subscription more flexibly here.
- **iOS App Store Checkout:** Apple takes a 30% cut on subscription revenue, increasing the effective cost. Prices can be \$25 or more in some regions. Plus, Apple’s tax handling is opaque in many countries, making final price calculations harder.
- **Android (Google Play) Checkout:** Google also takes roughly 15–30%, with similar price inflation. However, Google some times offers trial extensions or localized promotions differently from Apple.

Pro Tip: Always open the checkout page simultaneously on two devices (preferably one on web, the other on mobile) before subscribing — especially if using any promo or student offers. This helps spot pricing and tax discrepancies instantly.

No Annual ChatGPT Plus Plan — Why That Matters

Unlike many SaaS products that incentivize annual subscriptions with a discount, OpenAI offers *ChatGPT Plus only as a monthly plan*. This means:

- **No upfront savings** for committing long term, making budget planning harder for students on tight finances.
- **Limited flexibility** in trial promotions or student discounts which typically rely on longer subscription commitments.
- **Missed opportunity** for OpenAI to lock in users for 12 months, which could support ongoing research AI costs.

This absence also indirectly hinders third-party student verification platforms, which usually facilitate annual discounted plans to make student pricing viable.

The Reality of ChatGPT Plus Trials in 2026: Six Routes, All Offer-Based

Despite hopes for a universal free trial, OpenAI’s approach is far more complex — especially post-2024. There is no global, unconditional free trial for ChatGPT Plus. Instead, at least six distinct pathways exist, varying by region and user characteristics:

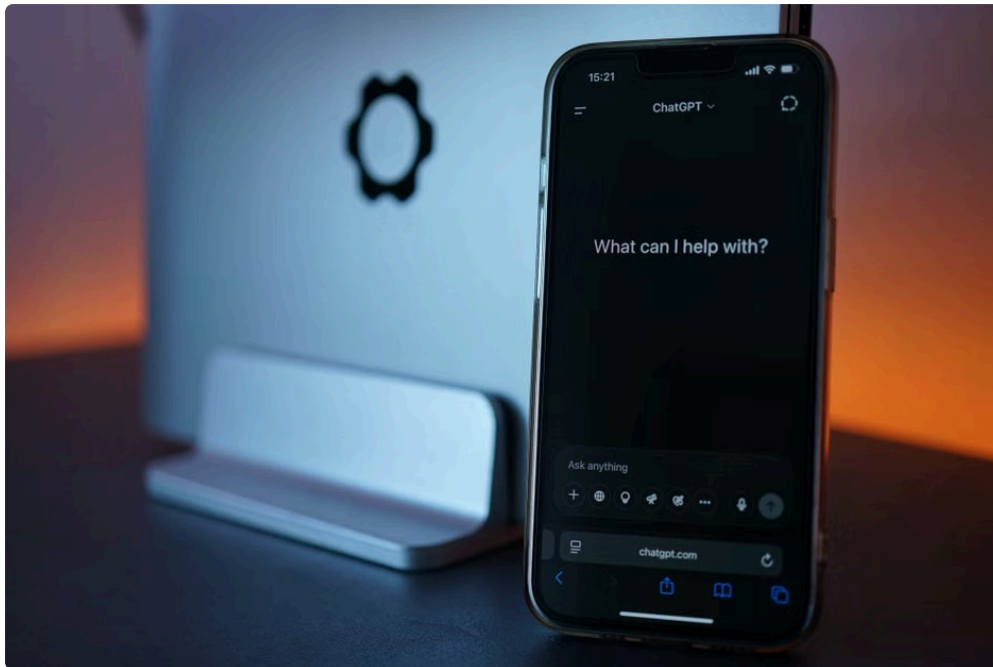
1. **Time-limited promotional trials** launched sporadically in select countries like Australia or Colombia (“student pilot Australia Colombia”).
2. **Offer codes applied through third-party platforms** such as SheerID, which historically verified student status for a discount — the “SheerID Student Plus” program is now largely inactive.
3. **Early access or beta invitations** to select universities or academic groups.
4. **Short-term app store trials** that might expire within days or weeks, depending on Apple/Google Store policies.
5. **Bundle offers** occasionally packaged with other OpenAI tools or enterprise education products.
6. **Direct regional offers** where OpenAI customizes plans to compete with local AI alternatives.

Important: These offers are temporary and tethered to strict eligibility conditions, meaning the idea of a “universal free trial button” is unfortunately a myth — a pet peeve of mine after auditing countless SaaS flow experiences.

What Happened to ChatGPT Student Discounts After May 2025?

The widely circulated rumor and keyword “ *chatgpt student discount expired May 2025*” holds water. OpenAI officially deprecated their student discount program by mid-2025 due to mixed uptake and verification challenges. Earlier pilot regions like Australia and Colombia ended their experimental student pilots, opting instead for streamlined paid subscriptions. The SheerID partnership quietly paused support as well, removing the third-party verification gateway for students globally.

While this may be disappointing, it aligns with overall subscription simplification and international tax compliance efforts by OpenAI.



How to Approach ChatGPT Plus Subscription in 2026 If You're a Student?

Here are some essential steps and tips before subscribing:

1. **Compare prices on multiple platforms:** Check the web checkout versus iOS and Android pricing pages in your region. Look for VAT/GST and platform fee markups.
2. **Set a calendar reminder 24 hours before any trial period ends.** OpenAI’s trial definitions might be short, so knowing when to cancel can save you from unexpected charges.
3. **Look for region-specific offers** from your university or OpenAI announcements that might revive student pilot programs or discounts.
4. **Always open checkout on two devices** (e.g., laptop and phone) to verify prices and taxes before hitting “Subscribe,” an auto-renew gotcha I constantly remind clients about.
5. **Check billing email for confirmation** right after subscribing and review cancellation policies immediately.

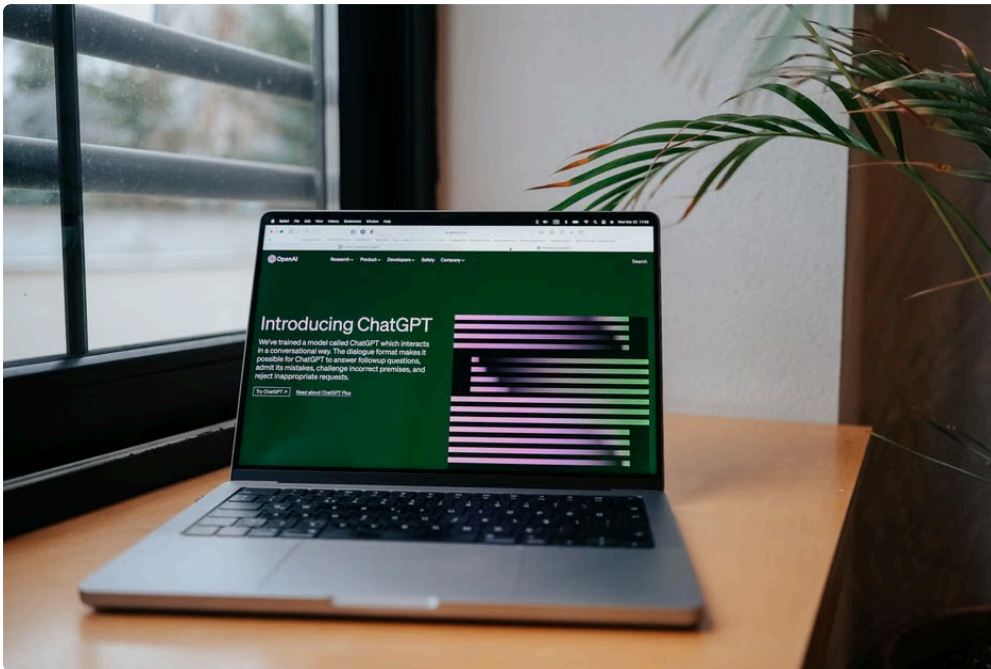
Summary Table: ChatGPT Plus Student Discount and Pricing Overview (2026)

Aspect	Status or Note
ChatGPT Plus Base Price (US Web)	\$20/month
Student Discount Availability	Expired May 2025, no active global discount
Regional Student Pilots	Ended in Australia, Colombia; no current offers
SheerID	

Verified Student Plans Paused / inactive with OpenAI Device Pricing Differences Web cheaper; iOS and Android include 15-30% platform fees VAT/GST Impact Varies by region, up to 20%+ Annual Plan Not offered Trial Availability Six distinct paths, all offer-based and limited

Final Thoughts

While the news that the *ChatGPT Plus student discount expired May 2025* may sting, understanding the complex pricing ecosystem helps students and users make informed decisions. OpenAI's pricing and trial models continue to evolve, but as of early 2026, the surest path is to shop around checkout pages, factor in VAT, and set a calendar reminder if you opt for a trial offer.



My final recommendation is a classic but often overlooked SaaS subscription trick: **open your checkout flow on both your laptop and mobile device simultaneously** before paying.**** This simple action reveals real-time discrepancies, helps spot platform fees, and ensures you're charged what you expect — saving you future headaches in subscription retention and refunds.

Good luck, and happy experimenting with AI-powered learning tools in 2026!