Guideline:

Period of Service, Suspensions and Exits

Period of Service is the time job seekers spend in each stream and phase of jobactive. It identifies when they must participate in activities and determines the services providers must deliver. It is affected by periods of Suspension and when job seekers are Exited.

Suspensions are periods when job seekers are not required to participate in jobactive services and providers are not required to deliver services to them during that period although they may agree to do so in some circumstances.

Job seekers may be Exited if they are meeting their obligations or are no longer eligible for jobactive services. This will usually happen automatically but there are some instances when providers can manually Exit job seekers.

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Policy changes:
Nil

Wording changes:
Pg.7 Additional information regarding Stronger Transition job seekers.
Throughout document change to departmental name

Document Change History:
A full document history is available on the Provider Portal

Related documents and references
Managing and Monitoring Mutual Obligation Requirements and Job Plan Guideline
Contents

Period of Service determines the phase of a job seeker 3
The Period of Service is calculated by the Department’s IT systems 3
Suspensions pause Period of Service and affect services to job seekers 3
Job seekers may be Suspended for a range of reasons 3
Who applies a Suspension 4
Fully Eligible Participants who are Suspended can voluntarily participate in jobactive services 4
Jobactive services resume when a Suspension ends 5
Job seekers may Exit from jobactive services for a range of reasons 5
Most Exits happen automatically (Effective Exit) 5
Some Exits can be actioned by providers (Provider Exit) 6
Providers should assess the appropriateness of job seeker requests to Exit 6
Fully Eligible Participants requesting an Exit 6
Volunteers requesting an Exit 7
Providers must continue delivering jobactive services if a job seeker request to Exit is not approved 7
Some job seekers cannot be Exited 7
Summary of required Documentary Evidence 8
Suspensions 8
Exits 8
Period of Service determines the phase of a job seeker

Job seekers move between jobactive phases at specific points in their Period of Service (except Volunteers, who are only eligible for six months of jobactive support).

The phases in jobactive are:
- the Self Service and Job Activity Phase
- the Case Management Phase
- the Work for the Dole Phase

Providers must deliver specific services to job seekers appropriate to their jobactive phase.

Job seekers may participate in a Work for the Dole Activity while in the Case Management Phase. This participation will not move the job seeker into the Work for the Dole Phase early.

(Deed references: Chapter B2, specifically Sections B2.1 – Stronger Participation Incentives Participants, B2.2 – Stream A (General) Participants, and B2.3 – Stream B (General) Participants and Stream C Participants.)

The Period of Service is calculated by the Department’s IT systems

The Period of Service:
- starts when a job seeker Commences in a Stream
- pauses while a job seeker is Suspended
- ends when the job seeker:
  - is Exited, or
  - moves to another Stream, except in the case of a Stronger Participation Incentive (SPI) Participant who moves from Stream A to Stream B and remains an SPI Participant.

(Deed References: Clause 92 and Annexure A1)

Suspensions pause Period of Service and affect services to job seekers

The Period of Service pauses when a job seeker is Suspended and restarts when the Suspension ends.

Providers generally do not need to deliver services to Suspended job seekers, however job seekers aged 55 years or over can be required to attend appointments relating to employment opportunities.

Job seekers may be Suspended for a range of reasons

Job seekers are Suspended if they are:
- a Fully Eligible Participant:
  - with an Exemption applied by the Department of Human Services (DHS)
  - who is a Principal Carer Parent (PCP) and is fully meeting their part-time Mutual Obligation Requirements through participating in 30 hours a fortnight of paid work and/or study
 who has a Partial Capacity to Work (PCW) of 15 to 29 hours a week and is fully meeting their part-time Mutual Obligation Requirements through participating in 30 hours a fortnight of paid work and/or study
 aged 55 years and over and is meeting their Full-Time Mutual Obligation Requirements through participating in 30 hours a fortnight of paid work and/or approved Voluntary Work
 with a temporary reduced work capacity of less than 15 hours per week
 identified as a PCW Participant who has a current and future work capacity of less than 15 hours per week
 participating in the Green Army Programme.

Who applies a Suspension

Suspensions can be:

applied by the Department of Human Services if:

• job seekers qualify for an exemption from their Mutual Obligation Requirements when their personal circumstances make it difficult for them to meet those requirements, or
• a job seeker is participating in an appropriate activity to meet their Mutual Obligation Requirements.

applied by providers:

• when a job seeker is a Volunteer who is experiencing a situation that affects their ability to participate for a specified period
• when the job seeker is a ParentsNext Volunteer and the ParentsNext Provider agrees to the Suspension if:
   the ParentsNext Volunteer’s ParentsNext Provider notifies the jobactive provider that the ParentsNext Volunteer has an Exemption; or
   the jobactive provider identifies that the ParentsNext Volunteer has experienced circumstances which prevent them from participating in Services for a specified period of time.

applied by the Department on behalf of providers

• if a Volunteer has a New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS) referral
• if the provider requests a suspension for a Fully Eligible Participant who meets the Suspension criteria.

Documentary evidence: Where a provider Suspends a job seeker, the provider must record the reason for the Suspension, and the start and end dates for the Suspension, in the Department’s IT System.

Fully Eligible Participants who are Suspended can voluntarily participate in jobactive services

A Fully Eligible Participant with Mutual Obligation Requirements can choose to participate voluntarily in jobactive services while they are Suspended after:

• being contacted by their provider to discuss and agree to voluntarily participate while Suspended, or
notifying DHS who will either call their provider or book an Appointment for them, or
• directly contacting their provider to request jobactive services.

The provider must provide jobactive services to a Suspended Fully Eligible Participant if they advise they want to voluntarily participate in Services.

Fully Eligible Participants on a preclusion period (a period during which they do not receive an income support payment from Centrelink because of a lump-sum payment) may also participate voluntarily in Services.

Documentary evidence: Where a Fully Eligible Participant elects to volunteer while Suspended, the provider must record, in the Department’s IT system:
• the agreed start and end dates for the volunteering period
• the agreed voluntary Activities in the Job Plan
• that the Stream Participant is participating as a Volunteer.

Documentary evidence: The provider must immediately record the end of the Suspension or volunteering period in the Department’s IT System. No additional Documentary Evidence is required.

(Deed reference: Clause 93.4)

Job seekers may Exit from jobactive services for a range of reasons

Most Exits happen automatically (Effective Exit)

In most cases, job seekers will be Exited automatically from jobactive services. This is called an Effective Exit and can occur when:
• a Volunteer has reached a maximum of six months Period of Service in Stream A
• a Fully Eligible Participant:
  ▪ is in a job and has stopped receiving an eligible Income Support Payment (for example when a job seeker has six consecutive fortights with nil rate of Income Support)
  ▪ has not lodged a report of income with DHS (even if this is zero) 14 days after their Report Due Date and their payment is cancelled by DHS
  ▪ is fully meeting their Mutual Obligation Requirements and no longer needs to remain fully connected to the provider
  ▪ is commenced in Disability Employment Services or the Community Development Programme, or
• they commence in NEIS.
Some Exits can be actioned by providers (Provider Exit)

Volunteers, ParentsNext Volunteers, and some Fully Eligible Participants may be eligible for a provider Exit which is processed manually by the provider.

Fully Eligible Participants

- Providers can Exit Fully Eligible Participants who are Suspended and who:
  - have a Partial Capacity to Work (PCW):
    - of less than 15 hours per week, or
    - of 15 hours or more per week and are meeting their Mutual Obligation Requirements through 30 hours or more a fortnight of paid work and/or study that will likely be ongoing or last more than 13 weeks.
  - are Principal Carer Parents (PCP):
    - who have a long-term Exemption (end date longer than 16 weeks), or
    - who are meeting their Mutual Obligation Requirements through 30 hours or more a fortnight of paid work and/or study that will likely be ongoing or last more than 13 weeks.
  - are Vulnerable Youth, Vulnerable Youth (Student), Structural Adjustment Programme job seekers, or Pre-release Prisoners who have no Mutual Obligation Requirements and no longer wish to participate.

Volunteers

- Providers can Exit a Volunteer once they have been informed of the six-month limit to their eligibility, and both parties agree to the Exit.

ParentsNext Volunteers

- Providers must Exit a ParentsNext Volunteer if both they, and the ParentsNext provider assess that the ParentsNext Volunteer is unsuitable for jobactive services.
  (Deed reference: Clause 95)

Structural Adjustment Programme job seekers or Stronger Transition participants

- Providers should manually Exit a Structural Adjustment Programme job seeker or Stronger Transition participant who has no Mutual Obligation Requirements and no longer wishes to participate.
- Providers should manually Exit a Structural Adjustment Programme job seeker or Stronger Transition participant who has no Mutual Obligation Requirements if the job seeker or participant is in Employment and the Provider has claimed a 26-week Employment Outcome for that Employment.

Providers should assess the appropriateness of job seeker requests to Exit

Fully Eligible Participants requesting an Exit

If a Fully Eligible Participant advises their provider that they wish to Exit, the provider should determine whether a provider Exit is appropriate. This decision should consider whether the Fully Eligible Participant:

- Is eligible for a provider Exit
- wishes to access Services in the future
• is currently tracking towards an Outcome Payment, or has a pending Outcome Payment claim
• is receiving post-placement support
• is in an activity that is likely to last more than 13 weeks (and has a Partial Capacity to Work of less than 15 hours per week or is meeting Mutual Obligation Requirements through 30 hours or more a fortnight of paid work and/or study).
• is aware of the Services that the provider can offer.

Volunteers requesting an Exit

If a Volunteer tells their provider they no longer want to participate in jobactive services, the provider must inform them of the six month limit to their eligibility.

Depending on their individual circumstances, the Volunteer may choose to:
• continue receiving jobactive services
• be Suspended, or
• be Exited.

A provider must resume the delivery of jobactive services to a Volunteer if they return to services within 13 Weeks from the date of Exit and have not received a total of six months of Services as a Volunteer.

(Deed references: Clauses 75, 93, 95.6)

Providers must continue delivering jobactive services if a job seeker request to Exit is not approved

The provider must advise a job seeker when they do not approve a request for a provider Exit and must continue to deliver jobactive services.

(Deed references: Clauses 93.2, 93.4)

Some job seekers cannot be Exited

Job seekers aged 55 years and over who are fully meeting their full-time Mutual Obligation Requirements through 30 hours per fortnight of paid work (including self-employment), approved Voluntary Work, or a combination of these Activities cannot be Exited.

These job seekers will remain connected with a provider but will be Suspended. They cannot be required to undertake Job Search, other additional requirements, or to attend provider appointments, unless they relate to employment opportunities or job referrals. Appointments must be made around the times of their paid and Voluntary Work hours.

These job seekers still have full-time Mutual Obligation Requirements and are required to attend job interviews with employers and accept increased hours of paid work until they obtain a full-time job or no longer receive income support.
Summary of required Documentary Evidence

Suspensions

- **Documentary evidence:** Where a provider Suspends a job seeker, the provider must record the reason for the Suspension, and the start and end dates for the Suspension, in the Department’s IT System.

- **Documentary evidence:** Where a Fully Eligible Participant elects to volunteer while Suspended, the provider must record, in the Department’s IT system:
  - the agreed start and end dates for the volunteering period
  - the agreed voluntary Activities in the Job Plan
  - that the Stream Participant is participating as a Volunteer.

- **Documentary evidence:** The provider must immediately record the end of the Suspension or volunteering period in the Department’s IT System.

Exits

- **Documentary evidence:** Where the provider determines it is appropriate to Exit a Participant, the provider must record this in the Department’s IT Systems, including the reason for the decision. No additional Documentary Evidence is required.
All capitalised terms in this guideline have the same meaning as in the jobactive Deed 2015–2020 (the Deed).

In this guideline, references to provider mean an Employment Provider, references to job seekers mean Stream Participants, and references to jobactive services mean Employment Provider Services as defined in the Deed.

This Guideline is not a stand-alone document and does not contain the entirety of Employment Services providers’ obligations. It must be read in conjunction with the Deed and any relevant Guidelines or reference material issued by Department of Jobs and Small Business under or in connection with the Deed.