



Australian Government
Department of Employment
and Workplace Relations

Mutual Obligation Requirements

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Criteria for receiving unemployment payments



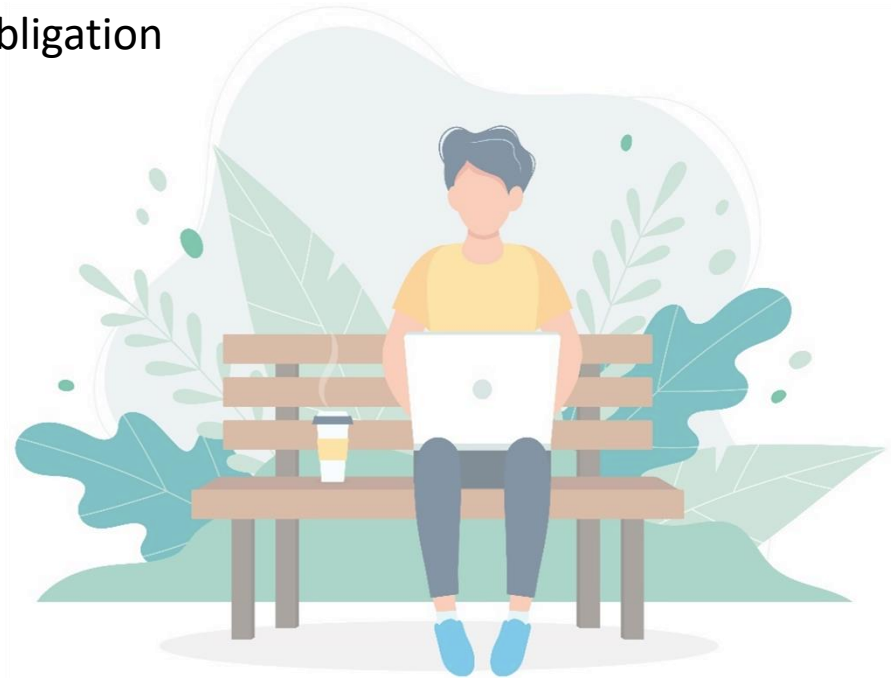
In order to receive unemployment payments, job seekers generally need to meet mutual obligation requirements.

These payments are:

- JobSeeker Payment
- Youth Allowance
- Parenting Payment
- Special Benefit



Mutual obligation requirements ensure job seekers are doing all they can to become self-sufficient through paid work.



Mutual Obligation Requirements



Claimants of unemployment payments are generally required to connect with an employment services provider before receiving payment.



Job seekers will then be required to enter into a Job Plan which outlines their mutual obligation requirements.

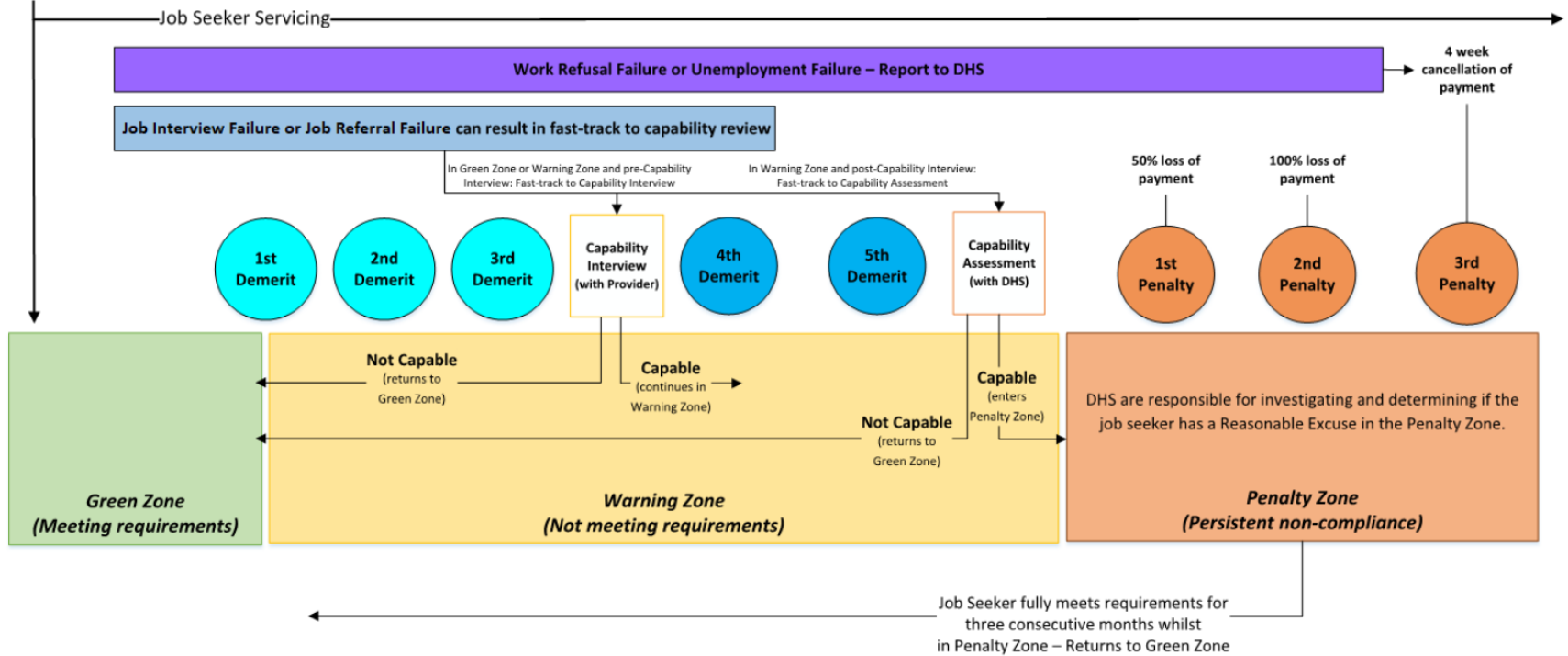


Requirements generally include:

- In Workforce Australia, meeting a monthly Points Target (including a minimum job search requirement) and a mandatory activation requirement
- In Disability Employment Services, applying for up to 20 jobs per month, and undertaking other suitable activities
- Attending appointments with an employment services provider
- Attending all job interviews
- Accepting offers of suitable paid work

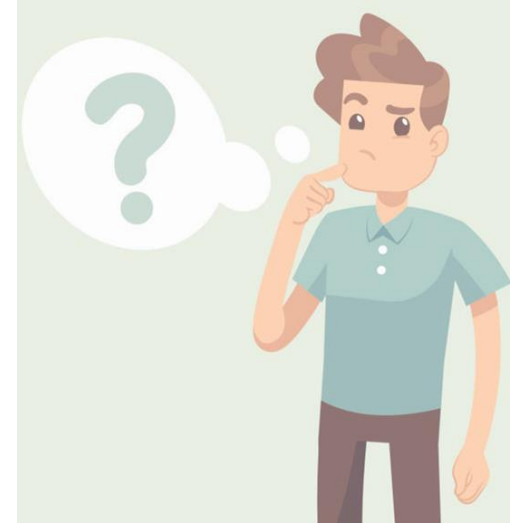
What if job seekers do not meet their requirements?

Job seeker commences in Employment Services





What if job seekers have difficulty meeting their requirements?

- ▶ Requirements should be appropriate and achievable
- ▶ Requirements can be adjusted to circumstances
- ▶ Job seekers unable to meet their requirements may be eligible for a temporary exemption
- ▶ Job seekers with a reasonable excuse for missing a requirement will not face financial penalty or accrue a demerit



What's different related to drugs and alcohol?

Since July 2018:

-  Job seekers are not eligible for an exemption where the reason is predominantly due to drug or alcohol misuse.
-  Job seekers who do not wish to participate in treatment cannot use drug and alcohol dependency as a reasonable excuse.

Removal of exemptions

- Criteria in legislation provide for cases for exemptions from mutual obligation requirements.
 - Since July 2018 legislative changes mean exemptions where the reason is “wholly or predominantly attributable to the person's misuse of alcohol or another drug” cannot be granted.
- However, job seekers’ requirements may be adjusted around participation in treatment.
- If job seekers are prevented from meeting a requirement due to circumstances beyond their control, they may have a valid reason/reasonable excuse.



Tightening of reasonable excuse

- Impacts of drug and alcohol dependency **must** be considered in assessing whether a person has a reasonable excuse for not meeting a requirement.
- After one use as a reasonable excuse, they may not be able to use the impact of drug and alcohol misuse again.
 - This does not apply if:
 - the person agrees to participate in treatment
 - appropriate treatment is unavailable
 - the person cannot participate in treatment
 - the person is not referred to treatment.

Employment Services Assessments (ESAts)

- Job seekers who have long-term disability or medical conditions impacting their ability to work may be referred for an ESAt
- Conducted by health and allied health professionals at Services Australia
- May be assessed as having an ongoing Partial Capacity to Work
- May be assessed as having a Temporary Reduced Work Capacity (e.g. to undergo treatment for a short period)
- Job seekers with reduced work capacity have reduced mutual obligation requirements and may be Centrelink-managed

Job seekers in residential rehabilitation

- Not required to undertake job search or other activities
- Employment services providers or the Digital Services Contact Centre (DSCC) must be advised of admission and release dates
- Facilities have implied authority to advise providers or the DSCC that job seekers have entered residential rehabilitation
- Providers or the DSCC will reduce their requirements

DSCC: 1800 314 677 or DigitalServices@dewr.gov.au

