



Australian Government



Period of Service Guidelines

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Disclaimer

This document is not a stand-alone document and does not contain the entirety of Disability Employment Services Providers' obligations. It should be read in conjunction with the Disability Employment Services Grant Agreement and any relevant guidelines or reference material issued by the Department of Social Services under or in connection with the Disability Employment Services Grant Agreement.

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Period of Service Guidelines

Document Change History

Version	Effective Date	End Date	Change & Location
1.0	01 July 2018	8 March 2020	Original version of document
1.1	9 March 2020		Narrative: Various Department name changes

Background

A Period of Service is the period during which a Participant can receive employment support from their Disability Employment Services (DES) Provider, and to which various outcome fees and other payments are attached.

A Participant's Period of Service:

- begins when the Participant Commences in DES;
- pauses for the duration of any Suspension period; and
- ends when the Participant reaches 52 weeks of Employment or Exits the program.

A Participant that reaches 78 weeks in Employment Assistance will Exit the program and their Period of Service will end. However, the Participant can undergo a Program Review to determine whether further DES support is likely to produce an employment outcome. Where a Program Review recommends additional DES support, the Participant's time in Employment Assistance can extend to 104 weeks. Participants who are receiving Post Placement Support or Ongoing Support when this period expires continue to receive services, but their Period of Service is complete and they must be exited when they reach 52 weeks of Employment. The Period of Service is also completed if the Participant loses their Employment any time after the 26-week Outcome.

A Participant who completes their Period of Service, or who exits DES after achieving at least a 26-week outcome, may be referred back to DES for a new Period of Service. A Participant who exits DES before completing their Period of Service can resume their incomplete Period of Service if they return to DES within 91 days of their exit.

A Participant's Period of Service may be Suspended when:

- a Volunteer (Non-Mutual Obligation) experiences a situation which affects their capacity to participate in voluntary activities (whether identified by the DES Provider or notified by Centrelink) for a specified period of time,
- a Participant (Mutual Obligation) or a Disability Support Pension (DSP) recipient (Compulsory Requirements) is identified as being unable or not required to participate on a compulsory basis in DES for a specified period by Services Australia. These Participants can volunteer to participate in their DES program during the period of their Suspension, and their Period of Service would continue during this period of voluntary participation. During the period of volunteering, the DES Provider must deliver Services in accordance with the Participant's Job Plan and the DES Grant Agreement.
- a Participant requires a Program Review, and this is delayed beyond 78 weeks of Employment Assistance; or

- a Participant who is in Post Placement Support voluntarily changes jobs, and there is a period of up to five Business Days between the jobs when they are temporarily not in Employment (this is known as a 'Change in Employment' suspension). The DES Provider is not required to re-anchor the Outcome.

A Participant's Period of Service relates to the DES program, rather than a particular DES service. If a Participant who is receiving DES is assessed by a Services Australia Assessor (Assessor) as requiring a different DES service, the Participant is transferred between the DES Disability Management Service and the DES Employment Support Service at point in time, and their Period of Service is not restarted. Similarly, a Participant transfers from one provider to a different provider at point in time, and their Period of Service is not restarted.

After a 52-week Employment Outcome has been achieved, DES Providers should determine if the Participant requires further DES assistance through Ongoing Support (if they are not in Ongoing Support already), or if the Participant should Exit as an Independent Worker. In either case, the Period of Service ends. If the decision is to Exit the Participant, the Participant should be notified within five business days and the decision discussed before actioning the Exit, either immediately or within 20 days of the Participant being informed. If the Participant cannot be contacted within a reasonable time frame, the DES Provider may Exit the Participant without making contact.

After a 26 Week Education Outcome has been achieved, the Participant will automatically be Exited from DES and the Period of Service will end.

A Participants' Period of Service is calculated daily.

Disability Employment Services Grant Agreement Clauses:

Clause 132– Effect of Suspensions

Clause 133 – Suspensions

Clause 134 – Effect of Exits

Clause 135 – Exits

Clause 136 – Other Suspensions and Exits

Annexure A – Definitions of 'Voluntary Change in Employment'

Reference documents relevant to this Guideline:

Program Review, Program Summary and Exits Guidelines

Eligibility, Referral and Commencement Guidelines

Contacts Guidelines

Records Management Instructions Guidelines

Documentary Evidence for Claims for Payment Guidelines

Explanatory Note:

All capitalised terms have the same meaning as in Disability Employment Services Grant Agreement. In this document, "must" means that compliance is mandatory and "should" means that compliance represents best practice.

Calculation of Participants' Period of Service

Who is Responsible:	What is Required:
<p>1. The DES Provider Provider Commences Participant in DES</p>	<p>A Participant's Period of Service starts when the Provider meets with the Participant and Commences them in the Department's IT Systems.</p> <p>The Period of Service commences at a count of one day, and is recalculated each day to reflect the time that the Participant has received DES services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed to Step 2
<p>2. The DES Provider DES Provider determines that a Participant is or should be Suspended</p>	<p>A Participant's Period of Service may be paused when the Participant's program referral is Suspended. A Suspension also pauses the Participant's progress towards the next Service Fee or Outcome Fee, and the DES Provider's requirement under the Grant Agreement to provide services to the Participant.</p> <p>Certain Suspended Participants may be Exited from DES if they advise their DES Provider that they wish to do so. See the <i>Program Review, Program Summary and Exits Guidelines</i>.</p> <p>A Suspension may occur in a number of ways, as detailed below.</p>
<p>2a. The Department's IT Systems System enters suspension when Participant (Mutual Obligation) or DSP Recipient (Compulsory Requirements) is Exempt from requirements by Services Australia</p>	<p>Participants (Mutual Obligation) or DSP Recipients (Compulsory Requirements) may be granted an Exemption from their requirements by Services Australia.</p> <p>When Services Australia records an Exemption, Participants in Employment Assistance will be automatically Suspended in DES for the period of the Exemption.</p> <p>DES Providers will be able to see details of Suspensions on the <i>Suspension and Volunteering</i> screen in Participants' individual records.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed to Step 3
<p>2b. The Department's IT Systems System enters suspension when Participant (Mutual Obligation) Requirements or DSP Recipient (Compulsory Requirements) is assessed as having TRWC 0-14 hours or PCW 0-14 hours</p>	<p>When a Services Australia Assessor assesses a Participant as having a Temporary Reduced Work Capacity (TRWC) or a Partial Capacity to Work (PCW) of less than 15 hours, the Participant in Employment Assistance will be Suspended in DES for the period recorded by the Assessor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed to Step 3 <p>Note: If the Participant is assessed as having a future work capacity with intervention of 0-7 hours, they are ineligible for DES and must be Exited by the DES Provider (see <i>Program Review, Program Summary and Exits Guidelines</i>).</p>
<p>2c. The Department's IT Systems</p>	<p>When a Participant (Mutual Obligation) or DSP recipient (Compulsory Requirements) fully meets those requirements, as</p>

Who is Responsible:	What is Required:
System enters suspension when Participant (Mutual Obligation) or DSP recipient (Compulsory Requirements) is fully meeting requirements	<p>assessed and recorded by Services Australia, the Participant will be Suspended in DES for the period of the activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed to Step 3
<p>2d. The Department's IT Systems</p> <p>System enters suspension when Mature aged Participant with Mutual Obligation Requirements is satisfying their requirements through paid and/or voluntary work</p>	<p>When a mature aged (55 or over) Participant is satisfying their requirements by undertaking 30 hours of paid and/or voluntary work a fortnight, and this is recorded by Services Australia, they will be automatically Suspended in DES.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed to Step 3
<p>2e. The Department's IT Systems</p> <p>System enters suspension when Participant's Program Review is delayed beyond 78 weeks of Employment Assistance</p>	<p>DES Providers cannot service a Participant after 78 weeks of Employment Assistance until the Participant's eligibility for Extended Employment Assistance has been tested through a Program Review.</p> <p>If the Program Review is delayed beyond 78 weeks of Employment Assistance, the Participant will be automatically suspended in DES until the Program Review is finalised.</p> <p><i>(See Program Review, Program Summary and Exit Guidelines).</i> This is to ensure that, if assessed as eligible, the full six months of Extended Employment Assistance is available.</p> <p>The Suspension ends when the DES Provider or the Assessor conducts and finalises the Program Review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed to Step 5
<p>2f. The DES Provider</p> <p>Provider manually suspends Volunteer (Non-mutual Obligation) who experiences a situation that impacts on their ability to participate</p>	<p>When a Volunteer (Non-Mutual Obligation) experiences a situation that impacts on their ability to participate in activities with their DES Provider for a set period of time, the DES Provider must manually Suspend the Participant by recording the period and reasons that they cannot participate, in the <i>Suspensions and Volunteering</i> section of the Participant's record.</p> <p>Reasons that a Volunteer (Non-mutual Obligation) may require a Suspension include (but are not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • illness; • travel; • family responsibilities; • school holiday; or • personal issues.

Who is Responsible:	What is Required:
	<p>The Suspension should be for the period that they cannot participate, or for a period up to a maximum of 13 weeks. Multiple periods of 13 weeks may be recorded if appropriate.</p> <p>If a Volunteer (Non-mutual Obligation) has routinely failed to attend Appointments or activities and the DES Provider cannot contact them, the DES Provider may Exit the Participant. If the DES Provider does not wish to Exit the Participant, they must immediately Suspend them until contact resumes (also see <i>Program Review, Program Summary and Exits Guidelines</i> and <i>Contacts Guidelines</i>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed to Step 5
<p>2g. The DES Provider</p> <p>Provider manually suspends Participant who has a Voluntary Change in Employment.</p>	<p>When an employed Participant voluntarily changes jobs, there may be a period of up to 7 Calendar Days between jobs when the Participant is not in Employment.</p> <p>When this occurs in Post Placement Support while the Participant is working towards a 13, 26 or 52 Week Outcome, the DES Provider may manually Suspend the Participant by recording a period up to 7 Calendar Days in the <i>Suspensions and Volunteering</i> section of the Participant's record.</p> <p>The Participant's Period of Service and progress towards an employment Outcome will be Suspended for the period of the recorded Voluntary Change in Employment. When the new job commences within 7 Calendar Days, the DES Provider is not required to record a new anchor but may continue to work towards the 13, 26 or 52 Week Outcome based on the original Anchor Date. The Period of Service and progress towards an employment outcome resumes when the Participant commences their new job.</p> <p>If the DES Provider does not wish to access the Voluntary Change in Employment provisions, or the Participant will be out of Employment for longer than 7 Calendar Days, the current outcome period must be ended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where the 26 Week Outcome has not been claimed, the DES Provider must return the Participant to Employment Assistance. Any subsequent Employment must be re-anchored. The Period of Service continues. • where the 26 Week Outcome has already been achieved, the DES Provider must Exit the Participant from DES. The Period of Service terminates. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed to Step 5
<p>3. The DES Provider</p> <p>DES Provider determines whether a Participant wants to volunteer to receive services during a Suspension.</p>	<p>DES Providers will receive a noticeboard message informing them when a Participant (Mutual Obligation) or DSP recipient (Compulsory Requirements) has been Suspended by Services Australia. These Participants may elect to volunteer for DES during a Suspension:</p>

Who is Responsible:	What is Required:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services Australia Providers may choose to contact Participants who are Suspended in DES to discuss with them the option of volunteering, and the Participant may agree to volunteer; or • Services Australia may book a Contact or call a Participant’s DES Provider to inform them that a Participant wishes to volunteer; or • Participants may contact their DES Provider to request services, and elect to volunteer. <p>In these circumstances, DES Providers must agree with the Participant on the period of volunteering. The Participant’s Period of Service will continue during the volunteering period, and the DES Provider must deliver appropriate Services, in accordance with the DES Grant Agreement, during this period.</p> <p>Note: Volunteering to receive services during a Suspension period applies only to Participants (Mutual Obligation) and DSP recipients (Compulsory Requirements). Volunteers (Non-Mutual Obligation) cannot volunteer to participate, but the Suspension may be lifted where appropriate. Participants who are Suspended due to a delayed Program Review (2e) are also unable to volunteer to receive services.</p> <p>TRWC 0-7 Participants</p> <p>Where a Participant is Suspended with a TRWC 0-7 and wishes to volunteer, DES Providers may agree that volunteering is appropriate. However, in certain circumstances DES Providers may decide not to allow the Participant to volunteer if they assess that it would be unsafe or not in the Participant’s interests to participate in voluntary activities. If the DES Provider does not agree to voluntary activities for a TRWC 0-7 Participant, they must keep a record of their reasons for this decision. The Participant will remain Suspended until the period of TRWC 0-7 is complete.</p> <p>Note: Employment Outcomes are payable in relation to a Participant’s Employment Benchmark, and are not payable for work of less than 8 hours per week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If volunteering is discussed with Participant and they agree to participate in voluntary activities, Proceed to Step 4 • If no contact is made, the Participant declines to participate in voluntary activities, or the DES Provider does not agree to voluntary participation for a TRWC 0-7 Participant Proceed to Step 5
<p>4. The DES Provider</p> <p>DES Provider must record the period that the Participant elects to receive Services as a volunteer in the Department’s IT Systems, update the Job</p>	<p>If a Participant on a Suspension advises their DES Provider at any stage that they wish to participate in voluntary activities, the DES Provider must record the period that the Participant elects to receive services as a volunteer on the Department’s IT Systems. The period of volunteering must not exceed the expected end date</p>

Who is Responsible:	What is Required:
<p>Plan and continue to provide DES to the Participant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Program Summary, Program Review and Exits Guidelines.</i> 	<p>of the Suspension, and the start of the volunteering period must not be backdated.</p> <p>The DES Provider and the Participant must agree on the activities the Participant is able to participate in voluntarily, and for what period the Participant wishes to be classified as a volunteer. The Participant may elect to volunteer for the entire remaining period of the Suspension, or for a shorter period.</p> <p>Once the details are agreed upon, the DES Provider must update the Participant’s Job Plan with the details of the agreed voluntary activities, and record on the Department’s IT Systems that the Participant is participating as a volunteer.</p> <p>The Participant’s Period of Service and progress towards the next Service Fee or Outcome Fee resume for the period the Participant elects to volunteer. As the Participant is now actively participating in DES, the DES Provider must continue to provide the Services to the Participant for the period of volunteering.</p> <p>A Participant may elect to have numerous periods of volunteering during a Suspension. If a period of volunteering ends and the Participant is still Suspended, DES Providers should discuss with the Participant whether they wish to continue volunteering. If they elect to continue, then another period of volunteering may be recorded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed to Step 5.
<p>5. The Department’s IT Systems</p> <p>Suspension Ends – Period of Service and Payment Period resume.</p>	<p>DES Providers will receive a noticeboard message when a Participant’s Suspension ends.</p> <p>DES Providers should action Suspension notifications immediately.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For recorded Suspensions for Volunteer (Non-mutual Obligation), Proceed to Step 6 • For recorded Suspensions for Participant (Mutual Obligation) or DSP recipient (Compulsory Requirements), Proceed to Step 7 <p>Note: Once the Suspension has ended, the Period of Service and progress towards the next Service Fee or Outcome Fee for the Participant resume, and the DES Provider must continue to provide DES to the Participant.</p>
<p>6. The DES Provider</p> <p>DES Provider resumes delivery of DES to Volunteer (Non-Mutual Obligation)</p>	<p>Once the manual Suspension has ended, the DES Provider must resume the delivery of DES.</p> <p>The DES Provider should contact the Participant by their preferred notification method (that is, phone, email, SMS or letter) to arrange a suitable Contact Appointment.</p> <p>If the Participant is still experiencing circumstances that prevent them from participating, the DES Provider must record another</p>

Who is Responsible:	What is Required:
	<p>Suspension (as per Step 2 above), or discuss Exiting the Participant from DES, if eligible for Exit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of Process.
<p>7. The DES Provider</p> <p>DES Provider resumes delivery of DES to Participant (Mutual Obligation) or DSP recipient (Compulsory Requirements).</p>	<p>When a Services Australia recorded Suspension ends, the DES Provider must resume the delivery of DES.</p> <p>The DES Provider should contact the Participant by their preferred method (that is, phone, email, SMS or letter) to arrange a suitable Contact Appointment.</p> <p>If the Participant has been a Volunteer (Non-mutual Obligation) during their Suspension period, the DES Provider should first check to see if any future Appointments have already been booked for them.</p> <p>As the Participant has resumed their Mutual Obligation Requirements or compulsory participation requirements, they will require an immediate review and update of their Job Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of Process.