

What are mutual obligations?

In return for certain social security entitlements, you must complete a variety of tasks and activities. These tasks and activities are known as mutual obligations.

How does it work

Mutual obligations (obligations) are tasks and activities you agree to do while receiving:

- JobSeeker Payment,
- Youth Allowance for job seekers,
- Parenting Payment after your youngest child turns 6, and
- Special Benefit paid under certain circumstances.

You will also have participation requirements if you receive either:

- Disability Support pension (DSP) and you are younger than 35 and meet other rules
- Parenting Payment and are a compulsory ParentsNext participant.

If you fail to meet your obligations, suspension of your payment, demerits or financial penalties may apply.

How to meet your obligations

Each month, you are allocated a points target of up to a maximum of 100 and your target can vary month to month depending on your circumstances.

To reach your points target, you must complete a range of tasks and activities to earn points. Job seekers generally will need to complete at minimum five job searches each month.

For example, if your points target is 100, you could meet this obligation by attending counselling (15 points), completing two job applications (5 points each), attending a job interview (25 points) and starting a job (50 points). Visit WorkForce Australia at www.workforceaustralia.gov.au and search 'points values for tasks and activities'.

If you are a principal carer, aged 55 or older or in the Community Development Program, your obligations could vary. In some instances, approved voluntary work can be completed to meet your obligations.

Visit WorkForce Australia at www.workforceaustralia.gov.au and search 'approved voluntary work'.

Summary of obligations based on age

Your age	Obligations
Under 54	Meet your points target each month.
55 to 59	First 12 months: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet your points target each month, or • Undertake 30 hours per fortnight of paid work, or • Undertake 30 hours per fortnight of a combination of paid work and approved voluntary work (a minimum of 15 hours per fortnight must be paid work) After 12 months: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet your points target each month, or • Undertake 30 hours per fortnight of paid work, or • Undertake 30 hours per fortnight of approved voluntary work, or • Undertake 30 hours of a combination of paid work or approved voluntary work
60 to age pension age (66.5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet your points target each month, or • Undertake 30 hours per fortnight of paid work, or • Undertake 30 hours approved voluntary work, or • Undertake 30 hours of a combination of paid work or approved voluntary work

If you're unable to meet your obligations

If your (or your partner's) personal circumstances change, you find it hard to meet your obligations or you intend to travel overseas you should contact Services Australia to discuss your options as soon as possible. Ideally, before your obligations are due.

If you do not meet your obligations, Services Australia will reduce or stop your payment.

1. De facto spouse generally means someone who is living with you as your partner on a permanent or indefinite basis.

Fact sheet: What are mutual obligations?

Exemptions

Depending on your circumstances, you may get a temporary exemption from your requirements. For example:

- you're experiencing a crisis such as the death of an immediate family member, family and domestic violence or being homeless
- you're sick or injured and have an approved medical certificate
- you're affected by a disaster such as fire or flood
- you have short term caring duties
- you're pregnant and it's less than 6 weeks before the expected date of birth or less than 6 weeks after birth
- you're a principal carer of 4 or more dependent children.
- You may also be exempted if you provide a medical certificate stating you are unfit for work for a specified period.

For more information on mutual obligations, visit Services Australia at www.servicesaustralia.gov.au and search 'mutual obligations'.

Important information

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