

STUDENT ADVISORY SERVICE

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The information in this leaflet is accurate at the time of print. However, as it is occasionally subject to change, students are asked to seek further advice from their centre Student Advisers.



STUDENT ADVISORY SERVICE

Job Seekers' Allowance and the 16-Hour Rule for Students

This leaflet explains the rules for people who want to study or train part-time on Job Seekers' Allowance.

JOB SEEKERS' ALLOWANCE

Don't give up – you can study and sign on. We'll help you find out how:

Q: What is the Job Seekers' Allowance?

A: From October 1996:

· **Job Seekers' Allowance or JSA** replaced Unemployment Benefit and Income Support for people who sign on.

· You will be allowed to study for up to 16 hours per week but only as long as you remain "available for and actively seeking work".

· You will sign a **Job Seekers' Allowance Agreement** at your benefit office to show what you are doing to look for work.

· If you turn down or refuse to apply for a vacancy, your benefit may be stopped.

Q: How can I study and get the Job Seekers' Allowance?

A: You need to tell the benefits agency that you are studying part time (up to 16 hours). They will accept as evidence a copy of the College Learning Agreement, which you will be able to obtain from Centre General Offices.

In your Job Seekers' Agreement, you will have to show that you are:

- Prepared to apply for a certain number of jobs each week.
- Willing and able to take time off from your course to attend a job interview.

· Willing and able to fit in your course attendance with a job or if you cannot do this you are prepared to give up the course to take up a job.

· Able to have messages about jobs left for you at the College during your study hours. Don't worry if all this means you have to miss classes – your tutors will understand and will help you to catch up.

Q: How will they check my situation?

A: When you go to sign on, you will have to prove to the Employment Service that you are "actively seeking work" – this will mean:

· Showing to Employment Service Officers job application letters, adverts etc. as well as giving details of any interviews you have attended.

· You will have to attend Job Clubs, Restarts, Job Search Courses, etc. as and when they come up. Advisers may sometimes help re-schedule these appointments.

· If a suitable job is offered to you by the Employment Service, you will have to accept it – otherwise you will be seen as "not available for work".

The College can help you to apply for work. Make an appointment with the Employment Solutions Service in the college – they run special workshops to make sure you meet the terms of your **Job Seekers' Agreement**.

Q: Does this apply to everyone on Benefit?

A: The only people who do not have to show that they are actively seeking work are:

- Those under-19 and in full time education
- Those who have under 16 (18 in some cases) dependent children. These students will continue to receive Income Support with no restrictions on their hours of study.
- Those claiming sickness or disability/incapacity benefits.
- Those who are pregnant.

Q: Can I negotiate my Job Seekers' Allowance agreement?

A: You don't have to sign the agreement there if you are not happy with any part of it (e.g. don't agree to more job applications per week than the minimum).

· Say you want more time and come and get advice from a Student Adviser if you aren't sure about anything.

· You don't have to sign the Job Seekers' Allowance agreement until you have it explained to you in your first language. Ask for a translator to help you if you aren't sure what you are signing.

Q: What do I do if I need help?

A: Talk to a Student Adviser before you go for a meeting about your benefit. They will make sure you understand your rights and know how to answer questions about your College course.

Don't Forget: Do not tackle the Employment Service alone – always get help from a Student Adviser as to your rights under the rules.