

Program of Support

In order to qualify for the Disability Support Pension (DSP) you may need to have participated in a Program of Support (POS).

The Program of Support (POS) requirement does NOT apply to you if your impairments have been rated at least 20 points on a *single* impairment table (for example, 20 points on Table 1).

Program of Support can be complicated. We recommend you contact Basic Rights Queensland for advice about Program of Support if you are claiming the Disability Support Pension.

What is a Program of Support (POS)?

A Program of Support is a Commonwealth government funded vocational, rehabilitation or employment program (usually through an Employment Service e.g. JobActive or Disability Employment Service) tailored to address the person's impairment and other barriers to employment. A Program of Support is designed to assist you to prepare for, find or maintain work.

How will a Program of Support help me?

The Program of Support should be tailored to address your disability or impairment so that you can develop skills to help you prepare for, find or maintain employment.

Your Program of Support should include activities that help you look and prepare for jobs, work experience, return to work, or education and training.

Centrelink guidelines say the Program of Support must include one of the following:

Job search, job preparation, education and training, work experience, employment, return to work, vocational and occupational rehabilitation, injury management or an activity designed to assist you to prepare for, find or maintain work.

How do I meet the requirements of a Program of Support for DSP?

To demonstrate that you have **actively participated in a Program of Support**, you need to show that in the three years before you claimed the Disability Support Pension:

- you have participated with a program of support for 18 months* in total; OR
- completed a course that counted as a Program of Support even if it is less than 18 months; OR
- if you have participated with a POS at some stage in the previous 3 years and can provide evidence (e.g. medical evidence or evidence from your employment provider) that continuing the program would not help improve your capacity to prepare for, find or maintain work.
- you were with a program of support which was terminated because your medical conditions alone meant that continuing would not improve your capacity to prepare for, find or maintain work through the continued participation in the program.

***Please note:** Any time that you spend on an exemption from your activity requirements (e.g. with medical certificates) will not count towards the 18 months in total participation in a Program of Support. This means that temporary exemptions can actually delay your eligibility for DSP.

Appeal Rights

If your Disability Support Pension (DSP) claim has been rejected you have 13 weeks to lodge an appeal, otherwise you may not receive full arrears if you are successful. To appeal, simply tell Centrelink that you wish to appeal/review the rejection of your DSP application.

Once you have had a review by an Authorised

Review Officer (ARO) you have the right to appeal further to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Level 1 (AAT1) and you need to do this within 13 weeks of the ARO decision to receive full arrears.

If you have already had a review with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT1) you can appeal this decision within 28 days to Administrative Appeals Tribunal Level 2 (AAT2).

If your circumstances have changed since you first lodged your claim (e.g. your condition has deteriorated, you have seen further specialists, stabilised on further treatment or are now attending or meet one of the program of support criteria) it may be advisable to lodge a new claim for the DSP. This new claim does not prevent you from proceeding with your appeal which can only consider your eligibility for the DSP within 13 weeks of the date of your original claim.

Interpreters

Most Centrelink offices have interpreters available at regular times each week. Your local Centrelink office can tell you about their available languages and times.

You can telephone the Centrelink Multilingual Call Centre on 131 202 and speak to a bilingual Centrelink officer.

You can also call the **free** Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS) on 131 450 and ask for an interpreter.

Please note:

This Fact Sheet was prepared by Basic Rights Queensland (BRQ). It contains general information only and does not constitute legal advice.

BRQ is a member of Economic Justice Australia (EJA). EJA members are community legal centres which provide specialist legal services in relation to Social Security (Centrelink).

BRQ also provides specialist legal services in relation to Disability Discrimination and non-legal advice services to Queensland women who are seeking assistance with problems at work.

BRQ is independent of Centrelink or any other government body and all assistance is free.

For advice about social security or disability discrimination problems call **1800 358 511**.

For advice for women experiencing workplace problems call **1800 621 458**.

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