

**SENATE EMPLOYMENT, WORKPLACE RELATIONS AND EDUCATION  
LEGISLATION COMMITTEE**

**2007-2008 BUDGET SENATE ESTIMATES HEARING  
28 AND 29 MAY 2007  
EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS PORTFOLIO**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Outcome 3: Increased workforce participation**

**Output Group 3.1: Working age policy**

**Output 3.1.1: Working age policy and legislation**

**Question Number: W197-08**

**Question:**

Senator Siewert asked in writing:

Is any consideration taken of current study requirements when considering what constitutes a suitable job? For example if a person has one year left of a university degree and the particular working hours of a particular job would require that person to give up study would that job be considered suitable?

**Answer:**

A Newstart Allowance recipient would be unlikely to be undertaking the final year of a university degree on a full-time basis. For most NSA recipients, full-time study can only be approved by their Provider of Australian Government Employment Services and can only be approved if:

- it is for less than 12 months, and
- there is little chance of the job seeker finding employment with their existing skills, and/or
- completing the course is likely to lead to an early employment outcome for the job seeker.

Providers are therefore expected to limit approvals to short vocational courses in most cases. An example of when full-time academic study might be approved is where a person has been unsuccessful in their job search but has only a single study period (for example a semester) to complete in order to obtain a degree that would greatly improve their employment prospects.

A job seeker who is participating in approved full-time study or training is not required to undertake job search or participate in other activities. However, they are still required to attend the office of their Provider or Centrelink if required and they must still accept any offer of suitable employment, regardless of whether or not it would interfere with their study.

A job seeker could undertake the final year of a university degree on a part-time basis if they were able to fully meet the activity test despite their study. In this case they would be required to look for and accept any suitable paid work.

A principal carer on Parenting Payment with participation requirements can fully meet those participation requirements by full-time study, and can study full-time to complete a course that they commenced on Parenting Payment if they move on to Newstart Allowance or Youth Allowance as a principal carer. In such cases they are not required to accept offers of suitable employment. As with other job seekers, if the study were part-time, they would be required to look for and accept any suitable paid work.

**Estimated cost:** Using the FOI calculator, to prepare this answer it has taken approximately one hour at an estimated cost of \$20.