



Australian Government

Workforce Australia

Doing irregular or freelance work to meet your mutual obligations

This factsheet explains how to report irregular or freelance work to meet your mutual obligation requirements. This includes work like self-employment, commissioned or project based work, or other sources of irregular income.

Examples of irregular or freelance work

- Freelance photographer
- Freelance designer
- Writer
- Visual artist
- Musician or music industry worker
- Actor or screen industry worker
- Business owner who runs a market stall
- Tutor or instructor
- Sports coach or trainer

Types of job searches that count towards your points target

You can apply for any kind of work that you want to do. This includes non-ongoing opportunities.

Job searches that count towards your monthly points target **include contacting a potential employer (or person) about any potential suitable paid work opportunity.**

You can earn 5 points for this type of job search, in the same way you could for handing in a resume or doing a job application online.

Job search examples

- Applying for a grant.
- Contacting the owner of a local venue for a music gig.
- Submitting an application or portfolio for a creative arts project.
- Approaching a publisher with a new manuscript to publish.
- Contacting a potential client who has posted an ad for some one-off web design work.

Activities that count as an interview

Interviews include activities that you need to do to get paid work. For example, auditioning for a role in a paid local production would be considered 'attending an interview', and you can earn 25 points towards your points target. This is

because an audition has a similar purpose to a job interview. You're meeting with an employer to show them you can do the role.

Interview examples

- An audition for a local paid production.
- Auditioning for a paid position in a local band.
- Meeting with a publisher to discuss your new manuscript.
- Working with a client to develop or secure a commissioned artwork.
- Having a zoom meeting with a potential client for your small business to discuss the services you offer.

Starting a job and how to report your work

If you are **offered and accept any suitable paid work, you can earn 50 points** towards your points target for your reporting period. This includes contract work and non-ongoing opportunities. Like photographing a wedding or playing a music set in a local venue.

Depending on how you're paid, you may need to calculate how many points are counted towards your points target under the **sufficient work test**. If your hourly rate of pay:

- is **at or above legal minimum wage**: You can report the total hours you worked. Check the award rate for your industry using the Fair Work Ombudsman's Pay Calculator (www.calculate.fairwork.gov.au/FindYourAward).
- works out to be **below minimum wage**: You can only report the equivalent hours you worked based on your income according to the national minimum wage. See the example below.

Sufficient work test example

A local community centre commissioned Lillian to produce a painting. They paid her \$400 and it took her 25 hours to complete the painting over a month. This means Lillian earned \$16 per hour ($\$400 \div 25$ hours).

This works out to be **below the national minimum wage** of \$21.38 per hour. This means Lillian needs to use the 'sufficient work test' to work out **how many hours of work she can report** to meet her Points Target. Paid work is worth 5 points per 5 hours and is rounded up to the nearest 5-hour mark.

Using the national minimum wage, Lillian's equivalent hours of work is 18.7 hours for the reporting period ($\$400 \div \$21.38 = 18.7$ hours). She can round this up and **report 20 hours of work in the reporting period**. This earns her 20 points towards her points target.

An appointment with your provider (if you have one) should not interfere with undertaking paid work. This includes irregular or freelance work.

You can update your Calendar (www.workforceaustralia.gov.au/content/documents/transcript-how-to-create-a-personal-event.docx) using the Workforce Australia app or website to show your availability. Your provider can see this, so they know about any prior commitments you have before booking an appointment. If you can't go to the appointment, you must call your provider straight away to reschedule. Contact the National Customer Service Line on 1800 805 260 or at NationalCustomerServiceLine@dewr.gov.au if you need more help.

Example

Sayed sees an ad seeking a digital web content creator to create a website. It's for a start-up company. He contacts the person advertising the project. **This counts as a job search effort and Sayed earns 5 points.**

The person says they would like to meet with Sayed via a video or phone call. Sayed meets with them to discuss his previous experience in web content creation and show some of his previous work. **This counts as an interview and Sayed earns 25 points.**

Sayed is successful at winning the project at the end of the video call. **He accepts the work and earns 50 points.**

Overall, Sayed **earned 80 points** through getting this work. 5 points (job search) + 25 points (interview) + 50 points (accepting a paid job).

If the work took Sayed 20 hours to complete over his reporting period and he earned \$500 from it, **he could report an extra 20 points** (5 points for every 5 hours of paid work rounded up). This is because his hourly rate is \$25 per hour ($\$500 \div 20$ hours = \$25 per hour), which is above the minimum wage.

Counting voluntary work towards your points target

Voluntary work is another way you can meet your requirements. Voluntary work can count for:

- 15 points per week for up to 15 hours and 20 points per week for over 15 hours, if it's sourced through your provider
- 5 points for 5 hours, up to a maximum of 10 points per month, if you source the voluntary work yourself.

You can find out more about points values for different activities on the Workforce Australia website

(www.workforceaustralia.gov.au/individuals/obligations/learn/points/earn-points).

Voluntary work examples

- Volunteering at a community organisation on an arts exhibition.
- Building shelving for an office of a local charity which is a registered voluntary organisation.
- Leading tours for visitors at a local attraction on behalf of a local historical society.