Chapter 4 – Start, Time on Programme and Completion

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Introduction

1. This section provides details on how to notify Jobcentre Plus that the claimant has started on the Skills for Work (Wales) programme. It also details responsibilities for you and the claimant and how to inform Jobcentre Plus that the claimant has completed their training.

High Level Requirements

2. During this process you must:

- make initial contact with the claimant;
- hold a welcome meeting and undertake an initial assessment;
- start the claimant on the programme;
- ensure the claimant completes the programmes; and
- ensure PRaP is updated appropriately within 24 hours.

Notification of Start

3. You will have up to 10 working days from the date of referral by the Jobcentre Plus personal adviser to meet with the claimant and hold the welcome meeting and undertake the initial assessment. Prior to that meeting you must make contact with the claimant to confirm details for this appointment.

4. As part the welcome meeting and initial assessment you are responsible for explaining to the claimant what is required in terms of:

- standards of behaviour, their responsibilities and required attendance arrangements and emergency procedures;
- the mandatory nature of the programme;
- where and when they will be expected to attend for training including hours of participation; and
- the aims and expectations of training.

5. A claimant is defined as ‘starting’ once they have attended for this meeting and completed, or part completed, the assessment. You must ensure that you have evidence that this activity has taken place, which should include:

   - a completed individual learning plan; and
   - a copy of the assessment.

6. Once this meeting has taken place and the assessment has been completed you should update PRaP to show that the claimant has started on provision within 24 hours.

7. There may be occasions where the claimant attends the welcome meeting and only partially completes the assessment, or fails to comply with the assessment. Where this occurs, the referral should be cancelled. This is done by taking ‘request cancellation of referral’ action in PRaP; and the claimant should then be recorded on PRaP as ‘Did Not Attend Interview’ (DNA).

8. Where the claimant attends the welcome meeting and completes the assessment, but is found to be at Level 1 or above, the referral should be cancelled. This is done by taking ‘request cancellation of referral’ action in PRaP; and the claimant should then be recorded on PRaP as ‘Did Not Start’ (DNS).

9. Should a claimant cease to claim benefits at any point after the referral from Jobcentre Plus and starting on the programme, the adviser will notify you. In these circumstances you can continue to offer the training if the claimant indicates that they want to. In these circumstances DWP will pay for the achievement of a qualification, should the individual be successful.

Claimant finds work

10. If the claimant finds work whilst participating on the programme you can continue to offer training as long as their employer is happy with the arrangement and DWP will pay for the achievement of a qualification, should the individual be successful. In these circumstances there is flexibility to offer training over an extended period. Further participation on the programme will continue on a voluntary basis.

Time on Programme

11. Participation on the Skills for Work (Wales) programme is mandatory for all claimants referred. If a claimant fails to participate, you must inform Jobcentre Plus, (initially by phone call), within 24 hours and update PRaP within 48 hours.

12. You should also retain supporting evidence, which includes information regarding:

    - failure to participate in, or complete, the Skills For Work (Wales) programme;
    - refusing a place on the Skills For Work (Wales) programme when notified of the requirement to attend by Jobcentre Plus, demonstrated by a failure to attend for the welcome meeting and initial assessment;
    - failure to attend or participate in any meeting or activity, having been notified of the requirement to attend by the provider; and
    - losing a place on the Skills For Work (Wales) programme through misconduct.

13. See Chapter 6 for action to take in cases of failure to comply and entitlement doubts.

14. You are responsible for ensuring that the claimant fully participates in the training as instructed. You should make clear to them that failing to participate, attend, complete the training or behave in an appropriate manner, could result in a sanction of their benefit.

15. Whilst on the programme the claimant is still required to attend the Jobcentre for Fortnightly Job Search Reviews and to confirm that they are continuing to meet JSA conditionality (actively seeking and available for work).

16. It is the claimant's responsibility to contact Jobcentre Plus to arrange a suitable time (wherever possible) to ensure that this attendance does not impact negatively on their participation on the programme. The same applies for attendance at the Jobcentre to reclaim travel, childcare and or replacement care expenses.

17. Claimants are required to be actively seeking work, and as a consequence they may be required to attend an interview for a job. In these circumstances you will need to be flexible and allow the claimant time to attend. It will be at your discretion to obtain evidence from the claimant of any interviews they request to attend.

18. Each claimant is expected to participate fully in the training on offer including any test or exam. Each claimant is expected to participate fully in the programme which will last up to eight weeks, for a minimum of 7.5 hours per week but not exceeding 16 hours per week, over a seven day period (unless restrictions have been agreed in the claimant's Jobseeker's Agreement . If the claimant fails their exam/test any retake should be scheduled within the eight week period.

19. Any restrictions will be part of the information that is sent to you through PRaP, and you will need to take this into account when developing the individual learning plan. Time spent travelling to and from the training does not form part of the hours of attendance.

20. Claimants will not be referred if they have a planned holiday or other commitments (eg caring responsibilities), in the ten week period following referral. Once a claimant has been referred and they subsequently request a holiday, this will be refused

21. It is your responsibility to explain standards of attendance and timekeeping to each claimant, establishing key principles upfront, which could include:

    - ensuring absences are minimised (eg to arrange routine GP appointments for evening surgeries where possible); and
    - notifying unplanned absences to you as soon as possible (eg for sickness, domestic emergencies etc) emphasising that failure to do so could result in sanction activity.

22. You must not give any incentive payments or rewards to the claimant for participation on the training programme.

23. As a minimum you are expected to keep evidence of the hours a claimant spends on the programme, including the date and the start/end times.

24. You are required to supply a contact landline telephone number for the claimant to use to contact you while they are on the training programme.

Completion of training

25. You are required to give feedback on the claimant's participation on the programme to enable the Jobcentre to take forward and build on any progress made whilst on training. A feedback form must be completed by you, and should be sent to Jobcentre Plus each time a claimant leaves for whatever reason or has completed their training. You can develop your own form and decide what the form looks like, but as a minimum, it should:

    - include a copy of the initial assessment;
    - document how the claimant has performed during the training;
    - verify the claimant's attendance, including number of weeks completed (this information is needed in cases of re-referral for balance of time);
    - provide a view on whether the claimant will have achieved a qualification; and
    - be returned to Jobcentre Plus within 10 working days of the claimant leaving the training programme, or completing the training.

26. The end date should not be input for claimants until:

- it is clear the claimant has not achieved a qualification;
- the claim for the qualification achieved has been paid; or
- the claimant has left provision for another reason, for example, disengaged or ceased claiming benefits.