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| Higher Education and Skills Group**Participation Branch Memo****Department of Education and Early Childhood Development** |

***NUMBER:*** *2014 / 12 / 9*

**TO:**

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| Learn Local organisations *– ALL* | Adult Education Institutions |  |

**FROM:** Bronwen Heathfield, Director, Participation Branch

**DATE:** 09/12/2014

**SUBJECT:** *Education and training participation requirements for learners accessing income support*

**ACTIONS / CRITICAL DATES:**

* Please note the policy advice provided below on education and training participation requirements for learners accessing income support.

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From time to time the Department receives enquiries from Learn Local organisations about education and training participation requirements for learners who receive income support.

Learn Local organisations should note the following advice from the Australian Government Department of Employment for learners who are also job seekers managed either through the Department of Human Services/Centrelink, or through a Job Services Australia provider.

Job seekers managed by the Department of Human Services (DHS) (Centrelink)

* DHS/Centrelink manages and monitors the requirements of job seekers who they deem are exempt from being serviced by a provider. DHS/Centrelink can, in very limited circumstances, approve full–time short courses for job seekers who are not yet connected to a provider. The course would still need to have a clear vocational application.
* To have a course approved by DHS/Centrelink under these conditions, a job seeker must attend their local Service Centre to discuss their individual circumstances and provide evidence of enrolment in the course of study.

Job seekers connected to a Job Services Australia provider

* In Job Services Australia, providers give flexible and tailored support that will assist job seekers to obtain sustainable employment. Through activities such as part-time study or training (which may include employability skills, language literacy and numeracy and vocational training), job seekers can satisfy their participation requirements.
* Job seekers can undertake accredited part-time study to meet their participation requirements. JSA providers have discretion in referring job seekers to appropriate training, depending on the job seeker’s individual needs and the local labour market. The JSA provider can only approve accredited part-time courses for job seekers on the condition the course is:
	+ vocationally orientated
	+ less than 12 months in duration
	+ delivered by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), and
	+ likely to provide a job seeker with a qualification and/or greater employability
* Job seekers can also undertake non-accredited training and, when combined with other activities, the training will count towards meeting a job seeker’s participation requirements.
* Before referring a job seeker to training, a Job Services Australia provider determines whether the training is in the best interests of the job seeker and identifies a suitable course that meets the job seekers interests, abilities and the local employment opportunities. Job Services Australia providers will usually contact the training provider for a preliminary conversation. The provider will also liaise with the relevant training authority and/or the training provider to determine whether the job seeker is eligible for a government subsidised training place.
* The provider will work with the training provider during the period of training to ensure that the job seeker is appropriately supported. Providers are also required to monitor and record a job seeker’s compliance with participation requirements during the period of training and will therefore request information on the job seeker’s attendance in and attainment of the course.

As Learn Local organisations may be aware, work is underway by the Australian Government to prepare for new employment services effective from 1 July 2015. Learn Local organisations will be advised if any changes to this advice occur as a result of these new arrangements.