

# Work and Study

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**Quick summary:** Work and study can be an important part of life for many people. There is support available for you to work or study and many programs that can help. You should talk to us if you think you might need extra support to study or work because of your disability. Even if you are not sure what you want to do, your support coordinator, planner or local area coordinator can help.

**Note:** when we say 'your plan' we mean your NDIS plan. If you're looking for information about your community connections plan, go to [Our Guideline – Community connections](#).

If you're looking for information about your child's early connections plan, go to [Our Guideline – Early connections](#).

## What's on this page?

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You might also be interested in:

- [Assistive technology](#)

## What do we mean by work and study support?

If you want to work or study, we want to support you. You might need support with working or studying now. Or you might want to work or study in the future. This page has information on how we make decisions about the work and study supports we can fund.

When we talk about work and study supports, we mean the extra support you need because of your disability to:

- study at school
- prepare for work
- find your first job or a new job

- do your job
- study somewhere like university or TAFE
- start an apprenticeship
- try things like volunteering or work experience
- work in your own business.

You need to read the information below to understand more about what supports we can fund and when.

## What about other work and study supports?

We can only fund work and study support that is not better funded or provided through another program or service. We call these other supports ‘mainstream services’ because they are available to other Australians, and are not just for people with a disability.

There are lots of mainstream services available to help you with work and study. So when we talk about the supports we can fund, we are only talking about the extra support you need because of your disability that is not provided by mainstream services.

For study, most people get the help they need through their school, university or TAFE. Talk to them if you need support to study, or even if you need help to work out what you want to study.

### Example

Anton has just finished school and is excited to start studying at university. Anton isn't familiar with the university or what it's like to be a university student. He has been talking with his local area coordinator about what supports he may need. Anton thinks he'll need to be able to go over the information in lectures more than once and extra time to do exams.

Anton's local area coordinator helps him link in with the university's program for students with a disability. This program can help with recordings of lectures and extra time to complete exams. Anton doesn't need extra support through the NDIS right now, but he knows he can always talk to his local area coordinator if he needs more help in future.

For more information about work, check out our [webpage on finding, keeping and changing jobs](#).

You should also look at what services are available through [Disability Employment Services \(DES\)](#) and [JobAccess](#). We can fund support to help you get ready for a Disability Employment Service, or look at other supports if you need more than a Disability Employment Service can provide.

You can also read more about the [different organisations who provide work and study support here](#).

<b>What work or study supports can we fund if you need extra support because of your disability?</b>	<b>What don't we usually fund?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• help to build your basic work skills</li> <li>• supports to help you move from school to further study, training or work</li> <li>• supports not available through DES to find and keep a job</li> <li>• training for your teachers or work mates about your individual disability support needs</li> <li>• personal care during work or study</li> <li>• travel to and from work and study in some situations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• changes to buildings where you work or study, like ramps, hoists and lifts</li> <li>• general equipment for work or study. For example, textbooks, computers or office equipment</li> <li>• anything related to teaching and learning. For example, staffing, supervision, learning support, tutoring, equipment, resources or fees</li> <li>• cost of phone calls, photocopying, stationery, meals for training or work</li> <li>• equipment that an employer should provide to meet their legal and business needs, for example safety equipment</li> <li>• equipment and general costs to start your own business</li> <li>• general training for all employees</li> <li>• supports provided by DES providers, when you are eligible for DES.</li> </ul>

Some of the things we don't fund might be available through DES or [JobAccess](#).

You can always [contact us](#) about questions you might have about work or study. You can also speak to your My NDIS Contact or support coordinator.

## How do we decide if work and study supports are reasonable and necessary for you?

All NDIS supports must meet the [reasonable and necessary criteria](#). We fund reasonable and necessary work and study supports for your disability needs.

Ask yourself the questions below. They can help you think about whether we can consider funding work or study supports for you.

Is the work or study support:

- related to your disability?
- helping you pursue your goals?
- effective and beneficial for you?
- legal and safe?
- value for money?
- something we expect informal supports or the community to provide?
- funded or provided by someone else?

### Is the work or study support related to your disability?

We can fund the extra work and study supports you need for your disability. We don't fund work or study support that isn't related to your disability.<sup>1</sup>

You may need extra help to learn about work, help to work out what you're good at, or what sort of work or study suits you. If the type of help you need because of your disability is not available through [DES or mainstream services](#), we may be able to help.

If you're working, your workplace should provide supervision and support to help you understand your role. This is the same for everyone at work. But sometimes you might need extra support because of your disability. This might be things like helping you to stay on track with work tasks or helping you work as part of a team. We may be able to fund this extra help at work if you need it because of your disability and you can't get it from a Disability Employment Service.

When you're studying, you need to pay for your school or university fees like everyone else. We fund the extra support you need because of your disability. For example, we might fund things like personal care while you are at university if you need it because of your disability.

## Does the work or study support help you pursue your goals?

We need to check if your work and study supports will help you pursue your goals.<sup>2</sup> For us to fund work or study supports you need to have a goal in your plan that relates to those things. For example, you might have a goal to get a job, do some work experience, or go to university.

Learn more about [setting goals](#).

## Is the work or study support effective and beneficial for you?

We need to check the work and study supports we fund will be effective and beneficial for you. We look at whether the support will help with your disability support needs. We also look at how effective the supports have been for other people with similar needs as you.

If you are looking to study, develop your work skills, get a job, or change jobs we think about if the supports we fund are likely to help you pursue your goals.

We know building your work and study skills can take time. We think about what supports will help you to build your skills over time and what funding can help with this.

Most people will get some benefit from trying study so we think about what supports are likely to help you with this. We will talk with you to understand what you will get out of it and how the support we fund will help you. We will also consider what benefits people usually get from this kind of support. We usually don't fund supports for study if:

- you are not likely to get some benefit or outcome from the support
- it's not likely you will eventually pass the course. We do understand that some people take extra time to pass their course and that is ok. We just need to make sure the support we fund is likely to be of benefit to you
- you withdraw from the course or are expelled due to misconduct.

If the supports you need for study are aimed at helping you to get a job, we need to check that they:

- are for training provided by a qualified provider
- are likely to help you get the job you want
- mean it's more likely you will successfully finish the course
- will lead to a reasonable chance you will be able to get paid or volunteer work once you finish the course.

## Is the support for work or study legal and safe to use?

The work or study support we fund has to be legal and safe for you and other people.<sup>3</sup> We will consider if there are any risks to you or others in using the supports we fund.

## Is the support for work or study value for money?

Your work or study supports must be value for money, compared to other supports.<sup>4</sup> It is important to consider:

- if there are supports that might achieve the same outcome that are less costly<sup>5</sup>
- if your work and study supports will help you in the long term<sup>6</sup>
- if your work and study supports could help you become more independent, or reduce your support needs in future.<sup>7</sup>

## Is the work or study support funded or provided by someone else?

We might not be able to fund all the supports you need for work or study. Some supports you need for your disability might not be our responsibility to fund and may be better funded or provided through:

- [mainstream services](#)
- [Disability Employment Services](#) or [JobAccess](#)
- [Department of Education, Skills and Employment](#)
- other government departments, like your state or territory government
- your school, TAFE or university
- your business or employer.

Under the law, the place you work or study is responsible for providing you with a safe place to work or study. They should make changes to remove any barriers that stop you from being able to work or study at that place. This is to help you to take part in education, or do your work, on the same basis as someone without a disability.<sup>8</sup> These responsibilities are called 'reasonable adjustments'.

Reasonable adjustments include support and changes that will help you:

- do your work tasks safely
- have the same opportunity to get a job, develop in your job and get promoted
- be treated fairly at work
- do your job as well as you can.

For more information, check out the [Australian Human Rights Commission](#) website.

We can't fund supports that should be provided by your employer, school, university or training provider under reasonable adjustment.

We can help you work out where to get the help you need. Talk to your My NDIS Contact or support coordinator for more information.

## **Do we expect friends, family or the community to provide this support?**

We think about whether we would usually expect family, friends or others in the community to provide the kind of supports you need.<sup>9</sup>

This includes thinking about the different supports that would usually be provided by family and friends at different ages. For example, we might expect a parent to help a small child get settled at the start of the school day but this would not usually be the case for an older child at high school, or an adult at TAFE or university.

We generally expect families to provide their primary or secondary school aged children general help with homework, or getting to and from school.<sup>10</sup> This is the same for all children, even if they don't have a disability.

We don't expect family or friends to provide personal care in the workplace or at school, because this isn't something people would usually do. More information about personal care in the workplace is available here [What work supports do we fund?](#)

## **What work or study supports do we fund?**

You might need different work or study supports at different times in your life. For example, you might start thinking about work as you reach working age, during or at the end of school. We can fund different supports for your work and study now and in the future.

A great starting point for information about work is our [Let's talk about work booklet](#).

## **What can we fund when you're at school?**

We can fund extra support you need at school due to your disability. These are supports that are not primarily related to your education and learning and beyond what the school is responsible for.<sup>11</sup>

### **What does the school fund?**

Your school will fund anything that is part of your education and learning. They must also provide reasonable adjustment for your disability.

For example, the school is responsible for making adjustments or changes to your study resources so that information is provided in a way that you will understand. They are also responsible for making sure you can get into and around your school.

The school should also make sure you have the same opportunities as other students to fully participate in class and other school activities.

### **What can we fund?**

We can fund special training for your teachers about your individual disability support needs. We can also fund other supports you need due to your disability.

You might see **personal care in school** included in your plan. This is for things like helping you go to the toilet, eating or drinking. These supports are funded differently and you don't need to pay for them out of your plan. We refer to this as 'in-kind'.

We might be able to fund **transport to and from school** if you can't catch the bus because of your disability, or if we wouldn't expect your family to take you. Student transport is funded through in-kind arrangements and provided by your state or territory government.

This arrangement will remain in place until 2023, and we are working with other governments on how school transport supports will work after this date. You don't need to pay for transport costs out of your plan. Your pre-paid transport supports will appear on your plan to show that you get that support.

Even though you are at school, you might want **help to find or keep a part-time job** outside of school hours. If you need this extra help because of your disability, we might be able to fund support to help you build skills to get a job. This might include things like working in a team, staying on task or learning to catch the bus or train.

**Work experience** as part of your school curriculum is the responsibility of your school. But if you need extra supports because of your disability to be able to do work experience, we may be able to help with that.

You might also have an opportunity to do a **school based traineeship**, where you combine school, study and work. We can't fund supports that are the responsibility of your employer, school or traineeship provider. But if there are extra disability related supports you need, we might be able to fund those to help you successfully complete your traineeship.

Your support coordinator, local area coordinator or planner can give you more information about these supports.

### **What are the things we don't usually fund?**

We usually don't fund things like:

- school fees

- 1:1 school assistants
- excursions
- textbooks or standard technology as required by your school
- after school care programs
- other things that everyone would need to pay for.<sup>12</sup>

## What if you're finishing school (or just finished) and want to build your work skills?

Leaving school is a big step in your life. It's important to think about your work goals during your last few years of school and as you get close to the end of school.

School Leaver Employment Supports can help you get ready for work when you leave school. They can give you the chance to test different types of work, learn how to follow work tasks or how to behave at work.

School Leaver Employment Supports might be right for you if:

- you're finishing school, or you recently finished school
- you want to start working
- you need to build your skills before you can start work.

More information on employment supports for when you leave school is available here: [School Leaver Employment Supports](#).

We usually fund School Leaver Employment Supports if you:

- need to build your job skills and gain practical experience before you are ready to look for work
- are old enough to leave school or have already left school and are aged 22 or under (and haven't got a job). There are different rules in each state or territory about when you can leave school.

If you're over 22, [learn more about what we can fund to help you find a job](#).

We fund School Leaver Employment Supports in the **Capacity Building – Employment** budget.

## What can we fund if you're in university or other training?

We can consider funding the extra supports you need at university, TAFE, during an apprenticeship or other training because of your disability. The supports should allow you to go about your daily activities.<sup>13</sup> This might include:

- personal care supports while you're at university or TAFE or undertaking approved placements
- transport to and from university or TAFE, if you can't drive or use public transport
- training for university, TAFE or employers (during placements) about your support needs
- support to take part in specific projects run by the university for people with disabilities.

We don't fund supports your university or TAFE need to provide as a 'reasonable adjustment', or anything as part of usual teaching.<sup>14</sup> We also don't fund things everyone has to pay for themselves.

This means we don't fund:

- changes to the buildings to make sure you can access it, like ramps
- changes to your learning materials to make sure it suits your needs
- textbooks or general equipment you need for your education or training
- course fees.

You should talk to your support coordinator, local area coordinator or planner about help available in your local area. There are lots of different support programs available and many universities have mentors and other help to support students with disability.

## What if you've only just started thinking about work?

It might be that you want to work one day, but you're not sure where to start. If you want to start thinking about how to get a job we might be able to help. We could fund capacity building supports to help you build your work skills if you need extra help with this because of your disability. These are available to all working age participants, from 14 years of age, including students at school.

For instance, this could help you:

- work out what you would like to do
- test your work skills through on the job work experience
- build your skills in work tasks, like following directions
- overcome any barriers you have experienced in finding and keeping a job
- build your skills so you can be supported by a [Disability Employment Service \(DES\)](#), if eligible.

If it's [reasonable and necessary](#), we'll fund these supports in your **Capacity Building – Employment** budget.

To help work out the amount of funding and type of supports you need, we will talk to you about:

- the type of tasks you're good at and those you need the most help with
- the things you enjoy doing, or things your friends and family say you're good at
- any work or volunteering experience you've done
- how confident you feel doing things on your own and if you need help to follow instructions
- how you look after your own money
- if you need help to do things out in your community
- if you can travel on your own, or need help with this
- the things that you feel stop you from looking for work
- other activities you might be doing that help build your skills, confidence and independence.

This will help us better understand how ready you are for work and how much help you might need to get ready for work. We'll also think about who might be best to provide the support you need and whether you're ready to explore working with a Disability Employment Service provider.

### **Example**

Tatiana is 27 years old and has never worked. She wants to work but isn't sure about what sort of work might be right for her or how much she could work.

Tatiana and her local area coordinator decide that on the job experience to learn more about her skills and interests would be a good start. Tatiana sets a goal to find out more about her capacity to work. Her planner decides it's reasonable and necessary to fund support to find work, as well as some community participation funds.

Tatiana works with her local area coordinator to get a service provider that will help her find employers who can offer work experience. This will help her develop her skills and confidence in a work setting.

Tatiana also uses some of her NDIS funding to join a club for people looking for work. The club meets regularly as a group. This helps her build her skills and confidence in meeting new people.

As Tatiana builds a clear picture of her work interests and capacity, she may then be able to explore her eligibility for a Disability Employment Service.

## What if you're ready to start work?

When you're feeling confident to start looking for a job, we might be able to fund:

- extra support to help you find work
- individual or group based on the job support once you have a job.

For some people a [Disability Employment Service](#) might be able to help. Disability Employment Services are free and can help you find and keep a job that suits your needs. Disability Employment Services can help you learn skills you need for work.

If you have been getting help to prepare for work with an NDIS provider, they might be able to help you find a Disability Employment Service in your area. Your local area coordinator might also be able to help.

There are a few rules about being eligible for a Disability Employment Service, but the main one is you need to be able to work at least eight hours per week within the next 2 years. That gives you time to learn about work and build up your skills over time, so you don't have to be ready to start work to get help from a Disability Employment Service.

If you think you'll need longer to get ready for work, or need more help than a Disability Employment Service can provide, we might be able to help. Talk to your support coordinator, planner or local area coordinator to get more information.

## What if you already have a job?

If you have a job, you might need extra support to manage your disability and help you succeed at work. For example, you might want to work more hours or need help getting your work done as well as your employer expects.

You might also need help when things change suddenly, for example when your job changes or you get a new boss.

In these situations there are some supports that your employer should provide to help you. A [Disability Employment Service](#) may also be able to help. Or, there may be some supports that we could fund in addition to the Disability Employment Service.

## What work supports should your employer provide?

We can't fund things at work that your employer must provide.<sup>15</sup> This includes any reasonable adjustments your employer needs to make so your job suits your needs.

This means we don't fund:<sup>16</sup>

- wages, insurance or superannuation
- recruitment
- changes your employer needs to make to recruitment or interviews to make sure they are fair for everyone
- changes to buildings where you work, like accessible bathrooms
- equipment, computers or software to help you do your job
- travel as part of your work
- support, training and skill development that your employer needs to provide all employees
- changes your employer provides to your work to make sure you do it safely and productively, that are considered reasonable adjustment
- changes to your work to make sure you have the same opportunities and conditions as everyone else (for example reasonable adjustments).

Your employer might be able to get funding for some of these things, such as workplace modifications outside the NDIS. This is through the [Employment Assistance Fund](#).

### **What work supports do Disability Employment Services (DES) provide?**

If a Disability Employment Service helped you to find a job, they can provide some supports to help you keep your job. They can work with your employer to make sure your job is going well, and you have all the support you need. Your Disability Employment Service will provide this support based on your needs and eligibility.

### **What work supports do we fund?**

We can fund the extra support you need that isn't provided by your employer or a Disability Employment Service. For instance, we could fund:<sup>17</sup>

- personal care supports while you're at work
- occupational therapist assessments to see how your disability affects how you work
- extra on-the-job training and support with your work tasks you need because of your disability
- support to help you manage your behaviour or complex needs at work
- support with other things to help you work. For example, we might fund modification of tools to suit your disability related needs.

## Example

Jasmin has a physical disability and has just started working for a bank. The bank installed a ramp and set up her work desk to meet her needs. At the moment, she works short hours and goes home for lunch so she can get support to eat. She wants to increase her hours at work.

Jasmin and her support coordinator work with her employer and carers to see how Jasmin could stay at work longer. Jasmin decides to use some of her Core funding to have a carer come to work at lunch time to help her with eating lunch. That way she can get the support she needs because of her disability and stay at work longer.

## What if you are self-employed or want to start your own business?

We may be able to fund supports you need because of your disability to help you work in your own business. This is where you work for yourself and not a company or business. You earn your income directly from your own business, trade or profession.

There are a number of programs that can help you if you want to work in your own business. Learn more about [supports to help you start your own business](#).

Generally, the kinds of supports we can and can't fund if you are self-employed are similar to what is explained in the sections above. More information is available in our [Let's talk about work booklet](#) or from your support coordinator, local area coordinator or planner.

## When do we fund ongoing supports in a job?

We'll fund the support based on your needs. We also consider your hours of work if you need day to day on the job supports. This could be support just for you, or in a group if you work with other people with disability. For example, in an [Australian Disability Enterprise](#).

You might need a mix of individual support for certain tasks, and group support for other types of work. This could be:

- **capacity building supports** to help you achieve a specific goal or overcome a problem. This is usually for a set amount of time. These funds are in your Finding and Keeping a Job budget.
- day to day supports if you need regular and ongoing help when you are at work. This is funded in your **Core** budget as part of your Social and Community participation supports. When you are in paid work, your provider will claim for these as "Supports in Employment".

You might have both capacity building and core supports in your plan.

It is important to understand that you can also use your other funding in your Core budget to help achieve your work goal.

For example, you can use your community participation funding to buy supports for activities that help you practice skills to get ready for work. You might need help to volunteer. This can be a great way to start learning about work.

## What if you want to change jobs?

If you are interested in changing jobs, there is help available to do that. Most people get this help through a Disability Employment Service (DES) provider.

If you need more than what the Disability Employment Service can provide, we may be able to fund capacity building supports to help with your work skills and develop a career plan.

## How do you get work and study supports in your plan?

You may have a goal to explore work or study or be supported to continue working or studying. It doesn't matter if it's a short or long term goal. You can talk to your support coordinator, local area coordinator or planner about your goals in your plan.

We will need to understand your goals and how much support you need. We will also talk to you about what your school, university, training provider, employer or other mainstream services like [Disability Employment Service](#) can provide.

We look at any information we have about the kind of things you are good at and what supports you might need when we decide how much funding to include in your plan. This includes things like information from school reports or other assessments you have already provided to us.

We will also consider the things we already know about you, for example the help you need to participate in the community or look after yourself at home.

You might like to bring a letter from your place of work or study. Work experience reports, Centrelink Job Capacity Assessment or Employment Services Assessments can also be useful.

You could also use the [Let's talk about work booklet](#) to support your conversations with us.

If you work in an Australian Disability Enterprise we have a [flyer on our website](#) that explains some recent changes to your funding. There is a spot where you or your employer can fill in information as well.

## What happens once you have work and study supports in your plan?

Once your plan is approved, you can start using your supports at work or when studying. Talk to your support coordinator, local area coordinator or planner for advice on how to use your funding.

You will know if these types of supports are included in your plan by the comments made by your local area coordinator or planner next to the funding budget in your plan.

We want you to make the best use of your funding even if you change your work or study. For example, if you work in an [Australian Disability Enterprise](#), you could continue to use your supports in a different job, not just at the Australian Disability Enterprise.

If your needs change, you should talk to us. You might be able to use your plan flexibly or you might need a plan reassessment. Learn more about [changing your plan](#).

## Reference list

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- <sup>1</sup> NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules rr 5.1(b), (d).
- <sup>2</sup> NDIS Act s 34(1)(a).
- <sup>3</sup> NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules rr 5.1(a), 5.3.
- <sup>4</sup> NDIS Act s 34(1)(c).
- <sup>5</sup> NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules r 3.1(a).
- <sup>6</sup> NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules r 3.1(b).
- <sup>7</sup> NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules rr 3.1(c), (f).
- <sup>8</sup> Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) ss 5, 6.
- <sup>9</sup> NDIS Act s 34(1)(e).
- <sup>10</sup> NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules r 3.4(a).
- <sup>11</sup> NDIS Act s 34(1)(f); NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules r 7.14.
- <sup>12</sup> NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules r 5.1(d).
- <sup>13</sup> NDIS (Support for Participants) Rules r 7.15
- <sup>14</sup> NDIS Act s 34(1)(f); NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules r 7.16.
- <sup>15</sup> NDIS Act s 34(1)(f).
- <sup>16</sup> NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules r 7.18(a).
- <sup>17</sup> NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules rr 7.17(a)-(b).