



FACT SHEET

Job Capacity Assessment (JCA)

JCA: What is it?

The Job Capacity Assessment has been designed to be the new way of working out who should get the pension and also which employment service or support program a person should go to. The assessor will tell Centrelink how many hours per week they think you can work, and Centrelink will decide whether you get the pension and will tell you what activities it wants you to do to keep getting your payment.

What will change?

From July 1st 2006, When you apply for a payment at Centrelink you will be asked a set of questions to try to find out whether it is going to be hard for you to find and keep work. If they think that you are going to need some support or help to gain and keep work they will send you for a new kind of assessment called a **Job Capacity Assessment** (or JCA). This assessment will be carried out by Centrelink, CRS and other Private Assessors (currently being chosen through a tender process).

Also, if you apply for the Disability Support Pension, Centrelink will book you in for a JCA, however, if you cannot work or do activities you will not have to.

What will happen?

Your appointment with the assessor will probably last for between 1-2hours and will usually be held at the office of the assessor. The assessors will want to meet with you as soon as possible. At the meeting you will be asked more questions; they will ask about what is stopping you from looking for work or what help you need to find it? After this meeting the Assessor will write a report and give a recommendation about how many hours you can work.

What do I have to do?

You will have to attend one (or more) meetings with the assessor, where they will ask you about your health and anything that is stopping you from doing paid work. You will need to take paperwork/forms and doctors reports with you, anything that is evidence of your condition and how it impacts on your ability to work, and also things in your life that make it hard to look for work (for example if you are homeless, or if your disability stops you from going places or you have to look after someone). You will be able to take a support person with you, and if you need an interpreter, let them know and they will provide one.

What should I tell them?

You should tell the assessor about how your disability would affect being able to work. It is very useful to have thought about and written about this before you go (some people keep a diary to write down how things change).

You should talk about what work means to you, how you would go looking for work, or keeping a job once you got it. Many people have lots of different reasons that make it hard for them to do work; the assessors want to know this so they can work out how much it's reasonable to ask you to do, and then you won't be asked to do more than you can handle.

What happens if I don't attend or I don't answer their questions?

If you don't attend they will try to reschedule another appointment with you, however it is possible that you can have your payments stopped until you go to this session. If you don't answer their questions fully you may put yourself at a disadvantage and they may think

you can do more work than you really can. However you can appeal any decision made from their recommendation (see www.welfarerights.org.au for information on how to appeal decisions).

What about Privacy? Who can they talk to?

After your assessment, the assessors will write a report about you and your work capacity, which depending on the outcome of your assessment, will go to an organisation running a program that the person feels is the most appropriate for you. They will explain who else will be able to read it. If they do not explain this you should complain. The assessors may also need to contact your other services especially your treating doctor if they feel there is not enough information to make a decision.

What will happen next?

The assessor will work out what is the best program for you to go to next; this may be an employment program, or a supportive program to help you get ready for work. And they will send your details to the new company to start this program

Pre-vocational account

If the assessor feels that you need a bit of extra assistance they may organise for you to undergo a short program of extra assistance (what these will be has not been fixed yet but it will probably entail activities such as pain management or counselling).

What if I disagree and How to complain?

Each assessor service will have an individual method for registering complaints, but there is also a hotline for this. The complaint number has not been finalised but it's likely it will be the same complaints number people call to complain about their employment service.

Where do I go for more info?

- The website for the JCA is www.jca.gov.au
- ACOSS has a sheet on their website explaining Welfare to Work www.acoss.org.au
- keep checking our website for updates: www.afdo.org.au
- Centrelink: Go to your local office or www.centrelink.gov.au
- The Employment Department has a website with information including welfare to work and the industrial relations changes on it. www.workplace.gov.au
- Welfare Rights Unit can assist with explanations of your rights and help to appeal decisions www.welfarerights.org.au

Your Rights as Explained in the Provider Code of Conduct:

- 1. To receive a high quality work capacity assessment that is fair, comprehensive, timely and transparent.**
- 2. To receive referrals to the most appropriate interventions and programmes of assistance to improve their current and future work capacity.**
- 3. To be treated with dignity and have their privacy and confidentiality respected.**
- 4. To have access to a complaints and dispute resolution process.**
- 5. To receive a professional service.**
- 6. To be assisted by staff with relevant skills, qualifications, training and competencies.**
- 7. Protection of human rights and freedom from abuse.**

Including: • respect for human dignity and freedom, equality before the law, privacy and protection against discrimination. (Pgs 165-166 – request for tender)