

Centrelink payments

Centrelink is the federal government program that deals with all welfare payments, including payments to eligible local students. All Centrelink payments are means-tested. Our general advice regarding payments is: if you think you might be eligible but are not sure, apply anyway. If your application is rejected, you can consider using your appeal rights.

Austudy and Youth Allowance

Most postgraduate students who are eligible for payments need to be enrolled full-time in an approved degree. All graduate certificate and graduate diploma courses are approved degrees, but only a few Masters coursework degrees are approved. [Find out if your degree is approved for Austudy payments.](#)

Unfortunately, research degrees (e.g. Master of Philosophy and PhD) are not approved courses for Austudy or Youth Allowance purposes.

ABSTUDY

ABSTUDY provides a range of payments for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students in approved degrees. [Find out if you're eligible.](#)

Unlike Austudy and Youth Allowance, you may be eligible for ABSTUDY if you are studying a Master's or Doctorate and not receiving any other financial support.

Rent Assistance

If you receive Austudy, Youth Allowance, or ABSTUDY and pay rent, you may also be entitled to Rent Assistance. If you are aged under 25 years special rules apply on eligibility.

Health Care Card

Health Care Cards are particularly useful for accessing free or low-cost dental care; discounted prescription medications; as well as concessions on energy bills and water rates. If you receive Austudy, Youth Allowance, or ABSTUDY you will be automatically issued with a Health Care Card (HCC).

Low Income Health Care Card

Even if you don't receive a Centrelink payment, you can apply for a Low-Income Health Care Card, if your income is under \$564/week (single and no children). This amount is higher for couples and parents with dependent children. [More details can be found here.](#)

Part-time students and Newstart

If you are enrolled as a part-time student, you are usually not eligible for student payments from Centrelink. Some exemptions do apply, e.g. Disability Support Pension.

If you are at least 22 years of age, unemployed and are studying part time, you may be eligible for Newstart allowance, but you will be expected to participate in activities designed to increase your chances of finding work. There may be circumstances in which some part-time or full-time study can be included in an activity agreement, if Centrelink is convinced such study will help you to find work.

Crisis payment

Centrelink may be able to assist with a special payment if you find yourself bereaved, homeless, experiencing mental health issues and/or in a domestic violence situation, and subsequently experience financial difficulties. The payment is equal to a week's pay at your existing income support rate.

You can [apply for a crisis payment online.](#)

If you already receive a Centrelink payment you may be able to get an [advance payment](#) depending on the situation. If you need to speak with a Centrelink social worker you can ask by calling 132 850 (8am–5pm)

Reviews and appeals

You have the right to appeal decisions made by Centrelink. You can call and ask them to review a decision or lodge an online request for review. If you seek a review you should do so **within 13 weeks of the decision.** [More information](#) on Centrelink reviews and appeals and how to submit a Review of Decision form.

The [Welfare Rights Centre](#) may be able to assist in cases of appeal.

More information or assistance

- **Centrelink:** [more details on Centrelink payments and eligibility.](#)
- **[The Welfare Rights Centre \(WRC\)](#)**
WRC provides advice on social security rights and can assist with reviews and appeals. Telephone advice is given on Monday and Wednesday (9.30am–12.30pm)
(02) 9211 5300 or 1800 226 028
sydney@welfarerights.org.au
- **Contact us**
If you require further assistance [contact us:](#)
(02) 9351 3715
help@supra.usyd.edu.au