

1. **What is the Youth Employment Support Scheme (YESS)?**

The Youth Employment Support Scheme (YESS) is a work placement scheme that is targeted at young jobseekers aged 18-24 years who are unemployed for at least twelve months and who are in receipt of certain qualifying payments or if unemployed for less than 12 months, face barriers in their efforts to find employment. The YESS will provide young people with the opportunity to learn basic work and social skills in a supportive environment while on a work placement. The scheme is specifically for those young people who are not currently engaged in employment, education or training.

2. **Am I eligible?**

In order to be eligible to participate on the YESS, a young person must be:

- aged between 18 and 24
- And
- be unemployed and in receipt of a qualifying payment for at least 12 months,
- Or
- If unemployed for less than 12 months, be considered by a case officer to face a significant barrier to work.

Candidates must be in receipt of one of the following qualifying payments:

Jobseekers Allowance, Jobseekers Benefit, One Parent Family Payment, Jobseeker Transition Payment, Disability Allowance, Blind Person's Pension or Supplementary Welfare Allowance.

Time spent on Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMPs) will count towards eligibility for the YESS provided the programme has been completed in full and the person was 18 years or older while on the programme. The jobseeker must have been in receipt of a qualifying payment immediately prior to commencement on the ALMP and will need to re-establish eligibility immediately prior to commencement on YESS. The programmes include: Community Employment, TÚS, Back to Education, Youthreach, Springboard, Solas Training Programmes and other such initiatives.

The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) case officer will confirm a candidate's eligibility before putting them forward for selection by the Placement Host.

3. Is participation on the YESS voluntary?

All participation on the YESS will be voluntary. There will be no financial penalties if jobseekers do not wish to participate on the scheme or if participants drop out during the placement.

4. How much will I get paid?

Participants on the YESS will receive a weekly payment of €229.20 for 24 hours per week. This will be paid for the duration of the placement but in arrears, and it is expected that participants will receive this payment approximately 2 weeks after commencing on the scheme.

5. When do I get paid?

Participants will be paid in line with their current primary payment schedule. For example, if you currently get paid every Tuesday, you will continue to be paid every Tuesday while on a YESS placement.

6. How will I get paid?

Participants will continue to be paid by their current payment method. Therefore, if you currently are being paid through the Post Office, you will continue to be paid by this means while on a YESS placement.

However, if you wish to be paid directly into a bank account via an Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT), then this can be arranged. You should talk to your local Intreo Centre/Scheme area about this option.

7. Will I get any top-up contributions from the Placement Host?

There is no employer top-up contribution allowed. However, there is nothing to prevent a Placement Host reimbursing a Participant for expenses incurred as part of the placement, for example, the purchase of specialist clothing, footwear or equipment. However, normal everyday expenses incurred in respect of travel, lunch etc., should not be reimbursed.

8. Can casual claimants on the Live Register participate on YESS?

No, casual claimants cannot participate on the YESS.

However, while on a YESS placement, Participants can commence casual employment without affecting their entitlements provided that it is not with the Placement Host (i.e. not with the same employer) and it does not interfere with the required hours of the placement. Participants must notify their DEASP Intreo Centre of changes in circumstances.

9. Can I apply for a YESS placement with an organisation that I have an existing or prior employment relationship e.g. working part-time?

No, an individual cannot apply for a YESS placement with an organisation that they have an existing or prior employment relationship with.

10. Where do I go to find a work experience placement under YESS?

All YESS placements will be advertised on Jobs Ireland website – www.jobsireland.ie and you should check this site for available/suitable positions. Placement Hosts can advertise their placements once they meet the eligibility criteria and the vacancy has been validated by the Department. Alternatively, if you wish to acquire a placement within a specific organisation you can approach them yourself informing them of the Youth Employment Support Scheme (YESS) and then direct them to the website to apply as a Host.

11. How do I apply for a YESS placement?

When you log onto the Jobs Ireland site at www.jobsireland.ie and click on current YESS opportunities to see what placements are on offer, you will be advised to contact your local Intreo Centre if you wish to apply for an available position.

12. What type of placements will be on offer?

Placements may be offered across private, voluntary or community sectors. However, Public Sector organisations including schools and colleges are excluded from participation on YESS.

13. How long can I participate on a YESS placement for?

All YESS placements will be for 3 months initially and the option to extend this further to 6 months may be taken after the Case Officer conducts a review two months after the commencement of the placement. The maximum period allowed with the same Placement Host however, is 6 months.

In total, jobseekers may avail of a maximum of 3 YESS placements up to a maximum period of 18 months overall.

14. How many hours do I have to do on a placement?

All participants on the YESS will be required to undertake their placement for 24 hours per week. All YESS placements should be conducted over a minimum of 3, and maximum of 4 days per week.

15. What if I start a YESS placement and I realise this placement is not for me, can I do another?

A placement can finish early and at short notice and a participant can avail of another opportunity if available up to a maximum of 3 placements. In such cases, both the Placement Host and Participant should notify the DEASP case officer immediately.

16. How will I be selected?

Interested, eligible candidates for YESS positions will be put forward by DEASP case officers for selection by a Placement Host.

Each Host will decide how they select a Participant (s) for the placement. For example, they may ask for a CV to be forwarded or invite the candidate to attend for an interview.

17. What will I be doing on my placement?

The advertised role will be outlined in greater detail in a Standard Agreement which will be agreed and signed by both the Participant and the Placement Host at the outset of the placement. A Learning and Development Plan will also form an integral part of the work experience, and this will include details of the social and work skills and knowledge that will be developed/applied during the placement.

18. Who will mentor me during my placement?

The Placement Host will nominate an individual to support and mentor you during your placement. The mentor's responsibilities will include the provision of a proper induction, while they will also ensure that your work experience as described in the Standard Agreement progresses accordingly. The mentor will also have responsibility for ensuring the Learning & Development Plan is put in place and is acted upon as agreed. In organisations where a formal mentoring system exists, YESS participants should be included in this process.

19. Will my placement be monitored?

Yes, there will be ongoing monitoring of your placement and the DEASP case officer will be the key liaison person for both yourself and the Placement Host, so there will be ongoing communication during the placement. There will also be a compliance check that the Placement Host will be required to complete and return to the Department on a monthly basis. The purpose of the monthly compliance is to confirm your attendance and to determine if the work experience as outlined in the Standard Agreement and the Learning & Development Plan is progressing.

20. Can I participate on education and training courses while on YESS?

Participants on YESS may engage in education and training provided by the Placement Host or part-time education and training courses, irrespective of length and which are paid for by the State, provided that it does not have an adverse impact on the placement.

However, participants on the YESS are **not** eligible to access:

- Full-time education or full time training courses paid for by the State,
- Other DEASP initiatives such as the Back to Education Allowance and the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance.

21. Will I receive a reference at the end of the YESS placement?

Yes, when the placement is finished the Placement Host should provide you with a reference that will detail the learning/development outcomes, along with the knowledge, skills and experience you have acquired/demonstrated during the course of the placement.

22. Am I entitled to any annual leave during my time on the placement?

Yes, you are entitled to the following leave:

- **Annual Leave** – Participants will be entitled to all Public Holidays and 5 days annual leave for every 3 months that they participate on YESS. All annual leave must be taken during the course of the placement; participants will not be financially compensated for any leave which they neglected to take while on YESS. If a participant works on a bank holiday, they should be afforded time off in lieu for working same.
- **Maternity Leave** – Participants are entitled to suspend a YESS placement early due to maternity leave. The DEASP case officer should be notified in such instances.

23. What if the placement is not working out as I expected?

If you experience any issues while on the YESS placement, you should contact the DEASP case officer to discuss the matter further.

24. Who is responsible for providing me with specialist clothing, footwear & equipment during the course of the placement?

It is the responsibility for the Placement Host to provide you with specialist clothing, footwear and equipment if/as required during the course of the placement. If you incur any costs in the purchase of such specialised equipment, the Placement Host should reimburse you for same.

25. What if I get a job?

If you get offered a job during the placement and you wish to take up the position you should notify your DEASP case officer accordingly. A finish date for your placement will need to be recorded also.