





Dealing with Centrelink

Centrelink is a very large organisation with in excess of 8 million clients. Centrelink staff are responsible for dealing with many different Centrelink benefits and because of this you may find, on occasion, that you are provided with different information from different Centrelink staff.

The following guide will hopefully assist you to deal successfully with Centrelink.

- Opening hours for Centrelink Offices are usually between 8:00am - 4:00pm Monday to Friday, but some open until 5.00pm. Check the Centrelink website for details.
- See overleaf for addresses of local Customer Service Centres.
- For **basic** information and enquiries you may wish to access the Centrelink website at: www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/individuals/st_index.htm or contact a Centrelink Call Centre.

For: Youth Allowance Austudy Rent Assistance		Youth and Student Services - 132490
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For: Abstudy		Customer Service - 132317
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If you receive information which you find confusing or conflicting, please talk to a Student Financial Aid Officer in Student Services.

- Keep a photocopy of all forms and information you provide to Centrelink. It is useful to be able to read these documents again if Centrelink subsequently wants to ask you about documents you submitted weeks or months ago. Also, in the event your application is lost by Centrelink, photocopies of the original application mean you will not have to complete all the forms again.
- When lodging your first Centrelink application, ensure that you provide adequate identification to meet Centrelink's 100 point test. (Refer to the information contained in the "Notes for Youth Allowance Claim" on the front of the Youth Allowance application form.) Also it is often a good idea to hand deliver your application form to the closest Centrelink office and ask the Centrelink staff to stamp your photocopy of the application with the date received. This provides proof of the date of lodgement of your application that can be very important if your application is lost in the Centrelink system.
- If you need to make an appointment to meet personally with a member of Centrelink staff then use the Call Centre number 131021 to arrange the appointment.
- Ensure that you are punctual for Centrelink appointments. Usually Centrelink appointments are scheduled back to back. Thus if you are late it may mean you will have to re-schedule your appointment and possibly wait a further 7-14 days for the next available interview time. Make sure you take all necessary forms/paperwork to the interview!
- If your circumstances change you can notify Centrelink of most changes via the Call Centre numbers listed above. Changes include part time employment, pay dates, change of address, change in study hours etc. You will need to quote your Customer Reference number when contacting Centrelink by telephone. This is usually far quicker than visiting a Centrelink office.
- It is **extremely important** that you make sure that the address Centrelink has on file for you is current at all times. **If you do not respond to a request from Centrelink for information, Centrelink will CANCEL YOUR PAYMENT IMMEDIATELY.** This may leave you in financial difficulty and you will then have to take time away from your studies to make the necessary arrangements to have your payment re-instated.

- To be eligible for Youth Allowance/Austudy or Abstudy you must be studying full-time (i.e. undertaking at least 75% of a normal full time study load for the course). If your course is a semester based course **YOU MUST MEET THE 75% RULE EACH SEMESTER!** You cannot “average” your study load across the full academic year. Almost all undergraduate courses at UWA are semester based courses.
- If you receive a letter from Centrelink stating that you have been overpaid, you must ensure you respond to the letter by the date indicated. However, it is a good idea to seek advice before contacting Centrelink. The Student Financial Aid Officer in Student Services is a good starting point.
- If you are having difficulties dealing with Centrelink, try to remain calm and systematically work through or discuss the problem with a Centrelink staff member. Remember that it is OK to be assertive but not aggressive!
- If you are unhappy with a Centrelink decision, you have the right to request a review of the decision. However, please note that you only have 3 months in which to ask for a review to be undertaken. After the expiry of that period, if the decision is reviewed and found to be incorrect your payment will only be backdated to the date you asked for the review. If you are still unhappy with the “review” decision, you can then ask a Centrelink “Authorised Review Officer” (ARO) to look at the situation. In the event that you still do not agree with the decision made by the ARO, you can then appeal to the Social Security Appeals Tribunal. The Student Financial Aid Officer in Student Services can provide you with more information on this process.

Did you know that it is no longer necessary to visit Centrelink to report your fortnightly earnings? You can use the web or voice technology. For Centrelink Online Services, visit: http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/online_services/index.htm

Centrelink Office Locations

If you prefer to visit a Centrelink office in person, below are the locations of some of the offices around Perth. They are open from 8.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday.

Curtin University Student Service Centre	Building 106 Curtin University Kent Street Bentley WA 6102
Fremantle	7 Pakenham Street Fremantle WA 6160
Innaloo	37 Ellen Stirling Blvd Innaloo WA 6018
Joondalup	68 Reid Promenade Joondalup WA 6027
Victoria Park	117-121 Shepperton Road Victoria Park WA 6100
Perth	2nd Floor, City Central Building 166 Murray Street Mall Perth WA 6000
<i>Note: The Perth office is a career information centre and is not a centre which can process payments.</i>	

UWA Student Services
2nd Floor, South Wing, Guild Village

To make an appointment please call
08 6488 2423
or
email: student.finance@uwa.edu.au

Visit our website at: <http://www.finaid.uwa.edu.au>

Got a Question? Find the Answer....@ www.ipoint.uwa.edu.au