



Australian Government

Services Australia

Independence calculator 010-23061406

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Background

This document outlines details on how to use the Independence calculator in Process Direct.

Relevant Workforce Independence Criteria

Staff can use the Independence calculator for Youth Allowance (YA), ABSTUDY and Special Benefit (SpB) customers to assess the following criteria:

- Self-supporting through full-time paid employment (30 hours per week for 18 months)
- Earned at least 75% of the National Training Wage Schedule rate in a 14 month period (regional and remote)
- Part-time employment of at least 15 hours per week for at least 2 years (regional and remote)
- Participated in the workforce for at least 3 of the last 4 years (ABSTUDY)
- Undertook approved agricultural work between 20 November 2020 and 31 December 2021

Note: where a customer applies for independence under a particular criterion which they do not meet, assess if they may meet another criterion.

Partial Pay Periods and Multiple Employers

The Independence calculator ensures a customer is not disadvantaged when calculating pay periods at the start and end of their independence assessment period. It is possible that the customer's pay period start and end dates do not line up with the start and end dates of the week, fortnight or month. Therefore, the calculation will include hours or earnings up to 7 days before or after the independence assessment period.

The pay period end date is determined by the start date of employment period. Subsequent employers will be broken down to a daily rate and applied to each pay period which the hours or earnings fall within.

Year to Date (YTD) figures and Annual Frequency

When determining amounts earned for under the 75% National Training Schedule rate independence criteria, YTD figures may be accepted. When using the Annual Frequency in the Independence Calculator the YTD figure can only be used with this frequency when:

- the customer has worked for their employer for the full financial year, and
- they have supplied their last payslip for the financial year, and
- the financial year falls fully within the claiming period

Where the customer has supplied a payslip with a YTD figure that cannot be used under the annual frequency as per above:

If the YTD figure does not include any periods where the customer is still at school or outside of the claiming period, record the YTD figure under a weekly or fortnightly frequency. See [Resources](#) page for examples.

The [Resources](#) page contains examples of YTD information and Annual Frequency scenarios, a link to the Independence Calculator tutorial, Services Australia website and latitude/longitude task card.

Related links

[Assessing independence when a customer is self supporting through full time paid employment](#)

[Assessing independence for full time or concessional study load students from regional and remote areas under the self supporting through employment criterion](#)

[Assessing independence for ABSTUDY customers](#)

[Assessing independence when a student has undertaken approved agricultural work](#)

[Independence for Youth Allowance \(YA\) customers](#)

[Independence for ABSTUDY customers](#)

Process

This document outlines details on how to use the Independence calculator in Process Direct.

Using the Independence calculator

Table 1:

Step	Action
1	<p>Independence status + Read more ...</p> <p>Note: this process only applies for Youth Allowance (YA), ABSTUDY and Special Benefit (SpB) customers.</p> <p>Check the customer's age and current independent status on the s 47E(d) screen.</p> <p>Does the customer have a current independence status on s 47E(d) or they are 22 years of age?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, the customer is already independent. Do not run the Independence Calculator. Procedure ends here • No, for a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ New assessment, go to Step 3 ◦ Previous assessment, go to Step 2
2	<p>Reviewing the Independence assessment + Read more ...</p> <p>In Process Direct:</p> <p>s 47E(d)</p> <p>Procedure ends here.</p>
3	<p>Accessing the Independence Calculator + Read more ...</p> <p>This calculator is a standalone workflow and cannot be run within a claim activity. If an assessment is needed for a new claim, staff will need to exit the claim activity and complete the workflow within the customer's record in Process Direct.</p> <p>In Process Direct:</p> <p>s 47E(d)</p>

- On the **s 47E(d)** screen choose the relevant criteria from the **s 47E(d)**
- For:
 - Full time work worked an average of 30 hours per week for at least 18 months within a 2 year period [go to Step 4](#)
 - Part time work worked at least 15 hours per week for at least 2 years since leaving secondary school [go to Step 5](#)
 - Earnings earned at least 75% of the Wage Level A of the National Training Wage Schedule included in a modern award within 14 months since leaving secondary school [go to Step 5](#)
 - Agricultural work earned at least \$15,000 from approved agricultural work between 30 November 2020 and 31 December 2021 [go to Step 6](#)
 - Workforce participation (ABSTUDY only) participated in the workforce or other approved activities for 3 out of the last 4 years [go to Step 7](#)

Note: selecting **Cancel** will cancel the entire transaction.

4 **Full-time work - worked an average of 30 hours per week for at least 18 months within a 2 year period** + Read more ...

For information on eligibility and coding of this independence criteria, see [Assessing independence when a customer is self-supporting through full-time paid employment](#).

s 47E(d)

[Go to Step 8.](#)

5 **Part-time work - worked at least 15 hours per week for at least 2 years since leaving secondary school or Earnings - earned at least 75% of the Wage Level A of the National Training Wage Schedule included in a modern award within 14 months since leaving secondary school** + Read more ...

For information on eligibility and coding of this independence criteria, see [Assessing independence for full time or concessional study load students from regional and remote areas under the self-supporting through employment criterion](#).

Enter:

s 47E(d)

- Answer **Yes** or **No** to the questions
 - Is the parental home located in an area classified as Inner Regional, Outer Regional, Remote or Very Remote?
 - Is the parental income below the parental income threshold?
 - Is the customer a full-time or concessional study load student who is required to live away from home to study?

Did the customer answer no to any of the 3 questions?

- **Yes**, [go to Step 9](#)
- **No**, **s 47E(d)**

[Go to Step 8](#)

6 **Agricultural work - earned at least \$15,000 from approved agricultural work between 30 November 2020 and 31 December 2021** + Read more ...

For information on eligibility and coding of this independence criteria, See [Assessing independence when a student has undertaken approved agricultural work](#).

Answer **Yes** or **No** to the questions:

- Has the customer claimed independence prior to 2 March 2023 and will the start date of independence be between 1 March 2021 to 1 March 2023?
- Is the parental income below the parental income threshold?
- Is the customer a full-time or concessional study-load student?
- Did the customer undertake approved agricultural work?

Did the customer answer no to any of the questions?

- **Yes, s 47E(d)** and [go to Step 9](#)
- **No, s 47E(d)**

[Go to Step 8](#)

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Workforce participation (ABSTUDY only) - participated in the workforce or other approved activities for at least 3 out of the last 4 years + Read more ...

For information on eligibility and coding of this independence criteria, see [Assessing independence for ABSTUDY customers](#).

Enter:

s 47E(d)

s 47E(d) If required, repeat to add other approved activities. **s 47E(d)** [Go to Step 9](#).

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Employment details + Read more ...

For:

- Full-time work - worked an average of 30 hours per week for at least 18 months within a 2 year period see:
 - [Assessing independence when a customer is self-supporting through full-time paid employment](#) for acceptable proof of employment
- Part-time work - worked at least 15 hours per week for at least 2 years since leaving secondary school or Earnings - earned at least 75% of the Wage Level A of the National Training Wage Schedule included in a modern award within 14 months since leaving secondary school, see:
 - [Assessing independence for full time or concessional study load students from regional and remote areas under the self-supporting through employment criterion](#) for acceptable proof of employment
- Agricultural work - earned at least \$15,000 from approved agricultural work between 30 November 2020 and 31 December 2021, see:
 - [Assessing independence when a student has undertaken approved agricultural work regarding](#) for acceptable proof of employment
- Workforce Participation (ABSTUDY only), see:
 - [Assessing independence for ABSTUDY customers](#) for acceptable proof of employment

Complete the following:

- Add Employment details **s 47E(d)**
- Provide the following details:
 - Employer name
 - Pay period frequency
 - End date of first pay period **s 47E(d)** . For Annual frequency use the end date of the last payslip for the financial year. For all other frequencies use the end date shown on their payslip
Note: only use Annual frequency when the full financial year (12 months) falls within the 14 month assessment period. When Annual frequency is used in the Independence Calculator tool, it assesses Annual frequency by using the Year to Date (YTD) total figure and dividing over 365 days to give a weekly amount. See [Resources](#) page for examples
- Select **s 47E(d)** and enter amount (hours are not essential for this criteria):
 - See [Resources](#) page to find out how to code YTD amounts
 - If all pay periods are the same, use the **s 47E(d)** to copy the first pay period's employment information to all pay periods in the table
 - **s 47E(d)** will clear employment information from all pay periods
- Select **s 47E(d)**
- If there are multiple employers add another employer **s 47E(d)** and repeat above steps
- The total amount and hours will display. **s 47E(d)**

Edit or delete information using the **s 47E(d)**

9	<p>Eligibility outcome screen + Read more ...</p> <p>The eligibility outcome will display.</p> <p>Note: the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • s 47E(d) will show the breakdown of hours or amounts calculated for each relevant week • s 47E(d) button will flow back to the s 47E(d) to start again. Go to Step 5 <p>Finalise outcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select S to finalise the assessment. A DOC with the outcome will be created • Record the independence outcome on the s 47E(d) screen. For details on processing decision, see either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Assessing independence when a customer is self supporting through full time paid employment ◦ Assessing independence for full time or concessional study load students from regional and remote areas under the self supporting through employment criterion ◦ Assessing independence when a student has undertaken approved agricultural work ◦ Assessing independence for ABSTUDY customers <p>Was Independence rejected?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, the customer may be eligible for independence under a different criteria. Consider reassessing the customer, go to Step 3. Otherwise procedure ends here • No, procedure ends here
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References

Policy

[Social Security Guide 3.2.5.10 Qualification for YA & DSP as an independent young person](#)

[Social Security Guide 1.1.N.12 National Training Wage schedule rate \(YA, DSP\)](#)

[Social Security Guide 3.2.5.80 YA & DSP - self-supporting through paid employment](#)

[Social Security Guide 3.2.5.85 YA concessional workforce independence criteria for regional students](#)

[Social Security Guide 3.2.7.40 Approved courses of study for YA](#)

[Social Security Guide 1.1.A.210 Approved course of education or study \(YA \(full-time student\), Austudy, PES\)](#)

ABSTUDY

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[ABSTUDY Policy Manual](#)

- 38.4, Workforce Participation
- 37.2.1, Permanent Independent Status
- 37.1, Independent status

Legislation

s 22

[Social Security Act 1991](#)

- section 1067A, When a person is regarded as independent
- section 1067G, Rate of youth allowance
- section 541B, Undertaking full-time study

Resources

Examples - use of Year to Date (YTD) information and Annual frequency

Table 1:

Scenario	Description
1	<p>When Annual frequency can be used</p> <p>Joseph has worked at a company since 01/07/2023 and has supplied the below payslip to have their independence assessed:</p> <p>Pay Date - 30/06/2024 - YTD \$19,584.00.</p> <p>The tool will use \$19,584.00 from 01/07/2023 and divide that figure by 365 days. This equates to \$374.56 / week from 01/07/2023 to 30/06/2024.</p> <p>This is an acceptable scenario to use Annual frequency as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the customer worked in their job for the whole financial year, and • the customer supplied a payslip showing YTD figures as at the end of that financial year, and • it is within the 14 month claiming period
2	<p>When YTD figure cannot be used</p> <p>Roland has worked at a company since 01/06/2022 and is assessing independence for the period of 18/11/2023 to 05/01/2025. Roland has supplied payslips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay Date - 28/06/2024 - YTD \$5,789.00 • Pay Date - 05/01/2025 - YTD \$11,555.00 <p>YTD figure \$5,789.00 cannot be used as it cannot be determined how much money was earned between start of the 14 month period of 18/11/2023 to 28/06/2024.</p> <p>YTD figure \$11,555.00 can be used as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it falls within the 14 month period, and • it is known the customer has worked there for the whole financial year
3	<p>When Annual frequency cannot be used</p> <p>Jenine has worked at a company since 07/12/2023 and has supplied the below payslips to have Jenine's independence assessed. Jenine is advising the 14 month period is between 07/12/2023 to 01/02/2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay Date - 15/03/2024 - YTD \$2,875.00 • Pay Date - 01/02/2025 - YTD \$17,655.00 <p>The Independence Calculator will use \$2,875.00 from 15/03/2024 and divide that figure by 365 days. This equates to \$55.28 / week from 16/03/2023 to 15/03/2024. As the YTD figure is only for 36 weeks of the financial year, the amount per week should be \$79.86. This will produce an incorrect assessment so the YTD figure cannot be used.</p>
4	<p>Using YTD income when using any other frequency</p> <p>YTD income figures can still be used but must be coded in the system differently to ensure it is assessed correctly. s 47E(d)</p>

Coding this way will ensure:

- all of the YTD figure is captured without the system dividing that figure over the year, and
- part of the YTD figure will not fall off and not be captured in the Independence assessment

Example: Joseph has supplied 2 payslips for Outback Bar and Grill. Joseph started working here 20/10/2023 until current.

- The first payslip supplied is dated 28/06/2024 for period 20/06/2024 to 26/06/2024 with a YTD figure of \$11,599.00
- The second payslip is dated 27/06/25 for period 19/06/2025 to 25/06/2025 with a YTD figure of \$25 478.00

To code these payslips using weekly or fortnightly and annual frequency see below:

- Pay Date 28/06/2024 as the customer only worked at this company for 9 months and not a full year, code this by using weekly or fortnightly frequency:
 - Use the end date of the pay period which is 26/06/2024
 - When filling out the **s 47E(d)** choose the **s 47E(d)** column 26/06/2024 and add the YTD figure in of \$11,599.00
 - Recording the figure as weekly or fortnightly frequency instead of annual frequency will ensure the whole figure is captured
- Pay Date 27/06/2025 as the customer worked the full financial year, use annual frequency and code by:
 - Using the end date of the pay period which is 25/06/2025
 - Filling out the **s 47E(d)** , only enter for financial year 2024 2025 the total figure of \$25,478.00
 - Recording the figure as annual frequency works in this scenario as the customer has worked at the company for the entire year

Independence Calculator tutorial

[Independence Calculator tutorial](#)

Services Australia website



Customers can use Check independence through work history online service to check whether they have met the self-supporting independence criteria through their work history.

To identify the remoteness category of a customer's home address for the purposes of Relocation Scholarship or self-supporting independence, refer to the [Student Regional Area Search tool](#).

Note: Service Officers and customers may experience intermittent system issues when using the search tool. If this occurs, the following workarounds can be applied:

- **Service Officers:** After selecting on the link above, a 'Service not available' error may appear. If this occurs, refresh the page [F5] until the correct page appears
- **Customers:** Customers can access the service by navigating to the [Centrelink online accounts](#) page on the Services Australia Website. From here, the customer should be able to access the 'Student Regional Area Search' link under the 'What you can do online' section. This link is also available via the [Independence for Youth Allowance](#) page. If a customer reports receiving a 'Service not available' error after selecting the link, tell the customer to keep trying until the page loads successfully

User guide

To determine the latitude and longitude of a customer's home address for Relocation Scholarship and self-supporting independence refer to the:



[Latitude and longitude task card](#)