



ABSTUDY KEY MESSAGES TERM 4

Advise parental income online

- Annual Parental Income Test (PIT) reviews are required to ensure that each ABSTUDY student's correct entitlement is paid from the start of each new calendar year.
- A PIT review letter was sent out in September to all dependent ABSTUDY recipients, except where the parent/s are PIT exempt, or the parent/s actual 2016/2017 financial year income details are already known to the Department of Human Services. The letter includes a One Time Access Code with a request to have their parent/s provide the necessary information using the Advise Parental Income Online Service.
- Where the parental income is not received by 31 December 2017, the ABSTUDY recipient's Living Allowance rate will be reduced to zero from 1 January 2018.

ABSTUDY Verbal Declarations

- Verbal declarations for ABSTUDY claims continue to be taken over the phone. Claimants who accept a verbal declaration for their claim will no longer need to sign and return the paper Customer Declaration Form (CDF).
- Claimants will be advised at the time of the claim if they are required to provide any additional information to support their claim.
- Recipients are still required to notify if any claim information has changed or is incorrect.

Students should commence study in week 1

- Boarding school students must commence school within the first 3 weeks of each term to be eligible for the maximum rate of ABSTUDY assistance for that term.
- Students who fail to commence by the 3rd Friday of term will only receive a pro-rata amount of ABSTUDY for that term.

- Any gap between the maximum rate of ABSTUDY and the school's annual board and tuition cost will need to be paid by the parent or guardian.

End of Year Circumstance Reviews

The End of Year Circumstance Review (EOY) will automatically update the following:

- Secondary non-boarding students completing Year 11 or below will have their study details automatically updated to the following year and payments will continue into the next calendar year.
- ABSTUDY secondary boarding students will have study and boarding details automatically updated to the following year and payments will continue into the next calendar year.
- ABSTUDY tertiary students whose course end date falls in a future calendar year will have payments continue into the next calendar year.
- On completion of the updates recipients will be issued a letter advising them of their study details for the following year. Recipients must contact Department of Human Services (DHS) if the information is incorrect.

End of Year/Start of Year Travel

Travel requests should be compiled over the next few weeks to be returned to the ABSTUDY travel team for processing. Please consider the following when requesting travel:

- Discuss student travel dates with parents
- Years 11 and 12 finish earlier than other students therefore their travel requests should be lodged earlier with the 6 week cut-off in mind
- Consider travelling siblings together even if they attend different schools or are studying at different levels
- Ensure final exam dates have been taken into account for years 10 – 12 when requesting end of year travel
- Travel should only be requested from the students place of study to their permanent home address
- Consider the Public Holiday, 26 January 2018, when requesting start of year travel for 2018
- Variations to pre-booked travel will only be considered if unforeseen or exceptional circumstances are presented

Supervisor Travel

- ABSTUDY organises travel for around 3,400 Indigenous secondary school aged children who travel to and from their home to education institutions each term.
- Student travellers vary in age, generally originate from rural or remote locations, can travel great distances alone, on multiple legs via different modes (air, sea, rail, bus and charter) and consequently can be vulnerable.
- Weather, transport delays, carrier maintenance or students choosing to miss travel can lead to unaccompanied minors experiencing travel disruptions.
- Supervisors are mandatory for secondary students under 12 years of age and DHS strongly encourages parent/guardians to nominate a supervisor for all students studying at secondary school and/or under 18 years of age who are:
 - travelling great distances;
 - on multiple carriers; or
 - Who may be 'at risk' of a travel disruption.
- A supervisor must be 18 years of age or over and a:
 - parent/guardian;
 - family member;
 - a community representative; or
 - Representative of the receiving school or hostel.

Penalties for missed travel

- It is important for students and non-student travellers to travel on the date arranged. Changes to booked travel will not be approved unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- If a secondary school student misses travel for the first time in a calendar year, the journey can be re-booked. If a secondary school student misses travel again in the calendar year, DHS will not re-book their travel in advance for the same trip. The parent/guardian or school will need to book and pay for that journey and, if eligible, seek reimbursement.
- If a tertiary student, secondary non-school student, or a non-student traveller misses travel, DHS will not re-book or pay for the same trip in advance. They will be required to book and pay for that trip and, if eligible, seek reimbursement.
- Students and non-student travellers may have to pay back the costs if we were charged by the travel provider for the trip they missed.

- Where travel is missed due to exceptional circumstances penalties may not apply.

Students should be encouraged to apply for a Tax File Number

- Claimants applying for ABSTUDY must supply their Tax File Number (TFN). If a claimant has a partner or is dependent, the claimant's partner or parent/s TFN(s) must also be supplied.
- If a claimant does not have a TFN or does not know their TFN request the recipient to complete the TFN application form (NAT1589).
- Claimants 16 years of age or over who fail to provide a TFN or TFN application form will have their ABSTUDY claim rejected.

Identity Confirmation

- Claimants applying for ABSTUDY are required to provide identity documents to meet the Identity Confirmation process. Claimants must provide 1 document from each category: The form SS231 can be downloaded from the Department of Human Services website at www.humanservices.gov.au
 - Commencement of Identity
 - Primary Use in Community
 - Secondary Use in Community
- When claimants have satisfactorily identified themselves to the department, they will achieve an Identity Status of 'Confirmed' and will not be required to provide these documents again.
- Claimants that experience difficulty in confirming their identity will still be eligible to use the Alternative Identity Confirmation procedures.

Claim ABSTUDY now

- Secondary students commencing in 2018, especially those students who will be living away from home for studies in 2018, should lodge their claim now for next year's schooling.
- It's important to encourage students to claim early so they can get their ABSTUDY before school starts next year and travel to school on time.

Third Party Permission to Enquire (PPE)

PPE allows parent(s)/guardian(s) or organisations to make enquires on behalf of the recipient to discuss:

- payments issued to students or organisations on their behalf
- travel arrangements or amendments
- Any change of circumstances e.g.: change of school or ceased studies.

- **To arrange Third Party Permission to Enquire a parent/guardian or organisation can:**
- contact the ABSTUDY Smart Centre Network on 1800 132 317, or
- Complete Authorising a person or organisation to enquire or act on your behalf SS313. The SS313 is available to download from the [Human Services Website](#).

ABSTUDY communication activities

The Department of Human Services' official YouTube channel shares the latest news on DHS payments and now displays various ABSTUDY Video on Demand (VODs).

These VODs cover information on:

- ABSTUDY – general claiming information
- Information you should provide to claim ABSTUDY
- ABSTUDY for students aged 15 and under and living at home
- ABSTUDY high school students who live away from home
- ABSTUDY Fares Allowance
- Advising of changes to circumstances for ABSTUDY
- Avoiding an ABSTUDY debt

The VODs can be accessed at the [Human Services YouTube channel](#).

ABSTUDY Schooling A

- ABSTUDY Schooling A is available to secondary students under 16 years of age, or primary students aged 14 years of age or older at 1 January, attending school in their local area.

- Parent(s) or guardian(s) who have a dependent secondary school student under 16 years of age may qualify for ABSTUDY School Term Allowance and School Fees Allowance.

- To qualify, the parent/guardian or parent/guardians partner must be in receipt of an Income Support payment, or hold a current Low Income Health Care Card or a Health Care Card.

Schools, Colleges and Student Hostels

- At the end of Term 1, 2 and 3 the Department of Human Services (DHS) requests attendance information from schools, colleges and distance education providers to work out if ABSTUDY students under 16 years meet the attendance requirements to get ABSTUDY School Term Allowance.
- At the commencement of each term DHS requests schools and hostels to provide start dates for ABSTUDY Away from Home students to work out the amount of ABSTUDY assistance payable.
- On 25 August 2017 DHS faxed a letter to qualified boarding schools and hostels inviting them to apply for the ABSTUDY under 16 Boarding Supplement for eligible ABSTUDY Away from Home students who are under 16 years.
- Education Institutions are to use the Education Institutions eService to send DHS the range of information required to determine ABSTUDY assistance for schools, hostels and Indigenous students.

Students must advise of any change in circumstances using online services

ABSTUDY recipients must advise when things change to avoid getting a debt. ABSTUDY payments may also be cancelled or suspended if we become aware of a change the recipient has not advised us of.

- ABSTUDY recipients who commence work are required to notify this initial change by contacting ABSTUDY on 1800 132 317. Students and apprentices will then be eligible to use online services to report their income fortnightly.
- The following self-managed services are available online, via smart device applications or can be accessed over the phone:
 - Print an Income Statement
 - Request an Advance Payment
 - View their payment history
 - View and update their payment destination