

Guidelines

Youth Employment Support Scheme

YESS

The Youth Employment Support Scheme is co-funded by the Irish Government, the European Social Fund and the Youth Employment Initiative as part of the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020



An Roinn Gnóthaí Fostaíochta agus Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection

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Part 1: General

1.1 Description

The Youth Employment Support Scheme (YESS) was announced as part of Budget 2018. It is a new work experience programme targeted exclusively at young jobseekers aged 18 to 24 years old who are in receipt of a qualifying social welfare payment and are either long-term unemployed or who face significant barriers to gaining employment. The scheme aims to provide these jobseekers with the opportunity to learn basic work and personal development skills in a supportive environment while on a work placement with a view to increasing their employment prospects.

Participation on the YESS is entirely voluntary. There will be no financial penalty for non-participation.

The Scheme is open to placement hosts in the private, community and voluntary sectors only. Public Service Bodies, including schools and colleges are excluded from participation on the YESS. (An employer deemed as a public service body within the meaning of 'a public service body' is not eligible for the scheme. A person or body funded by the Oireachtas or by the central fund and in respect of which a public service pension scheme exists or may be made is defined as a public service body).

An employer who is in receipt of an allowance/payment from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) may not participate on the YESS.

1.2 Rationale

The Scheme is designed to improve the employment prospects of young jobseekers that are distant from the labour market. It aims to provide participants with the opportunity to learn basic work and personal development skills in a supportive environment while on a work placement.

The scheme will complement and sit alongside other opportunities developed by the Department of Education and Skills, such as the new Career Traineeships and Apprenticeships, and will broaden the choice available to young people. The scheme will facilitate employers to contribute to the national activation agenda by providing meaningful placement opportunities to young jobseekers and provides an opportunity to contribute to economic recovery through corporate social responsibility.

Participants on the scheme should not displace a potential or existing job. Employers who are deemed to have caused displacement may be disallowed from further participation on the scheme.

1.3 Form of Incentive

Participants on YESS will receive an allowance of €229.20 per week. Payment will be made by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP). If the participant's primary payment exceeds €229.20, an additional €22.50 will be paid.

1.4 European Social Fund

YESS is co-funded by the Irish Government, the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) as part of the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020. The ESF is the European Union's financial instrument for investing in people. Its mission is to help prevent and fight unemployment, to make Europe's workforce and companies better equipped to face new challenges and to prevent people losing touch with the labour market. The ESF, with additional dedicated funding provided under the YEI, aims to assist Member States in their efforts to put their Youth Guarantee implementation plans in practice. The YEI is specifically aimed at tackling unemployment for young people under 25 years of age who are not in employment, education or training. YEI support is matched by equal amounts of ESF and national Member State support.

The Common Provision Regulation (CPR) and the ESF Regulation for the 2014-2020 programming period (respectively Regulation nos. 1303/2013 and 1304/2013) lay down the requirements for monitoring of ESF operations and subsequent reporting by Member States.

The Regulations require Member States to collect and store detailed data about participants covering a range of personal information (gender, age, labour status, level of education, etc.), including some sensitive data (i.e. those related to disability, migrant or minority status, and/or other disadvantages) as well as outcome data when participants leave YESS.

Part 2: The Placement

2.1 Finding a Placement

All YESS placements will be advertised publicly on the Jobs Ireland website, www.jobsireland.ie after being vetted for suitability and approved by Departmental staff in the Jobs Ireland National Contact Centre (NCC). Jobseekers should access the Jobs Ireland website to view the YESS positions on offer.

If a jobseeker is interested and wishes to apply for a placement, s/he should contact their local Intreo Centre and speak with a Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) case officer.

Alternatively, if an eligible jobseeker wishes to acquire a placement with a specific employer/organisation, they can approach an organisation and inform them of the YESS, and direct them to the website www.jobsireland.ie to apply to become a placement host.

2.2 The Selection Process

Interested, eligible and suitable candidates for YESS positions will be put forward by DEASP case officers for selection by the placement host.

Each placement host will decide how they select their potential participant for the placement. For example, they may ask for a CV to be forwarded or invite the candidate to attend for an interview.

The placement host will inform the successful jobseeker. They will also inform the DEASP case officer.

A commencement date will be agreed upon between the placement host and the jobseeker and the DEASP case officer will be notified accordingly.

2.3 Duration

The initial duration of a YESS placement will be 3 months, this may be extended further to 6 months. The placement will be subject to a review by the DEASP case officer two months after its commencement to determine if sufficient progress has been made on the Participant's Learning and Development Plan, with the credible prospect of further progress in the extended three months. Sufficient evidence will need to be provided to the DEASP case officer in this context to enable them to agree to an extended placement.

In all cases, the Department reserves the right to refuse a request for an extension to a placement.

The maximum duration a participant can spend on a placement with the same Placement Host is 6 months (26 weeks). A participant will only be eligible to do 3 placements in total, up to a maximum period of 18 months (78 weeks).

2.4 Hours of Attendance

A placement will be for 24 hours work per week. Hours must be completed over either 3 or 4 days.

2.5 Payment of participants

During the placement, participants will be paid a weekly YESS allowance by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. The total weekly YESS personal rate of payment will be €229.20 per week. Participants whose underlying entitlement is in excess of that amount will continue to receive their current entitlement plus a top-up allowance of €22.50 per week. Employer top-up contributions are not permitted.

2.6 Standard Agreement and Learning & Development Plan

When a placement commences, both the placement host and the participant agree and complete a Standard Agreement/Learning and Development Plan, which will detail the skills and experience the participant will have the opportunity to learn and develop during the placement. A copy of this document must be kept by the placement host, and a copy provided to both the participant and the DEASP case officer.

The Learning and Development Plan should be agreed between the placement host and the participant at the outset of the placement. The Plan should include a range of personal development skills as well as any specific 'work' skills that will be acquired during the placement and which are based on the advertised vacancy. The placement host will complete a reference for the participant at the end of the placement.

2.7 Compliance

The placement will be monitored regularly with monthly compliance reporting on the placement along with the evaluation of the participant's work experience, development and progression. The purpose of the monthly compliance is to ensure that placements are progressing in accordance with the scheme guidelines. Failure to complete the monthly compliance may affect the participant's YESS payment and the placement host's continued participation on the scheme.

The compliance is to verify:

- That the placement is being delivered as described by the placement host, in accordance with the Standard Agreement and the Learning and Development Plan.
- That the attendance of the participant continues in accordance with the Standard Agreement and for the requisite number of hours each week.
- If a participant has been absent during the course of the placement, that the type and period of absence is recorded and details provided to DEASP accordingly.

2.8 Support

The DEASP case officer will be the key liaison person for both the placement host and the participant. The case officer will be available for support throughout the placement and will regularly review the progress of same. This will include a formal review meeting after 2 months, which will also facilitate the case officer in deciding whether to approve a request for an extension of the placement duration to 6 months, if an extension has been requested. The case officer will also provide post-programme supports to the participant for up to six months after the placement ends.

The case officer will ensure that the Standard Agreement and Learning and Development Plan have been signed and are being adhered to by the placement host and the participant.

2.9 Mentoring of participants

The placement host will nominate an individual to support and mentor the participant during the placement. This person must have expertise and experience in performing the duties expected of the participant. The mentor will also have responsibility to ensure that the participant receives a proper induction; ensure that the work experience is progressing and that monthly compliance checks are being completed. If an organisation has a formal mentoring programme, they should include the participant in this programme.

2.10 Finishing a placement

If a placement finishes early or at short notice for any reason e.g. the participant gains employment, the DEASP case officer should be notified immediately.

When a placement is completed, the placement host should provide the participant with a reference that will detail the professional development/learning outcomes and experience they have acquired during the course of the placement.

If a participant takes up full-time employment, the placement must end and the DEASP case officer should be notified immediately.

Part 3: Jobseeker Eligibility and Conditions

3.1 Jobseekers who are eligible

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.

In order to be eligible to participate on the YESS, an individual must be:

- aged between 18 and 24 **and**
- have been out of work 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 employment.

Barriers will include, but are not limited to:

- Early school leaver
- Low levels of personal or technical skills
- Personal, behavioural or health issues
- A history of substance abuse
- A lengthy period of unemployment
- Homelessness or instability of residence
- Family history of unemployment
- From a marginalised community

Other barriers – These should be clearly outlined as part of the process

Jobseekers 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.

NOTE: A person in receipt of Supplementary Allowance (SWA) will only be eligible if the payment was allowed pending the outcome of a jobseeker's payment application only. Recipients of SWA who qualified for payment as a consequence of being unfit to work or pending the outcome of an Illness Benefit claim do not qualify for the YESS.

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

3.2 Persons who are not eligible

The following are **not eligible** for YESS.

- Qualified Adult dependants cannot participate on the YESS nor can they use a spousal swap to become eligible. The only way for qualified adults to qualify is to be in receipt of an eligible payment in their own name.
- Jobseekers who are casually employed.
- Persons who are signing for credits only.
- Individuals, who are in receipt of a non-qualifying payment even if they are also receiving half rate Jobseekers Benefit, are considered ineligible for participation on the YESS.

3.3 Education and Training programmes

Participants on the YESS may engage in education and training provided by the placement host, or part-time education and training courses, irrespective of length and provided that it does not have an adverse impact on the placement.

Participants on the YESS will be eligible to avail of the Training Support Grant (TSG) of up to €500 on two occasions during a 12 month period where deemed necessary. This will also apply to jobseekers who are engaged with JobPath and who go on to pursue a YESS placement.

3.4 Casual Employment

While on a YESS placement, participants can commence casual employment without affecting their entitlements provided that it is not with the placement host and that it does not interfere with the required hours of the placement. Casual employment with the placement host is not permitted.

Participants **must** notify their DEASP Intreo Centre /Scheme Area of changes in circumstances.

3.5 JobPath

JobPath clients are eligible to participate on the YESS. Jobseekers who inform their JobPath personal adviser that they are interested in pursuing a YESS placement, will be advised to contact their DEASP Office to discuss and the JobPath (Seetec/Turas Nua) company may also send a Change of Circumstances notification to the DEASP office.

When a person who is engaged with the JobPath service commences a placement, their referral to JobPath will be paused for the duration of the 3 month placement.

3.6 Exclusions

Participants on the YESS are not eligible to access:

- Full-time education or full-time training courses
- Other Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection initiatives such as the Back to Education Allowance and the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance

Persons who are currently or have been previously members of management boards/held directorships within a company or who have had a previous employment relationship with a company in the last 3 years, cannot participate on YESS with the same company

Individuals cannot undertake a YESS placement from home, and should be accompanied while away from the workplace on business.

Community Employment (CE) Programme, TÚS and Rural Social Scheme (RSS) sponsors/organisations are not eligible to participate on the Youth Employment Support Scheme (YESS). **With immediate effect, cases for consideration of any exception to this rule should be specifically referred to YESS Policy Unit before any approval can be considered.** Exceptions may be considered where the company providing the CE, TÚS or RSS programmes is proposing a YESS placement in a different area of activity to that being provided by the scheme/programme placement.

Part 4: Employer Eligibility and Conditions

4.1 Business type

The Scheme is open to placement hosts in the private, community and voluntary sectors only. Public Service Bodies, including schools and colleges are excluded from participation on the YESS. (An employer deemed as a public service body within the meaning of 'a public service body' is not

eligible for the scheme. A person or body funded by the Oireachtas or by the central fund and in respect of which a public service pension scheme exists or may be made is defined as a public service body).

An employer who is in receipt of an allowance/payment from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) may not participate on the YESS. These allowances include Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA), TÚS, Farm Assist etc.

4.2 Placement details

A YESS placement should provide the participant with a broad, meaningful and practical workplace experience within the organisation. The placement should genuinely enhance/increase the participant's ability to obtain future full-time employment. The placement should demonstrate that an organisation is willing to support the individual and provide the opportunity to learn new and practical skills and access to formal and/or informal training through the support of their mentor. Prospective participants should not work unsupervised/unaccompanied for extended periods of time. A placement host cannot state that previous experience is required when advertising a placement. The placement title and associated learning outcomes from the work placement should reflect these principles.

4.3 Business size

An organisation, or a local branch, must certify that they have a minimum of 1 full-time employee who is employed for 30 hours or more per week (i.e. on payroll and subject to PAYE and PRSI). The placement host should have a mentor available to support the YESS participant.

The Placement Host should be a legal entity and/or a charity recognised by the Revenue Commissioners (with a CHY number).

The scheme is open to sole traders who satisfy the conditions of the scheme. Sole traders must be available to mentor and supervise the participant.

4.4 Legal requirements

The placement host should be fully compliant with all legal requirements. The placement host's Public/Employers Liability insurance and Motor insurance, if applicable, should cover any participants on the programme. These are documents that all employers are legally obliged to hold and are not specific to the YESS. The requirement in the scheme conditions that an employer must hold these documents is simply a restatement, for the avoidance of doubt.

The placement host should be fully compliant with current workplace Health and Safety and all other legal and sectoral requirements.

The placement must be in accordance with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission's Code of Practice on Sexual Harassment and Harassment at Work.

4.5 Selection of participants

Selection of the participants is carried out by the eligible placement host and they are actively reminded of promoting equality and prohibiting discrimination in recruitment on nine grounds as defined in the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2011 and the Equal Status Acts 2000-2012. The nine grounds are gender (including gender identity), family status, civil status, sexual orientation, age, disability (including mental health), race (including skin colour, ethnicity and nationality), membership of the Traveller community, religion (including non-religious belief).

Placement hosts are also reminded that they must provide reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities and to ensure equality through preferential treatment or positive measures which promote equality of opportunity for people who may be disadvantaged because of their circumstances, or to cater for their special needs.

4.6 Displacement

The placement host should not have vacancies in the area of activity in which the placement is offered. The YESS placement should not displace an employee. The Department reserves the right to review cases where it is reported that this is the case and to make an appropriate decision in relation to this matter. The placement should be created specifically to provide a jobseeker with a work experience opportunity.

A Placement Host cannot offer a placement if they have made an employee redundant in the last 6 months.

4.7 Number of participants

There will be a limit on the number of participants that an organisation can host on the YESS. Please see below table for information:

Table 1

Number of Full Time Employees*	Number of YESS Participants permitted
1-10 employees	1 participant
11-20 employees	2 participants
21-30 employees	3 participants
30 + employees	10% of the workforce to a maximum of 10 participants whichever is the smaller
* Who is employed for 30 hours or more per week (i.e. on payroll and subject to PAYE and PRSI)	

Local branches of national organisations will **not** be regarded as individual Placement Hosts for the purpose of the YESS.

A cooling off period of 3 months will apply to an employer after each placement. This period may be waived in cases where the previous participant remains in full-time employment with the Placement Host.

4.8 Responsibilities of the Placement host

Responsibilities of the Placement host:

To provide valuable work experience – the skills to be developed will be outlined in the Standard Agreement and Learning and Development Plan when a participant is selected and commences the placement

The placement host must complete all required compliance checks/reports

A mentor in same area of expertise/experience in performing the duties expected of the participant should be assigned for the duration of the placement. The role of the mentor should include the following:

- To provide on-going support to the participant
- Be a workplace point of contact for the participant and the DEASP case officer
- The mentor should provide an induction session to the participant when the placement commences
- The mentor should ensure that the Learning and Development Plan for the participant is put in place and is being acted upon as agreed
- The mentor should ensure that the opportunity to learn/apply skills in the workplace is provided to the participant
- In organisations where a formal mentoring system exists, YESS participants should be included in this process.

4.9 Financial incentives for employing a participant

At the end of the placement, placement hosts will be encouraged to hire satisfactory participants (i.e. offer them paid employment) and may qualify for a subsidy under JobsPlus Youth.

Please see the Department's website for information on the incentive, eligibility criteria and how to apply: <http://www.jobsplus.ie>

Part 5: Placement Process

5.1 Leave and Rest Periods

Participants have the following Leave entitlements:

Annual Leave

Participants are entitled to all the Public holidays and 5 days annual leave days per 3 month placement. Therefore, a 6 month placement will carry a leave entitlement of 10 days. Participants will not be compensated for annual leave which has not been taken.

Maternity Leave

Participants are entitled to suspend their YESS placement early due to maternity leave. The DEASP case officer should be notified in such instances.

Sick Leave

A total of 5 days sick leave will be permitted. If 5 days are reached, the case officer must actively engage with the participant and assess their suitability for continuation on the scheme, as otherwise the placement may be terminated. The participant may, in exceptional circumstances be permitted to continue with the placement where their sick leave has exceeded 5 days. However this will be decided by the YESS Policy Unit on recommendation of the case officer.

5.2 Finishing a Placement

If a placement finishes early or at short notice for any reason e.g. the participant gains employment, the DEASP case officer should be notified immediately.

When a placement is completed, the placement host should provide the participant with a reference that will detail the professional development/learning outcomes and experience they have acquired during the course of the placement. A reference template will be provided.

If a participant takes up full-time employment, the placement must end and the DEASP case officer should be notified immediately.

Part 6: Other matters

6.1 Garda Vetting and Sectoral Requirements

The placement host has responsibility to ensure that the appropriate process is applied to placements that require Garda Vetting or other sectoral requirements. Potential participants must agree to comply with requests for Garda Vetting and other sectoral requirements where necessary, in accordance with the placement host's policy.

6.2 Freedom of Information (FOI) and Data Protection

The Department holds extensive and detailed personal information about individuals. The Department has an obligation to these people to ensure that the information is collected appropriately, is maintained securely and is used only for the purpose for which it was intended.

Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation provide certain safeguards to the customers regarding the collection, storage, use of and access to personal information. It also imposes obligations on staff not to misuse or abuse personal information.

The data provided by you as part of your application for entry into YESS will be collected, processed and retained by the Department in accordance with its obligations under the Common Provisions Regulation (EU) 1303/2013, the European Social Fund (EU) Regulation 1304/2014, and related delegated and implementing regulations (henceforth the “ESF Regulations”). The Department and the Department of Education and Skills are Joint Data Controllers in respect of the data you provide, and will only process that data in accordance with the GDPR and their legal obligations under the ESF Regulations referred to above. Personal data collected as part of your application will be shared with the Department of Education and Skills for the purposes of monitoring, evaluating, managing, verifying and auditing the implementation of YESS. Such data may also, from time to time, be shared with the European Commission, the European Court of Auditors and/or their agents for audit and verification purposes. Data will only be retained by the Joint Data Controllers for the period required to fulfil their obligations under the ESF Regulations. The Data will be retained for the period specified by the ESF regulations. Under the GDPR, data subjects have the right to request from the data controller access to their data, the right to request rectification or erasure of their data, the right to request that the processing of such data is restricted, and the right to data portability. Any such requests should be addressed to the YESS Policy Unit, Goldsmith House, Pearse Street, Dublin 2.

6.3 Specialist clothing and equipment

It is the responsibility for the placement host to provide a participant with specialist clothing and equipment if required during the course of their placement. While Placement hosts are not permitted to pay participants, they can pay out-of-pocket expenses incurred by participants in the purchase of any specialist clothing, footwear or equipment.

6.4 Complaints and Breaches of the Terms and Conditions of the Scheme

Any workplace issues which arise during the placement should be addressed and resolved between the placement host, the participant and the DEASP case officer, where possible. All complaints relating to participation on the YESS will be investigated in full by the Department, and appropriate action will be taken. Details may be made public. Please see the Department’s website for further details.

Contribution to Horizontal Principles

Promotion of Equality between men and women

YESS placements will be publicly advertised on the Jobs Ireland website and interested jobseekers will be advised to contact a Case Officer in their local Intreo Centre with an expression of interest. Case Officers are actively reminded of their requirement to abide by the relevant equality legislation.

Promotion of equal opportunities and non-discrimination

Suitable jobseekers will be put forward by Case Officers for selection by the Placement Host and all Case Officers are actively reminded of their commitment to equality which includes promoting equality and prohibiting discrimination in employment and in service delivery on nine grounds as defined in the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2011 and the Equal Status Acts 2000-2012. The nine grounds are gender (including gender identity), family status, civil status, sexual orientation, age, disability (including mental health), race (including skin colour, ethnicity and nationality), membership of the Traveller community, religion (including non-religious belief).

Sustainable Development

As set out in the Partnership Agreement, the principle of sustainable development requires that the needs of the present be met without compromising the ability of future generations. This requires support for environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, sustainable management of natural resources; risk prevention and management are addressed through both dedicated funding streams and through their horizontal integration across the Operational Programmes.

The Government sustainable development framework document is intended to provide a platform for the integration of sustainable development principles into policies across all sectors. The framework broadly follows the thematic approach of the *EU Sustainable Development Strategy* and sets out a wide range of measures that seek to ensure an improvement in Ireland's quality of life into the future. Among the areas listed are sustainability of public finances and economic resilience, sustainable consumption and production, conservation and management of natural resources, climate change and clean energy, social inclusion, sustainable communities and spatial planning, education, communication and behaviour change, innovation, research and development, skills and training and global poverty and sustainable development.