

# Working Development Scheme

## Introduction:

The ***Work and Development Permit*** (WDP) scheme is a Victorian government programme that allows eligible participants to “*deal with their fines and the circumstances that led to getting the fines*” through non-financial means. Through sponsorship, participants can reduce their fine “*by participating in certain activities and treatment under the supervision of*” an approved sponsor that converts to monetary value, rather than paying the fine directly. Sponsor can pay the fine in full or simply reduce the fine amount, however, if the fine includes loss of demerit points or license - these will still be lost regardless. “*While a person is undertaking a WDP, enforcement activity on the fines included in the WDP is suspended.*” A participant can have more than one sponsor, including third parties, e.g the university and a psychologist. It is the infringed participant that must reach out for a sponsorship, however, it is the sponsor that “applies for the WDP, on behalf of the client, and this is processed online by the Fines Vic WDP Team”. A participant can have several fines on a singular WDP and can apply as many times as they want.

## Usual Eligibility Criteria:

- The student must have received an “*infringement fine or registered collection and enforcement order.*”
- The fine can not be or related to a criminal offence (e.g assault) or issued by a court
- The student must be an enrolled student
- Most other sponsors only sponsor people under 25 (possible link to Centrelink Youth Allowance cut off age at 24, we can find other ways students can prove low-financial income\*)
- The fine hasn't passed its 7 day notice period
- There needs to be an approved and accredited sponsor
- Be able to complete and achieve activities set out by sponsor

\*ways to see if participant is eligible: receiving a social security benefit, or low income test, or extenuating circumstance

([https://prod2-wdp-accreditation-application-documents-public.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/accreditation\\_documents/Fact%20sheet%20-%20WDP%20eligibility.pdf](https://prod2-wdp-accreditation-application-documents-public.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/accreditation_documents/Fact%20sheet%20-%20WDP%20eligibility.pdf))

## Usual Sponsor Criteria:

- Be an organisation

- Capacity → the organisation has the financial and organisational capacity to carry out the functions of a sponsor as set out in these guidelines and the supporting material is issued by the Director
- Staff → the organisation has staff who are trained, qualified, or experienced to work with eligible persons or to provide the WDP activities that the organisation has proposed
- Working with Children Check → any person supervising an eligible person under 18 years of age must have a valid Working with Children Check
- Insurance → the organisation has current public liability and other appropriate insurance covering proposed WDP activities (such as professional indemnity insurance)
- Complaints → the organisation has a complaints procedure
- Australian Business Number (ABN) → the organisation has an ABN

### **Responsibilities for being a sponsor:**

- The sponsor is in charge of deciding participants treatment and/or activities, these can include:
  - Unpaid work (potentially community service)
  - courses, including educational, vocational or life skills courses
  - counseling, including financial or other types of counselling
  - Mentoring (for a person under 25 years of age)
- Sponsor must apply on behalf of client for a WDP through Fines Vic Team
- Supervise the person's participation in treatment and/or activities under the WDP
- "The client's sponsor must provide an estimated end date. This end date is very flexible. If the Fines Vic WDP Team believe that the end date is excessive they may organise with the client's sponsor a more realistic one."
- Sponsor only provides activities or treatment included in their accreditation
- Sponsor reports on the client's participation in activities or treatment monthly through the WDP Portal.

### **Why Unimelb should be a sponsor:**

1. Employability - could be run by UMSU legal services → gives students the chance to have some practical legal experience
2. Application is simple  
[https://prod2-wdp-accreditation-application-documents-public.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/accreditation\\_documents/Fact%20sheet%20-%20applying%20for%20a%20WDP.pdf](https://prod2-wdp-accreditation-application-documents-public.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/accreditation_documents/Fact%20sheet%20-%20applying%20for%20a%20WDP.pdf)
3. University gets to decide on who is eligible, doesn't have to take on every student and can instead consider:
  - the impact on the person if they do not participate in a WDP at that time

- the availability of staff to deliver the activity or provide the treatment
  - the capacity to take on new clients
4. Students can work off fines through community service and volunteering for eg, as Sustainability Volunteers, Peer Mentors, or other Melbourne Plus activities. Also gets students to know more about the different uni services/events and can interact more.

#### **How do RMIT does the WDP:**

- <https://www.rmit.edu.au/students/news/2023/mar/work-development-permit>
- Have a scheme of \$59 per hour spent participating in other activities based on a work-off rate of 0.3 penalty units.

#### **Alternative schemes:**

1. Centrelink payment plan: payments can be automatically deducted from your Centrelink payments. → a\*not international student friendly
2. Community Work Permit: allows individuals facing unpaid fines to fulfill their obligations by performing community work instead of paying the fine, and is issued by a sheriff's officer after an arrest under an infringement warrant.

\*Receipt of a social security payment: A person is experiencing acute financial hardship if the person receives jobseeker payment, youth allowance

#### **Contact and External Links:**

WDP contact: call 1300 323 483 between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday or email [wdp@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto:wdp@justice.vic.gov.au).

- <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/wdp>
- <https://online.fines.vic.gov.au/WDP-Sponsor-Search>
- <https://online.fines.vic.gov.au/Support/Work-and-Development-Permit>
- <https://pclc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/2.-Sponsor-WDP-FAQs.pdf>
- [https://prod2-wdp-accreditation-application-documents-public.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/accreditation\\_documents/Work%20and%20Development%20Permit%20Guidelines.pdf](https://prod2-wdp-accreditation-application-documents-public.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/accreditation_documents/Work%20and%20Development%20Permit%20Guidelines.pdf)