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GOVERNOR



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** March 25, 2015  
**TO:** Regional Workforce Board Executive Directors  
**FROM:** Lois A. Scott, Chief, Bureau of One-Stop and Program Support  
**SUBJECT:** Qualifying for Trade Readjustment Allowances

This memorandum provides guidance to local Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Coordinators in determining if eligible trade-affected participants qualify for Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA). Specifically this memorandum addresses those participants who are enrolled and participating in training on a full-time basis as defined by the training institution, remain in good (academic) standing, and have either: **a gap in class start dates, are on a scheduled break in training beyond 30 days, are on an excused absence, or are attending class less than full-time during their final semester.** In either of these circumstances, the participants may qualify for receipt of TRA benefits.

Trade-affected participants who are enrolled in training full-time during the term, semester or quarter and are unable to meet the “full-time” number of hours in any particular week **due to gaps in class start dates** are considered to have met full-time participation. This is no fault of the participant and these individuals should not be penalized as long as the participant is following the established training institution’s schedule for the term and that schedule meets their definition of full-time attendance.

When there is a **scheduled break** in training that will exceed 30 days, you may enroll the participant in an employability skills (soft skills) workshop prior to the 30-day period so that the participant can continue to receive TRA benefits during the schedule break in training. The participant’s training plan should be updated to include the enrollment in the soft skills activity. Once the updated training plan is received by the Trade Program Unit, a decision will be issued regarding the continued eligibility of the participant during the scheduled break. When substituting coursework for employability skills workshop(s), the local TAA Coordinator must document the substitution in the state management information system, and on the attendance record for the week in which the individual participated. These workshops should be carefully selected to ensure that participants are enrolled in courses leading to employment. Allowable employability skills workshops

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include, but are not limited to, interviewing skills, resume development, professional placement network, and computer skills, etc. The local TAA Coordinator must make the necessary referral and ensure that the participant begins participating in the workshop within 30 days of the beginning of the scheduled break in order to prevent an overpayment of benefits. If the participant fails to enroll and participate within the 30-day period, the scheduled break determination previously issued will be revoked and an overpayment will be created in the system if TRA benefits have been received. The purpose for assigning employability skills when scheduled breaks are expected to last more than 30 days is to allow the participant to continue receiving TRA benefits. The process to cover a scheduled break lasting more than 30 days will be allowed only one time per year.

It is the responsibility of the training institution to identify the type and number of absences allowable during a semester. In cases where the institution does not have rules in place, the Trade Program Unit will allow five **excused absences** per semester. The timesheet must be approved by the instructor/representative with the training institution supporting those absences on a week-by-week basis and TRA payment will be based on the school's assessment that the absence is excused and confirmation that the participant is in good standing. Any unexcused absences will result in a denial of TRA benefits regardless of the student's academic status.

As outlined in Training and Employment Guidance Letter 10-11, Change 1, (2011 amendments and Reversion 2014), participants on occasion may enter **the final semester** in an approved training program with only one or two courses remaining which may be defined by the training institution to be less than full-time. When this occurs, this last term will be treated as full-time, provided that the participant is designated as enrolled in training on a full-time basis. It is the case manager's responsibility to inform the Trade Program Unit of this information and ensure that the record (case notes and timesheets) are properly notated.

We have updated the TRA Certification form to accommodate for these special situations. This form is used to support the processing of manual TRA payments. Please remember to review all documents for completion and accuracy prior to submitting to the Trade Program Unit for a final determination.

Should you have any questions, please contact Mershal Noble or a staff with the Trade Program Unit at 1-800-342-3450.

LAS/omn

cc: Tom Clendenning  
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Local TAA Coordinators