

## JOB-SEARCH REQUIREMENTS

Job-search assistance and monitoring of jobseekers may be required to ensure that they search actively for work. This feature is definitely on the rise in OECD member countries, and a clear majority now seem to have explicit regulations for job-search reporting and monitoring. Such a policy can have a considerable impact on re-employment rates. However, there remains a risk that too-rigid requirements may generate perverse effects, such as employer cynicism about too many solicitations or pressure on jobseekers to quickly accept job matches that do not maximise their individual productivity.

As shown in the Table, column 1, half of OECD countries require reporting of job search (in most

cases) every two weeks or at least monthly: these are Australia, Austria, the Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, the Slovak Republic, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. Most of these countries use relatively standardised procedures for reporting and verification: for example, requiring employer confirmation of applications, or handing out standard forms where individual job applications should be listed.

Other countries verify job search within the context of intensive interviews: France once a month (starting at the fourth month of an unemployment spell), New Zealand every six weeks, Spain on average six times a year, Denmark and Norway every three months.

The placement agencies in Belgium, Canada, Germany, Ireland and Sweden describe procedures

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	Frequency at which unemployed have to report their job-search activities	Number of actions to be reported in a month
Australia	Every two weeks	From 8 to 20
Austria	Once a month	Not specified
Belgium	Variable requirements at placement agencies; after 15/21 months at ONEM (benefit agency)	Not specified
Canada	Variable requirements	“Reasonable” efforts expected
Czech Republic	Every two weeks	Not specified
Denmark	At least once every three months	Variable requirements (depending on IAP)
Finland	From one week to one month	Variable requirements (depending on IAP)
France	Once a month (after fourth month)	Variable requirements
Germany	Depends on profiling category: on average six times per year	Not specified
Greece	No specific requirements	Not specified
Hungary	Monthly for regular benefit recipients	Variable requirements (depending on IAP)
Ireland	Variable requirements	Not specified
Italy	Job-search monitoring is rare, despite a legal requirement	Not specified
Japan	Once every four weeks	Two
Korea	Variable, from once a week to once every four weeks	Two
Luxembourg	No specific requirements up to 2006; variable requirements starting in 2007	Not specified
Netherlands	Every four weeks	Four
New Zealand	Every six weeks	Variable requirements (depending on IAP)
Norway	Every three months	Not specified
Poland	No requirements	No requirements
Portugal	No specific requirements up to 2006; variable requirements starting in 2007	Variable requirements (depending on IAP)
Slovak Republic	Variable, from once a week to once every four weeks	One action per contact
Spain	Every two months (estimated average)	Not specified
Sweden	Every six weeks on average (adults six to eight weeks; youth two to three weeks)	Not specified
Switzerland	Once a month	From four to ten
Turkey	No requirements	No requirements
United Kingdom	Every two weeks	Ten
United States	Every two weeks	Ten

IAP = individual action plan.

Source: Compendium of national replies to the OECD Secretariat questionnaire on “Interventions in the Unemployment Spell”.

for reporting or verification of job search, but do not state how frequently such reporting takes place.

Greece, Poland and Turkey do not require reporting of job-search activities, while Italy in principle requires active job search, but does not currently monitor it in a concrete way. Finally, Luxembourg and Portugal which did not require job search in the past, have introduced respective requirements in 2007.

As to the minimum number of job-search actions to be undertaken by the registered unemployed (Table, column 2), many countries report that this is determined in an individual action plan or by a placement officer on the basis of client characteristics and the local labour market. In Austria, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and Spain usually no information about a typical or average required number of actions is available.

Typical numbers of required job-search actions per month are between eight and twenty in Australia, ten in the United States and the United Kingdom, between four and ten in Switzerland, four in the Netherlands, and about two in Japan, Korea and the Slovak Republic. At the other end of the scale, the number of actions that have to be reported is or approaches zero in countries with no reporting requirements or little monitoring, i.e. Greece, Italy, Poland and Turkey, as well as (up to 2007) Luxembourg and Portugal.

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### Reference

OECD Employment Outlook 2007, Paris, chapter 5.