1. **What are Contact Hours?**

A Links to Learning project is funded to deliver a target number of participants and funded hours as specified in their Funding Agreement. Each project delivers between 100 and 500 contact hours for each participant.

Under the 2009 Program Guidelines, the Project Co-ordinator is required to negotiate a participation and pathways plan with each young person detailing how many hours they will participate in Links to Learning activities. These participant hours are contact hours and are recorded as individual participant records on the Links to Learning Online database under Section 4.0 Project Delivery of the Participant Outcome Form (POF) at www.det.nsw.edu.au/cgpltlonline

2. **What are Negotiated Hours compared with Actual Hours?**

*Negotiated hours* are hours that you negotiate with the young person.

*Actual hours* are hours that participants actually receive and includes their attendance at project activities.

An individual may negotiate to attend 150 hours and actually receives 175 and vice versa.
Contact hours are participant-related only and include:

**Group Activity Hours (POF 4.2.1 and 4.3.1)**

*Must be at least 70% of the total negotiated hours.*

These are skill based activity hours underpinned by the Employability Skills.

**Individual Face to Face hours (POF 4.2.2 and 4.3.2.)**

*Average around 20% of the total negotiated hours.*

These are individual hours with each participant including individual tutoring, personal support and one-to-one interviews.

**Participant Planning and Liaison Hours  (POF 4.2.3 and 4.3.3)**

*Estimated at about 10% of total negotiated hours*

These are the hours that you spend with the young person negotiating their participation and pathways plan and liaising about the individual specifically with all the necessary people required, such as school staff, parents, referral agencies, next step providers, support agencies and work placement supervisors.

**Work Experience Hours* (POF 4.2.4 and 4.3.4)**

Work Experience hours can be counted towards contact hours with a maximum of 65 hours per participant and no more than a third of any individual’s total negotiated hours.

Work experience hours can be counted for contact hours but only within the range stated above. See Program Guidelines – Section 2. 2 Engage Core Element 2.

**Post Completion Support Hours (POF 4.3.4 and 4.3.5)**

*Estimated at between 5% and 10% of total hours*

These are the hours that you spend following up the ‘next step’ of a participant with them personally and the hours spent liaising with the person delivering the next step which could be from a range of options including school, TAFE, employers, support agencies etc.

*Please note that Work Experience is optional.*
Example of a Participant’s Negotiated Contact Hours

An example of a participant plan of 170 negotiated hours would be:

**Group Activity Hours – 105 hours**  
(Delivered as 5 hours per day for 3 days a week for 7 weeks)

**Individual Hours** - 31 hours

**Participant Planning & Liaison Hours** = 10 hours

**Work Experience Hours** – 24 hours – 4 days @ 6 hours per day

**Post Completion Support Hours** = 5 hours

3. **How many hours can I negotiate with a participant?**

Participants can receive a minimum of 100 hours up to a maximum of 500 hours in a year.

4. **Can I count any hours after the funding year ends?**

The only hours that you can count after the year has ended, are the **Post Completion Support Hours** (see above).

5. **Do all participants receive the same number of hours?**

Each individual participant has negotiated contact hours based on their own individual participation and pathways plan based on their needs, interest and personal goals.

6. **Can I count program planning or co-ordination hours as contact hours?**

No. Contact hours are participant related only. You cannot include record keeping, community networking and meetings, developing documents or project planning meetings with schools or other referral networks.
7. **What if a young person fills out the Registration and Permission form and then doesn’t turn up?**

A participant must attend for a minimum of 12 hours to count as commenced, otherwise you must delete the record of the participant from their Permission and Registration Form.

8. **What if a young person has inconsistent attendance or stops attending after commencing activities?**

If they are away sick or unexplained absence for a short period eg up to two weeks, the negotiated hours will remain the same. If the absence is extended, you may need to renegotiate the young person’s participation and pathway plan. If they stop attending altogether and you can’t make contact with them complete their POF with the knowledge that you have and mark the POF complete – add a note that they have dropped out for your future reference.

This may affect your projects funded hours – you may need to factor in a few extra young people as a strategy to ensure that you deliver the hours for which your project is funded.

9. **What happens if there is a big difference in the number of project hours negotiated and actual hours attended?**

Projects are monitored on an ongoing basis and POF data is analysed at specific intervals throughout the funding period. If there is a large difference between negotiated and actual hours, the project will need to develop strategies to ensure project participants and hours are met or renegotiate project targets. Note that project performance targets are calculated on the negotiated contact hours not actual hours. See Program Guidelines – Section 2: Core elements.