

Fail to attend

First published: **May 2016**

Last updated: **October 2016**

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Introduction

Universal Credit claimants are required to attend Initial Evidence Interviews and Commitment Meetings. Claimants may also be required to attend work-focused interviews as part of their work related requirements for Universal Credit. These interviews are to discuss the claimant's progress against activities agreed on their Commitment and agree further appropriate actions. If claimants fail to attend these interviews and meetings a sanction may be applied. Sanctions only apply to mandatory work focussed interviews, not the initial evidence interview and initial commitments meeting.

Failure to attend Initial Evidence Interview

A claim will normally be closed the day following a failure to attend the Initial Evidence Interview unless the claimant has complex needs, see [Complex needs overview](#).

Failure to attend Habitual Residence Test interview

A claim will normally be closed the day following a failure to attend a Habitual Residence Test Interview unless the claimant has complex needs, see [Complex needs overview](#).

Failure to attend an Initial Commitments Meeting

Failure to attend a Commitments Meeting (and therefore failure to accept a Claimant Commitment) can have serious financial implications. The claimant cannot be entitled to Universal Credit until they have accepted a Claimant Commitment.

If a claimant fails to attend but later makes contact, it is important to ensure safeguards are in place by seeking to understand why the claimant failed to attend and consider any complex needs – [Complex needs overview](#)

For claimants without complex needs then the claim will be closed the day following the appointment was not attended. If backdating is needed as a result of this then a decision will need to be made.

Complex needs claimants can be contacted and have their appointments rebooked. If contact is made they would rebook the appointment and make clear to the claimant that unless they attend they will not be able to complete their claim. This includes claimants who don't attend because they have gone on [holiday abroad](#).

If necessary a home visit can be considered when a claimant is unable to attend the office. See [Home visits](#)

In the case of a couple claim, both partners need to attend and accept their Commitment in order to be entitled to Universal Credit.

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Failure to attend subsequent Work-focused interviews

Some claimants are required to participate in [Work-focused interviews](#) (WFI). If a claimant fails to attend a WFI a low or lowest level sanction may be applied to their Universal Credit award. Lowest level sanctions are for claimants who are in

the WFI and don't have a reasonable explanation for failing to attend. See [Sanctions](#).

The compliance condition required following failure to attend a WFI is to arrange and attend another WFI. The claimant must be made aware of the consequences of not engaging immediately.

Self-employment gateway interview

Claimants may also be subject to FTA action if they fail to attend the [self-employment gateway interview](#) and will be subject to the same sanctions as if they had FTA a WFI.

Non-mandatory Work-focused appointments

If a claimant fails to attend a non-mandatory WFI a sanction cannot be applied. A sanction will only apply to mandatory interviews that the claimant FTA.

Reasons for missing interviews

A reasonable explanation could be provided to explain a FTA. For example Bereavement may be considered as a reasonable explanation, see [Death and bereavement](#). A decision maker decides whether a sanction applies or not, see [Sanctions](#).

It is important that the claimant is made aware that they need to provide their reasons for failing to attend and they are given the opportunity to do so.

Sanctions overview

Sanctions support Universal Credit conditionality by encouraging claimant compliance with their agreed [Commitments](#).

It is important that claimants fully understand they have a responsibility to carry out the activities agreed in their Commitment, including attendance at interviews and meetings or face the risk of reduced payments following a [sanction](#).

The claimant must also be made aware of the consequences of not attending on the date and time agreed.

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