

# National provision

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## Introduction

There is a wide range of provision available to claimants, both national and local, to help them to obtain the skills and experience they need to get work, more work or better paid work.

Any Work Related Provision which will support the claimant is identified and can be a single activity or several activities which address problems like debt, health or basic skills.

There are broadly two types of provision:

- specific services, for example training courses, work experience or work placements
- contracted employment programmes

Provision can be mandatory or voluntary, but if a claimant chooses to participate certain requirements may apply once referred.

## **Skills**

The skills need of the claimant is considered from the initial appointment and throughout their ongoing regime. Having the correct skills is vital for claimants when they are looking for work or progressing in their current employment. Skills can range from basic skills in maths and English to things like digital capability and the ability to access online services.

For some claimants, a lack of skills may be the main barrier to them:

- getting work
- getting more work
- getting better paid work

In these circumstances, a claimant may be referred to one or more of the following work preparation activities:

- in depth skills assessment
- careers advice in England
- basic skills training in England and Scotland, and provision funded by DWP in Wales
- English Speakers of Foreign Languages training in England and Scotland and provision funded by DWP in Wales
- ICT training in England and Scotland and provision funded by DWP in Wales
- employability training in England and Scotland and provision funded by DWP in Wales
- occupational training in England and Scotland and provision funded by DWP in Wales
- Prince's Trust programmes
- training funded by DWP
- training funded by the Scottish Government

The list is not complete. There may be other skills-related activities that are offered locally.

Skills work preparation activities are mandatory to start, to participate in and to complete.

Periods of education and training are expected to be of a fairly short duration. This is usually up to 8 weeks, except in specific circumstances, to meet skills needs if claimants have very low skills, for example:

- maths
- English
- English Speakers of foreign languages
- information and communication technology

There may be some variations to this in Scotland and in Wales.

Universal Credit is not intended to be a substitute for educational maintenance or a grant. Therefore, long periods of education and training will not usually be treated as work preparation. See [Students](#).

## **Sector based work academy**

This is training and work experience for claimants who lack certain skills or behaviours required by employers, in particular industries or work places. The sector based work academy (SBWA) scheme is run in England and Scotland.

It is designed to help claimants who are ready to start work. These claimants may need to learn the skills and behaviours that employers in particular industries look for in new employees. SBWA is designed to help claimants build confidence in a way that improves their job prospects and adds relevant skills to their CV.

SBWA offers claimants training and work experience for up to 6 weeks in a particular industry or area of work. Industry areas include retail, care and hospitality. A guaranteed job interview or support with an employer's recruitment processes are also offered.

Along with offering the necessary skills to compete for these jobs, employers also use SBWA to help them recruit into job sectors with a high demand for staff. The type of SBWA on offer locally will vary.

Eligibility for SBWA is open to Universal Credit claimants from any Labour Market regime, but is aimed primarily at those in the:

- Intensive Work Search regime (IWSR) – see [Intensive Work Search regime](#)
- [Work Preparation regime](#)

The reason for this is because these groups will be closer to the Labour Market. Claimants can access SBWA from day 1 of them being placed in the relevant Labour Market regime.

SBWA are intended for claimants who are relatively close to the Labour Market and don't need significant support, for example with numeracy, literacy or general employability skills. Referral to SBWA is voluntary.

Once a claimant has agreed to join, those in the IWSR have to complete the following elements of the scheme:  
the pre-employment training

attend the guaranteed job interview (if offered)

The SBWA also includes a work experience placement available on a voluntary basis.

Claimants will not be sanctioned if they decide not to take up the work experience opportunity, but if they do start work experience and are asked to leave because of gross misconduct (such as stealing, violence or verbal abuse) they should be referred for a sanction.

Participation for other conditionality regimes is voluntary throughout. In all instances, participants may be excused from completing the placement if the participating employer decides they are not suitable for the job on offer.

## **Work experience**

Work experience is a voluntary programme primarily aimed at 18 to 24 year olds who have little or no work history, but older claimants are not excluded from the scheme.

Work experience gives claimants the chance to add some experience to the career section of application forms and their CV, including having a referee. It also helps with:

- improving a claimant's job prospects
- identifying what skills and behaviours employers want from people
- seeing how a claimant's skills fit into the workplace
- building confidence
- showing an employer the skills that a claimant has

Work experience lasts for 2 to 8 weeks and claimants are expected to do 25 to 30 hours a week (unless there are agreed limitations on their availability). Acceptance on a work experience opportunity may involve an application / interview process.

Work experience is open to a range of Universal Credit claimants. For those in the IWSR:

- aged 18 – 24, from week 13 of being placed in the IWSR and who are not participating in the [Work Programme](#)
- aged 18 – 24, from earlier than week 13 of being placed in the IWSR if work experience will benefit the claimant
- aged 25 and over, from earlier than week 13 of being placed in the IWSR who have no recent work history
- aged 16 / 17 from day 1 of being placed in the IWSR

For claimants in the Work Preparation regime, work experience is available from day 1 of being placed in the Work Preparation regime.

Other Universal Credit claimants may access work experience if there is a need and this is agreed.

The suitability of claimants for work experience must be considered before referring them. Suitable claimants will:

- not have significant needs relating to numeracy, literacy and general employability skills
- have little or no work history and a low skills base
- be motivated and demonstrate a willingness to work

Claimants in the IWSR are required to attend regular Work Search review meetings as part of their Universal Credit conditionality. Participation on work experience is voluntary.

Claimants must be told about the accepted behaviours expected of them in participating in a work experience placement and any consequences if they do not follow these. If claimants in the IWSR start work experience and are asked to leave because of gross misconduct, they should be referred for a sanction (this will be a low level sanction).

Claimants in the Work Preparation regime cannot be sanctioned for gross misconduct.

For claimants in the Work Preparation regime, with limited capability for work due to a health condition, consideration must be given to their health condition or disabilities. This is to ensure that work experience is appropriate and any reasonable adjustments are in place.

Claimants must be actively looking for work and available for work while on work experience. Flexibility must be demonstrated, in terms of the timing of any Work Search Reviews, so that these do not impact negatively on the claimant's participation in work experience. If appropriate, discretion can be made and tailored on the Claimant Commitment. See [Claimant Commitment hub](#).

Claimants in other conditionality regimes are expected to attend [Work Focused Interviews as required](#).

## **Work Programme**

For information in relation to the Work Programme see [Work Programme](#).

## **Specialist Employability Support**

This provision is for disabled people who need the most support, either to: find work

move closer to the Labour Market

The claimant will receive individually tailored help through Specialist Employability Support (SES). The support available is designed to address all types of disability including mental health and learning disabilities.

SES will help claimants to secure work or become suitable for wider provision to help them move nearer to work. The duration of the support will vary to meet individual needs.

SES participation is voluntary but claimants must continue to meet ongoing requirements for their individual conditionality regime as set out in their Claimant Commitment.

There are two strands to this provision:

Specialist Employability Support Main Provision

- intensive employment provision focused on movement into work
- lasting up to 12 months (or possibly longer if the provider thinks this is necessary)

Specialist Employability Support Start Back

- a shorter-term provision that works with disabled people to help them to prepare for other available provision (DWP or non-DWP) and / or employment where appropriate
- lasts for up to 3 months (but can be longer in certain circumstances)

To establish if they are eligible and suitable for SES, a claimant must:

- have a disability as defined by the 2010 Equality Act
- not be in employment
- be of working age
- not be suitable for other provisions available nationally or locally (either DWP or non-DWP)

Claimants who are suitable for SES are those who have employment support needs and barriers that currently prevent them from benefiting from other provision or starting work. They will also have complex employment support needs not necessarily arising from their disability and need support to help them move nearer to or into sustainable work. Participation to SES is voluntary.

## **New Enterprise Allowance**

See [New Enterprise Allowance](#).

## **Traineeships**

See Traineeships. (under development)

## **Recording of all types of provision**

Once a claimant has discussed and agreed their activities for provision, they must accept them as part of their Commitment. See [Claimant Commitment hub](#).

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