

# Claim closure and re-claims

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NI Staff - please use the UCNI Guidance for Claim closure and reclaims

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## Consider claim closure

Claim closure is an important process on Universal Credit. Claims are closed for a number of reasons but the common factor is that the claimant is no longer receiving Universal Credit payments. Reasons for considering closing a claim include where a claimant:

- failed to book Initial Evidence Interview
- failed to attend their Initial Evidence Interview
- failed to attend their Habitual Residency Test (HRT)
- failed to attend their initial Commitments meeting
- hasn't accepted their Commitment within 7 days
- hasn't done annual verification
- has re-claimed but not booked First Commitment meeting
- withdrew their claim
- moved abroad
- passed away
- suffered bereavement of:
  - partner
  - child
  - person for whom they were the carer
  - non-dependants in some circumstances
- moved in to full time education
- is in legal custody or prison
- failed their Habitual Residency Test
- failed to provide evidence

- failed to review their details
- has been matched to an incorrect NINO
- has capital over £16,000
- isn't eligible or entitled (new claim)
- has their claim suspended for 30 days
- has a nil award due to earnings

These are examples, not a full list.

Nil award due to earnings – these are shown in auto-calc but there is no prompt to alert the agent to close the claim. Claims should be closed when the claimant has a nil award due to earnings.

## **Before closing the claim**

There are checks to conduct to consider whether the claim should be closed immediately or be deferred:

- has the claimant accepted their Commitment?
- were the appointment details correct on the appointment booking system?
- has there been a mandatory reconsideration?
- does a duplicate claim exist?
- is there a history of complex needs?
- is there a recent journal entry to explain the circumstances? If there is a journal entry, checks should be made to see whether the claimant has made contact. If there is an appointment, depending on the circumstances, the appointment can remain booked and the claim remains open.

These are examples, not a full list.

## **Claimant fails to book their Initial Evidence Interview**

Where the claimant has failed to book their IEI, checks should be done to see if:

- they made their declaration
- there are any other outstanding appointments
- the claimant has accepted an auto generated Commitments
- the claimant has complex needs and may need support to book the appointment

To ensure a claimant receives their first payment of Universal Credit on time claimants are encouraged to book their IEI at the earliest opportunity. If the claimant fails to book their IEI, their claim remains open for one calendar month from the date of their declaration. The claimant is automatically prompted 7 days after the date of declaration to book their appointment.

Full service is available 24/7 and therefore a claimant can make contact at any time on the last day of the calendar month. To ensure the claim is not closed too early if no further contact is made, the claim is closed **one calendar month + one day** from the date of their declaration.

If the claimant re-books the appointment within that time but fails to attend again, the one calendar month will still count from the date of declaration. [See Fail to attend](#)

### **Claimant fails to attend their Initial Evidence Interview (or Habitual Residency Test)**

If the claimant fails to attend their IEI or HRT appointment, the claimant is notified to make contact to book another appointment. If there is no contact, their claim is closed **one calendar month + one day** from their date of declaration.

If the claimant re-books the appointment within that time but fails to attend again, the one calendar month will still count from the date of declaration. [See Fail to attend](#)

If claim closure is to be deferred, a review date is set to make sure the claim closure is reconsidered. There is no set policy on how long claim closure can be deferred for or how many times. Discretion is applied in each case depending on the individual circumstances.

If a claimant fails to attend a Personal Security Number only appointment it is not a reason for claim closure and is not sanctionable.

### **Claimant fails the Habitual Residency Test**

A Decision Maker considers whether a claimant has failed the Habitual Residency Test. A claim should not be closed until the Decision Maker has given the claimant the opportunity to provide all the evidence to enable them to make the decision.

Claimants have a minimum of one calendar month from the date of request to provide evidence before the claim is closed.

Claims are only closed if it is:

- a single claim and the claimant has failed the Habitual Residency Test
- a couple claim and both claimants have failed the Habitual Residency Test

### **Claimant fails to provide evidence**

Claimants must be given a calendar month, or a longer period if considered reasonable, to provide information or evidence in connection with their claim. The month starts from the date the claimant is notified of the evidence that is required. This means the date the claimant completed the declaration.

If the claimant fails to provide evidence of their identity following an initial evidence interview and fails biographical questions then the claim cannot be closed until 1 calendar month after the request for evidence was made.

## **Claimant fails to attend their initial Commitments meeting**

If the claimant fails to attend their initial Commitments meeting and does not have complex needs, their claim must be closed the day after the appointment. The termination date is the date of declaration.

The claimant will be notified that their claim has been closed. [See Fail to attend](#)

## **Claimant fails to accept the Commitments**

Claimants are required to accept their Commitments to complete their Universal Credit claim.

For auto-generated Commitments, claimants are reminded to accept their Commitments within 7 days of receiving the prompt. For tailored Commitments, claimants are required to accept them within 7 days of their Commitments meeting.

If they don't accept the Commitments and do not have complex needs their claim must be closed the day after. The termination date is the date of declaration. The claimant will be notified that their claim has been closed. [See Fail to attend](#).

The claimant may however request a second opinion on whether the requirements of their Commitment are reasonable before they accept them. [See Commitment not accepted](#).

## **Closing the claim**

If the claim should be closed, all outstanding appointments must be cancelled. The claimant should receive a decision notification that the claim has been closed, including consideration of appeal rights. A journal note entry is added to this effect.

## **Duplicate accounts (claims)**

If there is more than one active UCFS account with a matching national insurance number registered on CIS a prompt will be sent to check both accounts. Where the duplicate account was an error, the older of the live accounts should remain live. If fraud is suspected then a fraud referral must be made.

## **Re-claims**

A Universal Credit claim is closed if entitlement has ended because of an increase in the claimant's earnings or because of another change of circumstances. The claimant can re-claim Universal Credit if their earnings decrease or if they decide to claim again.

Claimants must have been assessed as eligible for Universal Credit for at least one assessment period before their claim was closed to be eligible for a re-claim. Re-claims will allow most claimants who return to Universal Credit within six assessment periods of their previous award ending, to retain their previous Universal Credit assessment period and payment dates, as long as they

continue to meet the basic conditions of entitlement. The system will automatically identify if a claimant is eligible to re-claim. The re-claims period begins from the first day the claimant is not entitled to Universal Credit up to six assessment periods from this date. See Re-claims.