

Fail to attend

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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 Claimant 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 first Commitments Meeting.

Failure to attend Personal Security Number appointment

If the claimant successfully verifies their identity on Verify.Gov, an Initial Evidence Interview appointment is not required. If the claimant fails to attend the issue Personal Security Number appointment, it is not a reason for claim closure and a sanction cannot be applied.

Failure to attend Initial Evidence Interview

The following appointments are Initial Evidence Interviews (IEI):

- PSN/Evidence
- PSN + PYCA
- Standard ID
- Standard ID/Evidence
- Biographical ID
- Biographical ID & HRT

If the claimant fails to attend their IEI, they are notified via their journal to make contact to book another appointment. If there is no contact, their claim is closed one calendar month 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.

Failure to attend Habitual Residence Test interview

Where the claimant fails to attend a Habitual Residence Test interview, the same action is taken as if they had failed to attend an IEI.

Failure to attend a first 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.

Claimants with complex needs can be contacted and have their appointments rebooked. If contact is made it is important to make it clear that unless the claimant attends next time 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

If the claimant does not have complex needs then the claim will be closed the day after the appointment that the claimant failed to attend. Claimants will be notified that they may request a written explanation of the decision to close the claim **within one month** of the date on the notification letter. They will also be informed that if they disagree with the decision to close their claim they may request a reconsideration **within one month** of the date on the notification letter. If they disagree with the reconsideration decision they can appeal to a Tribunal.

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

If the claimant does not attend the first Commitments Meeting to review their Live Service Claimant Commitment, the transfer to Full Service claim will not be closed but a sanction may be applied.

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 good reason 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 or quarterly review 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

In some circumstances claimants who FTA a mandatory interview, can be treated as having good reason, for example Bereavement, without making a referral to a DM, see [Fail to attend – good reason](#).

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 Claimant Commitment.

It is important that claimants fully understand they have a responsibility to carry out the activities agreed in their Claimant 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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