

Work related activities and the Labour Market regimes

A claimant's circumstances will place them in one of four Universal Credit conditionality groups. The four groups are divided into six associated Labour Market regime which define the level of intervention and support claimants can expect to receive when claiming Universal Credit.

The work-related activities a claimant can be required to undertake is dependent on the regime to which they are allocated.

Depending on individual circumstances, the work-related activities a claimant agrees to on their Commitment can be:

- required – with payments potentially reduced if not carried out
- voluntary – with no loss of payment if not carried out (but see Expected hours)

The table below illustrates how mandatory and voluntary work-related activities might be applied across each of the regimes, depending on individual circumstances.

Labour Market regime	Work-related activities
Intensive work search	<p>Claimants can be required to participate in a Work Focused Interview and / or undertake Work Preparation activities, Work Search activities and be available for work depending on individual circumstances. Claimants may incur reduced payments if these activities are required but not carried out. See Sanctions.</p> <p>Claimants can volunteer to undertake any other work-related activity depending on their circumstances but any failure to undertake that specific activity will not result in a reduction of payment</p>
Light touch See Labour Market conditionality and regimes	<p>There is no requirement for the claimant to undertake work search activities, be available for work or carry out mandatory work preparation. Claimants are required to participate in two telephone conversations (these telephone conversations only apply to claimants placed in the light touch regime before 1 April 2017 and not after). These claimants may undertake work preparation activity on a voluntary basis. For claimants that are taking part in the In Work Progression trial see In work progression randomised control trial.</p>
Work preparation	<p>Claimants can be required to participate in Work Focused Interview or undertake Work Preparation activities if doing so means that will move them closer to work. A failure to undertake this may result in reduced payments of Universal Credit. See Sanctions.</p> <p>Claimants can also volunteer to undertake any other work-related activity depending on their circumstances but any failure will not result in a reduction of payment</p>
Work focused interviews	<p>Claimants can be required to participate in Work Focused Interview if doing so means this will move them closer to work. A failure to undertake this may result in reduced payments of Universal Credit. See Sanctions.</p> <p>Claimants can also volunteer to undertake any other work-related activity depending on their circumstances but any failure will not result in a reduction of payment</p>
Working Enough	<p>Claimants can volunteer to undertake any work-related activity depending on their circumstances but any failure will not result in a reduction of payment</p>
No work related requirements	<p>Claimants can volunteer to undertake any work-related activity depending on their circumstances but any failure will not result in a reduction of payment</p>

Couples

Each member of a couple is required to accept an individual Claimant Commitment.

Where a claim is made by a couple and one adult does not accept a Claimant Commitment the entire Universal Credit claim will not meet the conditions of entitlement and the claim cannot proceed on either a single or a household basis.

Changes in circumstances

Allocation to a Labour Market regime depends on an individual's personal circumstances.

Every time a claimant's circumstances change the Claimant Commitment must always be reviewed.

Claimants must be clear about their responsibility to provide information about any change in their circumstances.

It is important the claimant reports all changes in their circumstances because this might impact on their ability to work and undertake work related activities. Any change must be considered even where there is no direct impact on payment.

Where there is a change of circumstances that leads to the claimant moving from one Labour Market regime to another, the individual must accept an updated Claimant Commitment.

Example

A change of address may not change the payment of Universal Credit but that change may mean they are in a location with better transport links. This means that they can adjust the places or area they look for work. The change may also mean they have moved further away from their child's school, with longer journey times to drop-off and collect. In this case adjustments to the Expected hours must be considered.