

Going abroad

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Temporary absences abroad

It is a general requirement that claimants must be in Great Britain (GB) to be entitled to Universal Credit but there are circumstances when a person is still entitled to Universal Credit whilst temporarily absent from GB.

For payment purposes, legislation allows claimants to go abroad for any reason for up to one month. Where the claimant is entitled immediately before they go abroad and their absence will not exceed one month they can be treated as in GB. They will still need to satisfy their work related requirements and meet their claimant commitment.

There is no limit to the number of periods of up to one month allowed abroad each year. This is to reflect what was allowed within Tax Credits and so is aimed at working claimants, although is available to all claimants.

An absence can be extended, and in some specific circumstances work related requirements switched off. Where these exceptions do not apply the claimant will still need to satisfy their work related requirements and meet their claimant commitment.

Circumstances where the one month period can be extended

- Bereavement
- medical treatment
- mariner or continental shelf worker
- Crown Servants or serving in Her Majesties Armed Forces

Bereavement

Where a close relative dies abroad and it is unreasonable to expect the claimant to return to GB within the month, we can consider extending the absence for up to two months.

A close relative is a:

- partner
- child or qualifying young person the claimant is responsible for
- a close relative of the claimant, their partner, child or qualifying young person (QYP) for whom the claimant or their partner is responsible for

If the claimant can provide evidence of the death, we can switch off their work-related requirements whilst they are abroad.

For further information, see [Switching off work availability and work-related activities](#)

Medical treatment

Where the claimant is receiving medical treatment or accompanying their partner or child or QYP who is receiving such treatment, we can consider extending the absence for up to six months.

If the claimant can provide evidence of this, we can switch off their work-related requirements whilst they are abroad.

For further information, see Switching off work availability and work-related activities

Mariner or continental shelf worker

Where the claimant is a mariner or continental shelf worker, we can consider extending the absence for up to six months.

Crown Servants or serving in Her Majesties Armed Forces

Crown servants or persons serving in Her Majesties Forces who are posted overseas, do not have to meet the basic requirement to be in GB, if they are:

- carrying out their overseas duties, and
- were habitually resident in the UK immediately before the first posting (or the first of consecutive postings)

Where a partner accompanies a joint claimant, they also do not have to meet the basic requirement to be in GB. However, they still need to satisfy their work-related requirements and meet their Commitment, whilst they are abroad.

Holidays

For labour market conditionality purposes, there is no concept of a holiday either at home or abroad. Being on holiday is not a good reason for not carrying out any work search, preparation or availability requirements.

Claimants who are on holiday should continue to meet their work-related requirements, as set out in their Commitment.

For claimants in the Intensive worksearch regime, they must be prepared to end their absence abroad, even if abroad, to attend a job interview or take up a job offer.

They will still need to produce evidence of their work search and complete other activities documented in their Commitment.

If the claimant is unable to attend a mandatory appointment such as a Work Search Review, the work coach at their discretion can rearrange this if they decide the claimant is still available for work and able to undertake their work-related requirements.

New claim stage

Where a claimant is unable to accept a Commitment and fail the good reason test because they are abroad on holiday, they will be required to make a new claim on their return to GB. This is because they do not have entitlement to Universal Credit if they are not available to accept their Commitment.