

Claim closure

Consider claim closure

Before closing the claim

Claimant fails to book their Initial Evidence Interview

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

Claimant fails the Habitual Residency Test

Claimant fails to book their initial Commitments meeting

Claimant fails to attend their initial Commitments meeting

Claimant fails to accept their Commitments

Claimant fails to do their annual review

Claimant fails to provide evidence

Closing the claim

Duplicate accounts (claims)

Re-claims

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.

The system will automatically advise to close the claim when an award is nilled 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 one calendar month (or a longer period if considered reasonable) to provide information or evidence in connection with their new claim. The month starts from the date the claimant is notified of the evidence that is required. **If they fail to provide the evidence, their claim is closed one calendar month + one day from the date the evidence was requested.**

Where further evidence is needed for a new claim and the claimant is notified, consideration is given whether the remaining time of the original month to provide evidence is reasonable or whether that period should be extended.

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 one calendar month + one day after the request for evidence was made.

Where a claimant reports a change of circumstances and is asked to provide evidence, they have 14 days from the date it was requested to provide it. This period may be extended to allow the claimant time to comply with the request. If they fail to provide the evidence, the claim may be fully suspended.

Where the evidence because cannot be provided because it no longer exists or cannot be obtained, the claimant is deemed to have satisfied the request.

If the claimant still fails to provide the evidence after the time limit or suspension, their claim will be closed.

Claimant fails to book their initial commitment meeting

The claimant has 1 month from the date of claim to book an initial commitment meeting. If the claimant does not and they do not have complex needs we close the claim, following the same process for failing to book their Initial evidence meeting.

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. If they do not accept their Commitments, there is no entitlement to Universal Credit. See Commitments not accepted.

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.

Claimants who refuse to accept their Commitments can ask for a cooling off period or a second opinion. More information on the outcomes of these actions can be found in Commitments not accepted

Failure to do their annual review

Annual verification applies to claimants who have remained in the Intensive Work Search and Light Touch Regimes continuously, for 12 assessment periods from the start of the assessment period that they were allocated to their regime. This could be from new claim or following a change in regime.

They must re-declare the circumstances of their claim, to verify that the claim details held for them are still correct. If they fail to review their circumstances within the allocated time, their claim will be closed and the claimant notified of their right of appeal. The Service closes the claim from the first Assessment Period in which the to-do or claim closure tab is completed. See Annual verification.

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 the Customer Information System (CIS) (Searchlight), 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.