

New Style Jobseeker's Allowance Only claims

Definition of New Style Jobseeker's Allowance

New Style Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA):

- is for jobseekers who are unemployed or work less than 16 hours per week
- can be paid on its own or with Universal Credit, see dual claims guidance

Entitlement to New Style JSA

To be entitled to New Style JSA, a claimant must first satisfy the two following contribution conditions. They must normally have both of the following:

- paid (or be treated as having paid) Class 1 National Insurance (NI) contributions as an employee (or class 2 for share fishermen and volunteer development workers) for 26 weeks (but not necessarily consecutive weeks), of at least 26 times the Lower Earnings Limit in one of the two complete tax years that fall before the start of the benefit year in which the claim begins.
- paid (or be treated as having paid) or been credited with, Class 1 NI contributions (or class 2 for share fishermen and volunteer development workers) that amount to at least 50 times the Lower Earnings Limit in each of the two tax years.

A benefit year runs from the first Sunday (each year) in January and ends on the first Saturday immediately preceding the first Sunday in January the following year.

The two complete tax years that fall before the relevant benefit year are called relevant income tax years (RITYS).

A claimant can check their National Insurance record through gov.uk

Key features of New Style JSA:

- They are not entitled to New Style JSA if they work over 16 hours a week.
- If applying for New Style JSA only, and no application to Universal Credit is made, existing Housing Benefit and Tax Credit awards can continue. This might be particularly important for Tax Credit claimants who have more than £16,000 in savings who would not be eligible for Universal Credit.
- A claimant's earnings and any income from Pensions may impact the amount of New Style JSA the claimant receives.
- Unlike Universal Credit, New Style JSA counts towards taxable income.
- Claimants who want to apply for New Style JSA Only will have to do so separately to Universal Credit. Claimants don't need to have made a claim to Universal Credit in order to make a claim to New Style JSA.
- New Style JSA will not be treated as a source of income for Universal Credit purposes if it is not awarded and paid.
- Claimants will be credited with a Class 1 National Insurance (NI) credit. This is true even when they are entitled to Universal Credit (Dual Claim) for which a Class 3 NI credit is normally awarded. Class 1 NI credits count towards the State Pension, Bereavement Benefits and contributory benefits, whereas Class 3 NI credits only count towards the State Pension and Bereavement Benefits.
- Class 1 NI credits are also credited when a claimant meets the entitlement conditions for a New Style JSA award but no benefit is being paid - for example, if an

occupational pension has reduced their entitlement to nil. However, no NI contribution will be credited if the claimant's award of New Style JSA has been sanctioned.

- New Style JSA is delivered via the JSA Payment system (JSAPS), while Universal Credit is delivered on the Universal Credit system.
- Entitlement to New Style JSA is limited to 182 days in any one job-seeking period.
- New Style JSA is paid fortnightly according to the claimant's National Insurance number in the same way as the old style JSA award. Please see Periodicity and Payday guidance for more information.

Claimants who work and receive Jobseeker's Allowance

New Style JSA claimants retain the old style JSA earnings, pension and payment rules which are different to those for Universal Credit.

If a claimant starts part-time work or self-employment of less than 16 hours per week on average, they are required to self-report earnings and hours of work.

If a New Style JSA claimant starts work and earns more than their award of New Style JSA plus the appropriate earnings disregard, they will not be paid any New Style JSA and their claim will terminate. (A claimant with a dual claim may still be entitled to Universal Credit and the work allowance and earnings taper will apply.)

A claimant who has only claimed New Style JSA may wish to claim Universal Credit in the above circumstances.

Claimant Commitment

It is a condition of entitlement for New Style JSA that the claimant accepts a claimant commitment, although exceptions can be made if:

- the claimant lacks the capacity to accept the claimant commitment
- there are exceptional circumstances for which it would be unreasonable to expect the person to accept a claimant commitment

The claimant commitment explains what the claimant must do to meet their work-related requirements and the consequences of not doing so.

These requirements can be suspended for 13 weeks for victims of domestic abuse. See Domestic violence and abuse.

Other exceptions to requirements being imposed include circumstances where a claimant is temporarily sick or recently bereaved. These exceptions are the same as for Universal Credit. See Claimant Commitment hub.

COVID19

It is a sanctionable failure if a claimant does not carry out their agreed actions included in their claimant commitment, without good reason. No failure to undertake a work-related requirement or to attend (FTA) action is to be taken at this moment. All appointments from 3rd August 2020 are voluntary, therefore if a claimant fails to attend, Work coaches should attempt to book a further appointment and ensure the payments are triggered by updating D470, on the claimants benefit week ending date, regardless of whether the claimant re-engages or not. Please note as part of Covid 19 easements signing is currently excused and the D470 evidence is automated so Work Coaches won't need update D470 until further notice.

Work-related requirements for New Style Jobseeker's Allowance

The work-related requirements for New Style JSA claimants are the same as those for Universal Credit claimants who do not have limited capability for work.

The details of what a claimant must do to meet their work-related requirements (and the consequences of not doing so) are set out in a claimant commitment which the claimant must accept as a condition of entitlement.

New Style JSA claimants are required to be available for work and work search for up to 35 hours a week. However, if the claimant has caring responsibilities or has a physical or mental impairment, the number of hours which they are required to be available can be reduced to a reasonable number for their particular circumstances. For example, if the claimant is the responsible carer for a child under the age of 13, they would be expected to be available for the hours that the child attends school less the time it takes to travel from the school to the place of work. See Claimant Commitment hub for other switching-off requirements (easements) that may apply.

New Style Jobseeker's Allowance – effect on waiting days

Seven waiting days will be applied at the start of an award of New Style Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) unless the claim is made within 12 weeks of the termination of a prescribed working-age benefit, a period of jury service or if no other exceptions apply. Any past or current entitlement to Universal Credit has no effect on the application of waiting days in New Style JSA.