

Backdating

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Universal Credit claims are made online and if a claimant needs support to do this, help is available by telephone, face to face, in the office or, exceptionally, through a home visit.

A Universal Credit claim can be backdated in limited circumstances. This is to protect the most vulnerable claimants who may be delayed in claiming through no fault of their own.

If the claimant requires help with making their claim by a home visit, the date of claim will be the date of first contact, see Home Visits - Date of Claim.

The maximum period a claim can be backdated is one calendar month from the date they make their claim.

Evidence to support the backdating request must be received within one calendar month of a claimant making their claim to Universal Credit.

If a decision maker decides backdating is appropriate the claimant's assessment period will be adjusted.

For joint claims both members of a couple must meet the criteria to be eligible to backdate the claim.

Claimant requests to back date their claim

A request for a claim to be backdated can only be considered if it could not reasonably have been expected to have been made earlier. One of the following circumstances must apply:

- the claimant has supplied medical evidence that they had an illness which prevented them from making a claim
- the claimant was previously in receipt of another benefit and did not receive notification the benefit had ended before the end date
- the claimant has a disability
- the claimant was unable to make a claim online because the Universal Credit Full Service was down
- a joint claim / award of Universal Credit is disallowed or terminated because one member of the couple does not accept their claimant commitment and:
 1. the couple then separate
and

2. the person who did accept their claimant commitment makes a new claim as a single person

The claimant must state the reason for not claiming earlier and must understand the reasons must apply to everyday that the claimant wishes to back date their claim.

If the claimant could have reasonably claimed on any of the days in the period they wish to backdate their claim, the whole period of backdating will be rejected.

If none of the above circumstances apply, the claimant will not be able to backdate their claim. Not knowing they could claim, or not claiming because they thought they would get a job are not valid reasons for a claim to be backdated.