

Fail to attend: good reason

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Introduction

Universal Credit claimants are required to attend various interviews and appointments as part of their work-related requirements for Universal Credit. For more information, see Universal Credit appointment list.

If a claimant fails to attend these interviews or appointments without good reason, a sanction may be applied. Sanctions only apply to mandatory Work Focused Interviews. For a full list of appointments and interviews which can be sanctioned, see sanctions.

Refer also to the 'Table of acceptable good reasons' below, and Fail to Attend.

For Restart, refer to the Restart guidance.

When a referral to a decision maker may be required

Good reason cannot automatically be applied if a claimant fails to attend a mandatory interview due to an event which they already knew about in advance. This is because a claimant is expected to notify DWP in good time if they cannot attend an interview. These cases must be referred to a decision maker.

A claimant's past history of failures must also be taken into account when considering if good reason should be applied. This is because repeated failures, without supporting evidence, may cast doubts on the genuineness of the reason given.

It is important, when there is any doubt as to whether good reason can be accepted, that it is referred to a decision maker. A clear explanation of why the case is not being decided locally should also be included with the referral.

When good reason can be accepted

In some circumstances, a claimant who fails to attend a mandatory interview can be treated as having good reason without making a referral to a decision maker. A maximum of 3 good reason decisions are allowed. A fourth failure to attend must be referred to a decision maker.

Once a decision maker has made a decision following 3 consecutive locally allowed good reason decisions, the clock starts again and there can be a further three locally allowed decisions.

Table of acceptable good reasons

Only those reasons listed in the table below can be accepted without referral to a decision maker and only if the event occurred unexpectedly.

Good reason	Further information
The claimant was suffering a temporary period of sickness or medical emergency	The claimant has shown that the nature of their illness is temporary and can include a physical or mental condition. This might include the 5 days after a positive Covid-19 or test where the claimant underwent a medical emergency or dental treatment which prevented them attending.
The claimant was attending a funeral of a close friend or relative on the day of the appointment.	The claimant must only have been notified of the funeral on the day before the appointment (at the earliest).
Serious illness, death or emergency affecting a relative or close friend.	The claimant was required to assist a relative or friend in dealing with their emergency or is not in a correct emotional state to attend the appointment due to the death or serious illness of the relative or friend.
Death of someone for whom the claimant is caring.	Work-related requirements can be temporarily switched-off. See Switching-off work availability and work-related activities.

<p>The claimant was detained in police custody for 96 hours or less then released.</p>	
<p>The claimant was required to attend court or tribunal in any capacity.</p>	<p>Notification to attend was only received the day before they were due to attend their appointment and the claimant has provided evidence.</p>
<p>The claimant has attended a job interview.</p>	<p>The claimant can provide sufficient evidence, including full details of the interview, and it was not reasonable to have attended both the interview and the appointment.</p>
<p>Adverse weather conditions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it was not reasonable or possible for the claimant to attend the office • their usual mode of transport was adversely affected by the weather (for example, cancellation of trains or roads closed) • no other reasonable method of travel was available •
<p>At the time of their appointment, the claimant was undertaking duties in any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • crew member on a lifeboat • part-time firefighter working for the benefit of others in an emergency (for example, special constable, reservist, member of St Johns ambulance) 	
<p>The claimant was at work or travelling to work.</p>	<p>The claimant was offered work at short notice.</p>
<p>The claimant was temporarily looking after a child full time, because the normal care is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ill • temporarily ill 	<p>Alternative care could not be arranged.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • temporarily absent from home • looking after a family member who is ill 	
<p>National or local transport industrial action.</p>	<p>It was unreasonable for the claimant to make alternative travel arrangements to attend at the time and date specified due to the disruption.</p>
<p>The claimant has a recorded mobility issue and there was an unforeseen issue with transportation.</p>	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • due to a failure in means of transport, or • disruption caused as a result of their mobility aid, or • there was an unforeseen failure of their only means of transport, such as a wheelchair, mobility vehicle or car