

Work search activities

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Introduction

Work search activities can be:

- required: with failure to carry out those activities resulting in a potential reduction in the payment of Universal Credit
- voluntary: with no reduction in the payment of Universal Credit if these specific activities are not carried out (but see expected hours)

There are 2 sub-categories of work search activity:

- general: a general requirement to take all reasonable action, and
- particular: specific actions accepted on the Claimant Commitment

All work search activities must be for the purpose of obtaining:

- paid work
- more paid work
- better paid work

What are work search activities?

Work search activities include:

- developing skills to be able to take on more responsibility in current employment and increase earning potential
- carrying out work searches
- making applications
- creating and maintaining an online history
- registering with an employment agency

- creating and maintaining job profiles - however, a claimant must not be mandated to use specific internet or social media sites (this must be entirely voluntary)
- seeking references
- any other reasonable actions which increase the likelihood of obtaining employment

Specific jobsites are not to be included in a claimant commitment or the work plan as in line with DWP policy. However, examples of specific online jobsites including Find a Job, can be included in the claimant's journal.

Please refer to Journal Messaging in the related Content section at the top of this page.

All work search activities must be SMART.

In order to satisfy the 'all reasonable action' aspect referred to in the Introduction, claimants must do either of the following:

- spend at least their expected hours (35 hours if they are expected to take up full-time work) engaged in work-related activities for the purpose of finding paid work minus any relevant deductions (see below)
- demonstrate that:
 - they have taken all reasonable action to find paid work despite the actual number of hours spent being lower than the expected number of hours per week, and
 - the action taken gives them the best prospects of obtaining work

Time spent undertaking agreed work preparation activities (which may include agreed hours of voluntary work) and any hours of paid work that the claimant is already engaged in, must be deducted from their overall expected hours of work-related activity. This then gives a residual number of hours that a claimant should be engaged in work search.

The work search activities set for the claimant must be the most effective activities which when undertaken, gives them the best possible chance of getting paid work as quickly as possible.

How long any particular activity will take will vary according to each claimant's personal circumstances and each case must be assessed in line with their individual capabilities.

Work search entries

Good quality work search entries include:

- use social media sites to search for and apply for any work I can do on a daily/weekly basis (delete as appropriate). If I am unable to do this, I will inform my work coach and it may affect my payments
- look in local papers and online job-search sites on a daily basis, applying for any work I can do. If I am unable to do this, I will inform my work coach and it may affect my payments
- contact the employment agencies that I have registered with on a daily/weekly basis (delete as appropriate) and discuss and apply for any jobs I can do. If I am unable to do this, I will inform my work coach and it may affect my payments; and
- research local companies that employ people in job roles that I am interested in on a daily/weekly basis (Delete as appropriate) and inform my work coach of my findings. If I am unable to do this, I will inform my work coach and it may affect my payments.
- apply for xxx job with xxx by the vacancy closing date. If I am unable to do this, I will inform my work coach and it may affect my payments. By/..(vacancy closing date).;
- register with 3 employment agencies, who advertise work I am capable of doing in order to obtain work. If I am unable to do this, I will inform my work coach and it may affect my payments. By <date>../..* .

This is not an exhaustive list.

For further information on supporting claimants into work, including the addition of specific sites in the journal, please see the links in the 'Related Content' section at the top right hand side of this page.

Limitations on work search activity

If a claimant has other responsibilities, such as childcare or a health condition, the number of hours required to engage in work search is adjusted according to their expected hours.

Claimants who are in work must not be expected to spend longer looking for work than the difference between their current hours of work (including travel time) and the hours they are expected to work.

If a claimant has done all they can reasonably be expected to do to find work and it has taken them less than their expected hours, that is acceptable and they must be treated as complying with their requirements.

Work search and preparation: SMART activities

Work search and work preparation activities agreed on the Claimant Commitment must be SMART. This means:

Specific	Clearly state the claimant's precise job goals and the specific activity they will take to give them the best chance of finding and securing a job (for example, generic job descriptions such as 'driver' must be avoided and more specific terms such as 'bus driver', 'HGV driver' or 'van driver used).
Measurable	For work search activities to be undertaken regularly, how many and how often must be specified.
Achievable	Any activities set must be achievable. Activities that are clearly beyond the claimant's capabilities or that are simply unreasonable must not be included.
Realistic	Job requirements and work-related requirements must be realistic, taking into account (for example) the claimant's skills, experience, capabilities and the local Labour Market.
Time bound	Activities must be time bound and will be reviewed at appropriate points. Activities may: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• be regular (for example, weekly) and reviewed in work search reviews, or• be one-off, time bound and reviewed in Work Search Interviews or Work Search Reviews

Evidence

A claimant has to provide information and / or evidence if requested in order to show they are able to comply with the rules relating to work-related requirements.