

# **Backdating: Guidance**

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Universal Credit claims are made online. 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 Universal Credit 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 Universal Credit claim can be backdated is 1 calendar month from the date the claim was made.

Evidence to support the backdating request must be received within 1 calendar month of a claimant making their claim.

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

For joint claims, both members of the couple must meet the criteria to be eligible for the claim to be backdated.

## **Claimant makes a request to backdate their claim**

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

- the claimant has provided 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 stopped before the end date
- the claimant has a disability

- the claimant was unable to make a claim online because the Universal Credit Service was down
- a joint claim or award of Universal Credit is disallowed or terminated because one member of the couple does not accept their Claimant Commitment and:
  - the couple then separate, and
  - 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 that the reasons must apply for each day that they want their claim to be backdated.

If the claimant could reasonably have claimed on any of the days in the backdating period, the whole period of the 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.