

Work-related activities and Labour Market regimes

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Introduction

A claimant's individual circumstances will place them in one of four Universal Credit conditionality groups.

The 4 groups are divided into 6 associated Labour Market regimes which define the level of intervention and support a claimant can expect to receive when claiming Universal Credit.

The claimant's Labour Market regime determines the type of work-related activities they can be required to do and sets the maximum expected hours per week. However, these only set the parameters and both the requirements and expected hours must be tailored to fit with a claimant's individual circumstances. See Expected hours.

Depending on individual circumstances, the work-related activities a claimant agrees to on their commitment 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)

The table below shows the requirements as they should be applied in each regime:

Labour Market regime	Work-related activities
Intensive Work Search	<p>The claimant is required to participate in a Work Focused Interview and can be set any of the work-related requirements (for example, work preparation activities or specific work Search activities). They will be expected to undertake and provide evidence of general work search and be available for work (unless specific circumstances mean these have been switched-off). If the claimant fails to complete any of their set requirements without good reason, they will be sanctioned. See Sanctions.</p> <p>The claimant can volunteer to undertake any other work-related activity depending on their circumstances – but any failure to undertake that specific activity will not result in a reduction of payment.</p> <p>Work availability and work-related activity are not the same. A claimant who is in work could commit to increasing their working hours which is different to the number of hours they commit to on looking for more work. A claimant could be required to spend anything from 0 up to 35 hours on work-related activities but they cannot be expected to spend more hours looking for work than they could spend in work.</p>
Light Touch See Labour Market conditionality and regimes	<p>There is no requirement for the claimant to undertake work search activities, be available for work or carry out mandatory work preparation. The claimant is required to participate in 2 telephone conversations (these telephone conversations only apply to claimants placed in the Light Touch regime before 1 April 2017 and not after). These claimants may undertake work preparation activity on a voluntary basis.</p>
Work Preparation	<p>The claimant can be required to participate in a Work Focused Interviews or undertake work preparation activities if doing so means that it will move them closer to work. A failure to undertake this may result in reduced payments of Universal Credit. See Sanctions.</p> <p>The claimant can also volunteer to undertake any other work-related activity depending on their circumstances but any failure will not result in a reduction of payment.</p>
Work Focused Interview only	<p>The claimant can be required to participate in Work Focused Interviews if doing so means that this will move them closer to work. A failure to undertake this may result in reduced payments of Universal Credit. See Sanctions.</p> <p>The claimant can also volunteer to undertake any other work-related activity depending on their circumstances but any failure will not result in a reduction of payment.</p>
Working Enough	<p>The claimant can volunteer to undertake any work-related activity depending on their circumstances but any failure will not result in a reduction of payment.</p>
No Work Related Requirements	<p>The claimant can volunteer to undertake any work-related activity depending on their circumstances but any failure will not result in a reduction of payment.</p>

Couples

Each member of a couple is required to accept an individual Claimant Commitment.

If a claim is made by a couple and one adult doesn't accept a Claimant Commitment, the entire Universal Credit claim will not meet the conditions of entitlement and it cannot proceed on either a single or a household basis.

Changes of circumstances

Allocation to a Labour Market regime depends on a claimant's individual circumstances and in the case of a couple claim, the household's circumstances.

Every time a claimant's circumstances change, the Claimant Commitment must be reviewed.

A claimant must be clear about their responsibility to provide information about any changes in their circumstances.

It is important that a claimant reports all changes of circumstances because this might impact on their ability to work or undertake work-related activities.

Where there is a change of circumstances that leads to a claimant moving from one Labour Market regime to another, they must accept an updated Claimant Commitment.

Even when a reported change does not result in a change of regime, it must be considered against the claimant's current requirements and expectations on their Claimant Commitment.