Universal Credit – conditionality group and Labour Market regime policy

Summary

This explains the policy for the different conditionality groups and labour Market regimes that will apply to a claimant as a condition of receiving Universal Credit and how these are assigned to a claimant taking into account their individual circumstances and household earnings.

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Conditionality

All Universal Credit claimants are expected to do a number of things in order to get Universal Credit and it is recognised that each claimant will be able to do more or less than other claimants.

A claimant's circumstances will place them in a particular conditionality group and an associated Labour Market regime which defines the level of intervention and support they can expect to receive.

Conditionality groups

The conditionality group that a claimant is placed in will determine what they need to do to find work (if this is appropriate), what is required of them in relation to their Universal Credit award and the type of Claimant Commitment that is agreed. This will also include the kind of activities a claimant may be mandated to undertake and the type, level and duration of sanctions that Universal Credit can impose if they do not complete these.

The type of conditionality placed on a claimant is dependent on the individual's circumstances at the time but it can also be affected by the household's overall earnings.

There are 4 legal conditionality groups. These are:

- All Work-Related Requirements
- Work Preparation Requirements
- Work-Focused Interview Requirements only
- No Work-Related Requirements

Labour Market regimes
Linked to these conditionality groups, the 6 current Labour Market regimes identify groups of claimants for whom Universal Credit offers differing services.

There may be additional or different regimes in the future.

The regime sets out the expectations that Universal Credit will have of the claimant group, the level and intensity of contact with the claimant and the support that will be made available to them.

These offers are likely to change over time as policy and the services available change.

The regime structure has been developed with the expectation that claimants will transition between the different groups. This may be determined by an increase or decrease in earnings or a change in circumstances, for example the birth and increasing age of a child or recovery from a health condition.

The 6 current regimes are:

1. **Intensive Work Search** - for those who are able to work, but are either not working at the moment or are in work but earning low amounts below the Administrative Earnings Threshold. They are expected to take intensive action to secure work or more work attending regular Work-Focused Interviews, attending Work Search Reviews (at least fortnightly) and undertaking work preparation, work search and other work-related activities.

   Conditionality group is ‘All Work-Related Requirements’.

2. **Light Touch** - for those whose individual or household earnings are above the Administrative Earnings Threshold but insufficient to take them above the relevant individual or household Conditionality Earnings Threshold. They are required to take action to secure more or better paid work but the contact and requirements that Universal Credit places on them is less frequent and lighter.
Conditionality group is 'All Work-Related Requirements'.

3. Work Preparation - for those who are expected to work in the future but are not required to look for work at this stage. These are claimants who are found to have Limited Capability for Work at their Work Capability Assessment or those who are nominated as the lead or responsible carer of a child aged 3 or 4 years old. They are expected to attend periodic Work-Focused Interviews and undertake work preparation activities.

Conditionality group is 'Work Preparation'.

4. Work Focused Interview only - for those expected to work in the future but currently are too committed to work because of their childcare responsibilities. This includes those who are nominated as the lead or responsible carer for a child or children aged 1 or 2 years old or others as defined in regulations. They are only required to attend a Work Focused interview.

Conditionality group is 'Work Focused Interview only'.

5. No Work-Related Requirements - for those not expected to work at present. This includes:
   - found to have Limited Capability for Work and Work-Related activity at their Work Capability Assessment
   - who are over State Pension age
   - who are the lead or responsible carer of a child aged under 1
• who are the carer (of 35 hours per week or more) of a severely disabled person (as defined in regulations)

They are not expected to attend Work-Focused Interviews or undertake any work-related requirements.
Conditionality group is 'No Work-Related Requirements'.

6. Working enough - for those who are:
• earning over the individual Conditionality Earnings Threshold
• in a household whose earnings re over the household Conditionality Earnings Threshold
• self-employed and the Minimum Income Floor applies

This means that there may be some out of work claimants in this regime. They are not expected to attend Work-Focused Interviews or undertake any work-related requirements. Conditionality group is 'No Work-Related Requirements'.

If a claimant has characteristics that mean they could fall into more than one regime, the regime with the lowest conditionality intensity will always apply.