Student Development and Well-being



STUDENTS AND SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

Students and Universal Credit

April 2016 - March 2017

Liverpool Hope University
Student Support & Well-being

Liverpool Hope University





Universal Credit is a new means-tested benefit for people under pensionable age who are on a low income. It replaces a number of existing benefits including Income Support, Income-based Job Seekers Allowance, Income-based Employment and Support Allowance, Housing Benefit, Child and Working Tax Credits and Social Fund Budgeting Loans.

It is gradually being introduced for working age claimants and the full roll-out is expected to be completed by 2021. It is not clear when new or existing claims from students will be transferred over to the new arrangements.

Previously, claimants were required to make separate claims for each of the above benefits. Claimants will remain entitled to their existing benefits until the claims cease and they are required to make a fresh claim or they are transferred over to Universal Credit.

The students who are likely to be entitled to Universal Credit are those with children, some disabled students, and young students in non-advanced education without parental support.

Students eligible to claim Universal Credit

If you are in full or part-time education you are eligible to claim Universal Credit if:

- You are responsible for a child or young person under 20 years of age
- You have limited capability to work and also get Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payment
- You are a single foster parent
- You are over the qualifying age for Pension Credit and your partner has not yet reached that age
- You have a partner who is not a student
- You have taken time out due to sickness and caring responsibilities and you have now recovered from your illness, or your caring responsibility has ended and you are not eligible for a grant or loan.





Work-related requirements

If you are eligible to claim Universal Credit you may have work-related requirements imposed as a condition of your claim. However, if you are in receipt of student income e.g. student grant and loan, this only applies during the period of the year when your student income is taken into account. This means that over the summer vacation you may be subject to work-related requirements, depending on your circumstances.

If you do not meet these requirements you could be sanctioned and have your benefit reduced - this is part of your 'Claimant Commitment'. You may have work-related requirements even if you are in paid work, although these can be adjusted to reflect your circumstances, for example, if you are disabled, a carer, a lone parent or have an illness or disability.

The work-related requirements

Work-focused interviews: You must take part in one or more interviews at the Jobcentre to discuss and assess your prospects of obtaining work.

Work preparation: You must take particular action to look for work as agreed by the Jobcentre.

Work search: You are expected to take all reasonable action to obtain paid work, further paid work or better paid work, as appropriate.

Work availability: You must be available to immediately take up paid work or attend an interview (these are the same as the current Job Seekers Allowance conditions).

N.B. There are no work-related requirements if you are in full or part-time education and in receipt of student income, which is taken into account for Universal Credit e.g. for maintenance costs. However, student income is not payable during the summer period.

How will my student income affect my Universal Credit entitlement?

The Maintenance Loan (excluding the Special Support element) will be treated as income over the period of study, whether you apply for it or not. Some student income will be disregarded such as Special Support Grant, Parental Learning Allowance, Childcare Grant, and Tuition Fee Loan. The teacher training bursary is also counted as income over the period of study. Student Finance income is not counted during the summer vacation but NHS bursaries are counted as income over the whole year. There are additional rules about the period over which student income is divided over the calculated assessment periods, which are monthly.

How will Universal Credit be paid?

Universal Credit is normally paid monthly, although sometimes payments can be made in advance for people in hardship. Payments will be made on the first day of entitlement and the same day each subsequent month. Payments should be adjusted and increased over the summer period.

Further help

If you require any further advice or assistance in relation to a welfare benefits issue, help is available by contacting the Liverpool Hope Students' Union Advice Service.

Liverpool Hope Students' Union
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E: suadvice@hope.ac.uk