Guidelines and Directives

The Washington State University Retirement Plan (WSURP)

Effective January 1, 2012

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Purpose of Guidelines and Directives

The Washington State University Retirement Plan (WSURP) Retirement Plan Rules is the University’s 403b plan document. This supplementary, yet corresponding document to the WSURP Retirement Plan Rules will address the University’s policies for implementing and administering the WSURP. This document should not be read independently from the WSURP Retirement Plan Rules.

The WSURP is a retirement program offered to eligible University employees as identified in the WSURP Retirement Plan Rules. The WSURP is a defined contribution plan, and was established by the Washington State University Board of Regents on July 1, 1974.

All information presented in this document must remain aligned to the WSURP Rules, legislation, laws, rules and regulations from federal, state, local and institutional governance. This Plan is subject to change in order to maintain compliance with both Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration rules.

Included with this document is a Plan Choice Matrix, which provides an overview of new employee and reclassified employee retirement plan options.
Plan Participation

Dependent upon the employee’s hire date with Washington State University (WSU), or the date of their reclassification or appointment change, different retirement plan options have been/may be offered. Section 3 of the WSURP Retirement Plan Rules and the Plan Choice Matrix identify the options.

In all referenced situations, Human Resource Services (HRS) will review each employee to determine what retirement option(s) the employee should be offered, and provide the appropriate plan election forms to the employee.

As of January 1, 2012, employees have thirty (30) days to make their irrevocable plan election, or be subject to the binding default option.

Participation for New Employees

HRS reviews all new employees to determine what retirement plan option(s) they have, dependent on prior State service, and whether they have retired under a state of Washington plan prior to their current period of employment. Although the WSURP is primarily offered to Faculty and Administrative Professional employees, there may be occasions in which Civil Service employees are eligible to participate in the WSURP.

Refer to the Retirement Plan Choice Matrix addendum pages I – VII for:
- New Administrative Professional Employees
- New Faculty Employees
- New Civil Service Employees

Reclassification or New Appointment of Existing WSU Employees

HRS reviews all reclassifications and new appointments for existing WSU employees to determine if the change in job classification or appointment results in the employee being eligible for a new retirement plan election.

Refer to the Plan Choice Matrix, pages VIII – XI, for:
• Reclassified/Appointed to Administrative Professional from Civil Service or PERS Hourly
• Reclassified/Appointed to Faculty from Civil Service or PERS Hourly
• Reclassified/Appointed to Civil Service from Administrative Professional or Faculty
• Reclassified/Appointed to Administrative Professional from Faculty
• Reclassified/Appointed to Faculty from Administrative Professional

Retirement under the WSURP

Regular Retirement

Employees participating in the WSURP may access their retirement accumulations at any time following their separation from the University.

WSU recognizes a WSURP participant as a retiree of the University if they meet the following criteria:

• Upon attaining age 62, regardless of years of service; or
  o This is the age in which an individual is eligible to draw an early benefit from their Social Security, and a recognized standard age for drawing retirement earnings.

• Upon attaining age 55, with at least ten (10) years of service; or

• Any age and years of service, provided the participant provides proof of drawing a lifetime annuity benefit from their WSURP retirement contributions.

Employees who meet the above criteria may be eligible for various benefits offered through the State, including retiree medical/dental insurance, and a VEBA medical expense account. Those retiring at age 62 or later with at least 10 years of service may be eligible for a Supplemental Retirement Plan (SRP) benefit. For additional information about these benefits, as well as a review of eligibility criteria, please contact HRS.

Notification of Retirement:

Notification of retirement from WSU active service is made by the employee submitting written notification of their last day of employment to his or her superior with a copy to HRS. Written notification of retirement is binding, and can only be rescinded upon approval of an Appointing Authority.
The timeframe in which notification of retirement should be provided must be in accordance with the Faculty Manual, Administrative Professional Handbook, and Business Policies and Procedures Manual.

- For Teaching Faculty, at least two (2) months’ notice
- For Principal Administrative Officers, at least four (4) months’ notice
- For Administrative/Professional, at least thirty (30) days’ notice
- For Civil Service, recommended thirty (30) days’ notice

Upon receipt of the retirement notification, HRS will review the employee’s eligibility for retirement and notify the employee and their department/college if the employee is not eligible to retire. If eligible, HRS will provide assistance and guidance to the employee regarding retiree benefits and paperwork.

**Retirement Because of Health Condition**

A retirement because of health condition must be approved by the President of WSU or such other person as may be designated by President in the event a Participant has a serious health condition that prevents him or her from performing the duties of his or her Eligible Position.

Employees should contact the HRS Benefits unit to discuss whether a retirement due to health should be pursued, and to discuss other benefit options they may be eligible for. If pursued, the employee will submit a written request. The HRS Benefits Director will determine if supporting medical documentation is needed or if sufficient documentation has already been provided to the HRS office.

If approved, the employee may be eligible for the SRP benefit, provided they have at least ten (10) years of service. If eligible, the age requirement of age 62 can be waived.

Any request for retirement because of health is reviewed by the HRS Director of Disability Services and the HRS Director of Benefit Services. Notification of the request is provided to the appropriate appointing authority, and consultation of whether the individual is able to perform the essential functions of their position will/may occur. If deemed eligible, the Director of Benefits presents a recommendation to the President or his/her designee for a final determination on whether the request will be approved.
Retiree Reemployment means the reemployment in any capacity of an individual who retired under the WSURP.* Employment can be for up to forty percent (40%) of full-time equivalency following the date of retirement. Exception: If WSURP retiree is hired into a Civil Service position via a fair recruitment process, they would be able to work above forty percent (40%), since Civil Service positions are covered under a Department of Retirement Systems plan.

Such reemployment after retirement will not be counted as additional service with the WSURP, and will not result in any eligibility for increased benefits under the WSURP or the SRP. A reemployed retiree is not considered an active participant of the WSURP.

A reemployed WSURP retiree's maximum salary will be calculated by HRS and will not exceed forty percent (40%) of the retiree's average monthly basic salary paid during his or her highest two (2) consecutive years of full-time service. A reemployed retiree is not eligible for merit increases, equity adjustments, or market raises.

Request to Rehire a Retiree Process

Departments/Colleges must contact the HRS Benefit Services unit when considering rehiring a retiree of a Washington State retirement plan. HRS Benefits will provide critical information regarding what rehire limitations a retiree may be under, if there are salary limits the department needs to be aware of, and determine if the request for rehire can be approved by HRS, or if it will need to be reviewed by the Provost.

HRS Benefit Services will need to know:

- What the employment need is
- What extent/length of employment will be needed
- Whether or not there are other University personnel that could perform the duty(ies)
- Proof the request has been reviewed and approved by the Dean/Vice President or Appointing Authority

If the request is approved, HRS Benefits will approve the appointment in Workday and make an entry on the appointment reflecting the request was approved and the appointment is within the limits of the retirement plan.
Future and extended appointments will also need to be processed through the rehire of a retiree process.

*Individuals who retire under another retirement plan other than the WSURP will also be subject to the rehire request process. Based on their plan, there could be different limits at which the retiree can be rehired. Please contact HRS whenever considering hiring a retiree of the State of Washington.
Phased Retirement Guidelines

The WSU Phased Retirement Plan is a program designed to give University faculty and administrative professional staff who participate in the WSU Retirement Plan (WSURP) an opportunity for pre-retirement reduction of full-time service while gradually phasing into retirement over a period of years. This Plan allows eligible personnel of the University to reduce their regular appointments to pursue personal or professional interests and to continue their academic and professional lives in gainful part-time employment. This Plan provides an opportunity for individual career flexibility and forms an important part of the long-range personnel resource management of the University.

See the Phased Retirement Plan Guidelines for details on the plan, as well as eligibility criteria.