

RETIREMENT PENSION PROCEDURE AND GUIDELINES

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1. INTRODUCTION

This guidance document provides you with information on College's retirement options and processes, and advises on ways in which the College can assist you to plan for, and adapt to, the prospect of retirement.

Equality and Diversity

The College treat equality of opportunity seriously and have an equality framework that is applicable to you in order to promote and ensure equality of opportunity. Implementation of this procedure must be clear and transparent and not subject to any unfair discriminatory practices.

Line managers and supervisors are required to familiarise and understand this procedure.

2. FLEXIBLE WORKING

Both you and your line manager, may wish to consider the benefits of flexible working if you are considering retirement or wish to partially retire. This may allow the College to retain valuable skills, experience and expert knowledge as well as saving on costs of recruitment and training, while you can ease yourself into retirement at a pace that suits both you and the College.

In many situations flexible working can be arranged to meet the objectives of both the College and you if you are considering retiring or wish to partially retire. Flexible working could include giving consideration, for example, to: reduced hours, variable hours, job sharing, compressed working weeks, term time working, change in role, working from home and "hot-desking".

3. RETIREMENT

Pension Scheme Members [USS, SAUL and NHS]

The College operates a number of pension schemes, the main ones being; the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS), Superannuation Arrangements of the University of London (SAUL) and the NHS pension scheme. If you are considering retiring you should familiarise yourself with the relevant pension scheme rules which will explain the earliest date you can retire. You should also obtain a confidential [pension quotation](#) to understand the level of pension benefits you would receive upon retirement. Further information is available at <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/hr/workingatimperial/pensionschemes/approachingretirement>

Second State Pension

If you are not a member of one of the College's schemes you may, when you reach State Pension age, draw your Second State Pension whilst working or you may choose to draw your Second State Pension and retire. Further information is available from: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk>.

3.1 Full Retirement

If you intend to take full retirement with a pension you should notify your manager of your intention in writing ideally giving three months' notice to enable the processing of your pension. A leaving date with less than three months' notice is likely to mean a delay in receiving pension immediately following retirement.

If you are not a pension member you are also required to notify your manager of your intention in writing, giving your normal notice period as outlined in your contract.

3.2 Full Retirement and Part-Time Re-employment (Partial Retirement)

With College permission, as a pension scheme member [USS, SAUL and NHS], you have the option to retire and, following a short break in service (normally one month), be re-employed whilst in receipt of their pension.

Individual scheme rules determine when this option is available, the hours that can be worked and the type of role you can be re-employed into following retirement. Full information is available on the Pensions webpage: <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/hr/workingatimperial/pensionschemes>.

You should be aware that any pension benefits received before the Normal Pension Date will be actuarially reduced

When you are re-employed, you will automatically be entered into the appropriate College pension scheme.

3.3 Flexible Retirement

With College permission, if you are a USS or a NHS 2008 Section member and are 55 or over, you have the option to draw a proportion of your pension and tax-free cash and continue working on a part-time basis in your current role but with reduced hours and salary. You are permitted by the scheme rules to flexibly retire twice whilst continuing to work. On the third occasion you would have to fully retire.

Individual scheme rules determine when this option is available, the hours that can be worked and the amount of pension benefits that can be flexed. Full information is available on the Pensions webpage: <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/hr/workingatimperial/pensionschemes/approachingretirement>

Prior to making a request to take partial or flexible retirement involving reduced working hours, you should consider carefully the effect on pay, pension contributions and benefits which will also be reduced on a pro-rated basis. Other financial consequences should also be considered e.g. the costs of travelling to and from work if purchase of a weekly, monthly or annual season ticket will not be appropriate for the hours worked.

4. THE PRE-RETIREMENT PROCESS

Where you are considering retirement, you should:

- i) Consider attending the College's "[Preparing to take your pension](#)" course, which is available to all staff who are able to start drawing their pension from one of the College schemes. More information is available at section 8 of this procedure.
- ii) Following attendance on one of the courses, and liaison with the Pensions Office, if you intend to draw your full pension and cease working for the College, you should complete the '[Intention to Retire](#)' form and submit the form to your line manager, HR and the Pensions Office at least 3 months prior to your retirement date.

- iii) Where the pension scheme rules allow it, you may discuss with your line manager the feasibility of full retirement and re-employment for a fixed period.
- iv) Liaise with the Pensions Office to ensure scheme rules will allow the type of retirement you are interested in and obtain a [confidential quotation](#).
- v) Having considered all discussions and information received, if you wish to be considered for flexible retirement or full retirement and part-time re-employment you should complete the appropriate form and submit the form to the Pensions Office. The Pensions Office will confirm if, under the scheme rules, you are eligible. If the Pensions Office have confirmed your eligibility, you should forward copies of the form to your line manager, Head of Department, Department Operations Manager and HR, along with the following supplementary information:
 - Specify the new working pattern applied for, the date on which it is proposed the change is requested to become effective and for what period of time.
 - Explain what effect, if any, you think the proposed change would have on the department and your colleagues and how, in your opinion, any such effect might be dealt with.
 - Provide reasons explaining why your preferred working pattern is compatible with the needs of the Department, as far as you can tell.

5. THE FULL RETIREMENT PROCESS

Upon receipt of the '[Intention to Retire](#)' form, HR will confirm receipt of your retirement form, leaving arrangements and retirement date, which will normally be 3 months from the date the form was received by HR.

Copies of the confirmation letter will be forwarded by HR to the Pension and Payroll teams to process your retirement.

No further action is required.

6. THE REQUEST FOR FLEXIBLE OR PARTIAL RETIREMENT PROCESS

Upon receipt of the '[Partial Retirement](#)' form or the '[Flexible Retirement](#) form' your line manager must consider all requests for flexible or partial retirement. The requests must be dealt with fairly and equally so that indirect, or direct, discrimination does not occur and stereotypical assumptions about capabilities are not made.

While you have the right to make such applications, it should be understood that the department/division may not be able to accommodate the request and flexible retirement or partial working can be refused.

a) Meeting To Review Request

When a request is received by your line manager, HR should be informed of the date your line manager intends to meet with you and, your line manager may wish to have a pre-meeting with HR for advice. **The meeting should normally take place within 10 working days of receipt of your application.**

The meeting is an opportunity for you to provide details of your request to your line manager, including the reasons for your request and how the new working pattern will align with departmental operations.

Following the meeting your line manager may liaise with appropriate Departmental colleagues to consider the wider impact on the Department before making a decision. **The decision will normally be communicated within 10 days following the meeting.**

b) If the Request Is Accepted

In cases of Partial retirement, having considered the reasons for the request carefully, your line manager will inform HR of their decision, including the period you will be re-employed for. To do this your line manager will complete a Leavers form to advise the retirement, and a New Contract Request form to confirm the re-employment (ensuring that there is a break in service of one month, to comply with pension scheme rules). HR will then confirm the decision in writing to you.

In cases of Flexible retirement, having considered the reasons for the request carefully, your line manager will inform HR of their decision. To do this your line manager will complete section D of the Flexible Retirement form and forward it to HR, with a copy to Pensions, who will then confirm the decision to you in writing.

Requests that are approved will be processed by the Pensions Office within 3 months of the approval date. If you accept a partially approved request, this will also be processed within the same timescale.

c.) If the Request Is Not Accepted

Where your line manager has not approved or has partially approved the request and this is not acceptable to you. HR will include in the confirmation letter the reason[s] for the decision. The letter will also outline the process to be followed [detailed in section 7 below] if you wish to appeal against the decision.

Reasons for refusing the request may include [the list is not to be considered exclusive or exhaustive]:

- Economic factors
- Business needs
- Burden of additional costs
- Inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff
- Inability to recruit additional staff
- Detrimental impact on quality
- Detrimental impact on performance
- Succession Planning

You have the option to continue undertaking your full duties (working your normal work pattern) or to consider full retirement.

7. IF YOU WISH TO APPEAL AGAINST A DECISION NOT TO SUPPORT FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT OR FULL RETIREMENT WITH PARTIAL RE-EMPLOYMENT.

Following receipt of the confirmation letter from HR, you may appeal if you think the process detailed in section 6 above to consider your request for flexible or partial retirement has not been followed correctly.

Should you wish to appeal you should do so in writing to your Faculty/Support Services Senior HR Manager. **This letter should be submitted within 10 working days of receipt of the refusal.**

When appealing, you should set out clearly the grounds for appeal and the subsequent appeal meeting will provide a final opportunity for you to make a case.

The appeal meeting will be heard by an independent senior manager who will be supported by an HR representative. You may bring a colleague or Trade Union Representative to this meeting who will be able to address the meeting, and confer with you, but who will not be able to answer questions on your behalf. **The meeting should normally take place within 10 working days following receipt of the appeal letter.**

HR will notify you of the decision in writing, **normally within 10 working days following the meeting.** If the appeal has been successful, the letter will state the flexible retirement date or the full retirement and part re-employment date.

If the decision is to reject the appeal, a letter will be sent by HR informing you of the decision.

If your appeal is unsuccessful, you have the option to continue undertaking your duties (working their normal hours) or to consider full retirement. One request for flexible or partial retirement can be made per year. Each year runs from the date when the last application was made.

8. PREPARING TO TAKE YOUR PENSION COURSE

If you are considering retirement you can attend the "[Preparing to take your pension course](#)" from any point that you are able to start drawing your pension from one of the College schemes.

The aim of the course is to inform you of key issues that may impact your decision and to provide an opportunity for questions and discussion; specialists will present information relevant to pension schemes and retirement. Courses are provided throughout the year by the College's Learning and Development Centre. Key areas covered within the course include:

- How to evaluate your choices
- Pension allowances and rules
- Key financial planning principles

For further details and general development support, please see the College webpages: www.imperial.ac.uk/staffdevelopment

Other sources of support include:

- Imperial College [Coaching Academy](#)
- Imperial College Counselling Service – [Confidential Care](#) tel: 0800 0854764

9. GLOSSARY

Non-pensionable	Salary that is not included for pension purposes
Non-superannuable	Same as above
Second State Pension	A separate part of the State pension previously known as the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme (SERPS). Members of the College pension Scheme are contracted out of the Second State Pension
Draw pension	Member of staff taking their pension benefits on retirement
Draw down	Member of staff taking part of their pension benefits before full retirement
Re-employment	Returning to College employment after retirement in a part-time capacity
Actuarially reduced pension	A reduction applied to pension benefits brought into payment before the scheme's normal pension date
Non-actuarially reduced pension	Unreduced pension benefits
Normal Pension Date	The normal retirement age is the age at which pension benefits can be claimed without an actuarial reduction for early payment, and without an actuarial enhancement for late payment
Partial retirement	Full retirement benefits taken and part-time re-employment after one calendar month's break
Flexible retirement	To draw a proportion of pension benefits while continuing to work with reduced hours in the same role
USS	Universities Superannuation Scheme
SAUL	Superannuation Arrangements of the University of London
NHSPS	National Health Service Pension Scheme