IMPERIAL

Flexible and Partial Retirement Guidance for Managers

1. Flexible Retirement

Flexible retirement allows an individual to draw a proportion of their pension while reducing their working hours and continuing to build up more pension savings. Two flexible retirements are permitted, and the third flex must be full retirement, with the pension fully drawn.

1.1 Recognising the need for a clear, consistent and transparent approach, the University Management Board (UMB) has approved a framework, applicable to all staff taking due regard to pension scheme rules. Flexible retirement can be granted only as part of a package that leads to full retirement, normally within three years, but exceptionally up to five for NHS pension scheme members who can access their pension unreduced from age 60.

1.2 A reduction in pensionable salary of at least 10% for NHS pension scheme members and 20% for USS members must be achieved, usually by reducing working hours. This is in recognition that this is the start of a phased journey into full retirement. For clinical staff, this means reducing the number of Programmed Activities (PA's) worked, not reframing between PA's and Additional Programmed Activities (APA's), which are non-pensionable. Clinical PA's should not be reduced without first consulting with the NHS Trust.

1.3 Individuals in receipt of National Clinical Impact Awards (NCIAs) (previously known as Clinical Excellence Awards) should retain these; however, the ACCIA must be notified in advance if pension is being claimed, and they will confirm whether the award will be retained and at what level.

1.4 Process and Criteria

Ideally, have an early conversation about plans to manage expectations. To help, you may want to frame the conversation with your direct report along the following: -

1. What effect will the proposed change have operationally on both the department and work colleagues?
2. Existing and Proposed Job Plan (*for clinical academic staff only)*
3. What existing research activities are being undertaken, and details of any existing research grants? (Point 3 below)
4. What existing educational activities, including teaching commitments, supervision of MSc or PhD students, leadership or tutoring
5. How, in your opinion, might this effect be dealt with?
6. As far as you can tell why/how is the preferred working pattern compatible with the needs of the department?
7. How work will be reorganised or reassigned in order to accommodate the reduced working hours?

You'll need to consider whether you can accommodate the request, and you may want to take the following into consideration: -

1. Economic factors
2. Business needs
3. Capacity to re-organise work amongst existing staff (for clinical academic staff, this will also require discussion and agreement with the clinical lead at the relevant Trust)
4. What is likely impact on Section/Division/Department/Faculty?
5. If they are in the NHSPS, they can continue for a maximum of five years to full retirement. USS members can continue for a maximum of three years.
6. Impact on quality
7. Impact on performance
8. Ability to recruit additional staff
9. Planned structural changes
10. Succession planning
11. Allocation of space

If you agree to the request, a retirement options form along with a contractual change form needs to be sent to the HR Staff Hub for processing. The individual will be written to confirming their new working hours and salary, and that their contract now has an end date. The Pensions team will send any pension forms that need to be completed to claim pension. This must all be done at least **three months in advance** to allow adequate processing time and to meet pension scheme rules.

1.5 Full retirement is expected to follow in not more than three years (USS) and five years (NHSPS) from the date of first flexible retirement. SAUL members do not have a flexible retirement option available to them.

2. Partial Retirement

Partial retirement permits an individual to retire fully, draw all of their pension, and return to employment after a minimum one-month break on a new contract.

2.1 Recognising the need for a clear, consistent and transparent approach, the University Management Board (UMB) have approved a framework, applicable to all staff regardless of individual pension scheme rules. Whereby partial retirement (retire and return) can be applied for if an individual has reached their minimum pension age, currently age 55 for most. This involves drawing all of their pension benefits and retiring from Imperial. Re-employment can be considered, but the contract can only be up to a maximum of 0.6 FTE, and the maximum duration is **three years.** Please note that re-employment cannot take place until at least one month after full retirement due to contractual issues and to ensure consistent and fair application across all staff regardless of their pension scheme membership.

2.2 Whilst three years might be considered an appropriate period for colleagues to start to transition from working into retirement, there are some cases where this may take longer, e.g. a strategic role that is difficult to replace or to support a department through a period of restructure or reorganisation. If, at the end of three years, you and your partially retired staff member need to extend the arrangement further, discretionary approval for up to five years overall may be granted. Approval can only be granted by your Dean or Director of Support Services along with the Chief People Officer.

2.2 Individuals wishing to request Partial Retirement must complete a form and give this to you for your consideration. If you are able to approve their request, the form, along with a Leaver Form and a New Contract Request Form will need to be sent to the Staff Hub for processing. This must be done at least **three months prior to the retirement date** to meet pension scheme processing requirements.

3. Research Funding and Grant Applications

Staff must also confirm that they will not submit or lead any application for external funding, research grants, contracts, studentships or other commitments where the proposed duration, delivery obligations or principal investigator responsibilities would extend beyond their agreed retirement date.

Where they are involved in collaborative funding applications, identify appropriate succession and handover arrangements before submission to ensure any funded activities can be completed without relying on their continued employment beyond the agreed retirement date.