

Retirement policy and procedure

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Policy updated March 2007 following consultation with the trades unions

HR reviewed March 2014; no changes made

January 2017: terminology updated

February 2019: terminology updates

January 2021: reviewed by HR; no changes made

January 2023: reviewed by HR; no changes made

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Our Retirement Policy reflects good practice and changes made by the Government to the retirement regulations.
- 1.2 Our policy is intended to reflect the guidance provided by ACAS¹. The University values all staff and the continued contribution that they make to the student experience. We do not have a mandatory retirement age for staff. In considering their individual positions in respect of retirement, however, staff may wish to take into consideration the provisions of any pension scheme of which they are a member and the date at which they receive state pension. In certain circumstances, continuation in employment can impact on the benefits provided through a pension scheme. Further information in this respect is provided in section 4.1 of this policy.
- 1.3 Employees who want to retire, subject to their respective pension scheme provisions, should confirm this in writing to their senior manager and Human Resources (HR).

Where an employee wishes to retire they may wish to arrange to meet with HR to discuss this. Staff can have the contact details for our occupational pension schemes should they wish to seek further information at that point, from either HR or the relevant scheme. Staff can at anytime prior to this contact their pension agency direct for information on retirement options or other pension related matters. Staff can also contact our Head of Payroll, Taxation and Pension Administration for information about the respective pension schemes. Contact details are given at the end of this policy.

- 1.4 Where a member of staff wishes to retire (subject to the relevant scheme provisions), normal resignation processes and notice periods would apply.

2. Advice to heads of school, directors and line managers

- 2.1 Whilst staff may choose to retire at or before their 65th birthday (subject to their relevant pension scheme provisions, as amended from time to time), others may wish to continue working beyond age 65. It is for individual staff to reach a view as to their preferred retirement date. Our employment framework and policies including appraisal, performance management and staff development apply equally to all staff.
- 2.2 The process of regular discussions, which include appraisal processes, between managers and staff in respect of expectations, performance and future plans apply to all staff regardless of age. It is important that managers treat staff fairly and consistently, regardless of age. For example, managers are advised not to differentiate between younger and older staff in relation to the application of employment procedures/policies, performance management and staff development opportunities.

¹ [Guidance for employers: working without the default retirement age](#)

- 2.3 In discussions with staff about future expectations, managers are advised that asking older staff questions about potential retirement dates (without such a discussion being initiated by the member of staff) could be viewed as potentially discriminatory on grounds of age. However, should a member of staff choose to initiate a discussion about the possibility of a retirement date, the manager may wish to explore the options further, subject to the individual being content to do so. When managers ask about future expectations and plans, for instance, as part the normal appraisal process, staff may choose to initiate a discussion about retirement at that point. Managers are advised to adopt the same non-age discriminatory approach for all staff, regardless of age, in terms of asking generally about future plans in a similar constructive manner. Managers are therefore advised not to ask about retirement plans unless the member of staff instigates the subject, to avoid causing offence and to minimise the potential for age discrimination complaints. Care should be taken when discussing retirement options with staff not to imply any level of pressure or expectation that employment should be terminated at a particular age, or indeed that they will be expected to remain after their pension is available to them.
- 2.4 As outlined above, the University values its performance supporting practices, including appraisal, performance review/management, together with staff development opportunities. Managers are advised to implement these practices and policies consistently for staff across all age groups.

3. Options available

- 3.1 Staff who choose to work beyond the date on which they can access their occupational pension may wish to discuss their future working arrangements with their manager, and the possible options available. Staff may wish to explore the possibility of options such as a reduction in hours, phased retirement with a graduated reduction in hours, or job share, thereby gradually realising full retirement over a period of time. As with any proposed changes to working arrangements/hours, such a request would be subject to the approval of the head/director, having taken into consideration operational and resource requirements. Alternatively, staff may prefer not to request a change to their working arrangements.
- 3.2 Staff considering a reduction in hours or phased retirement should also be mindful that a reduction in hours would be accompanied by a reduction in salary, which would impact on the level of pension scheme contributions made by themselves and the University. A reduction in hours, salary and pension contributions could also impact upon the amount attached to the individual's final annual pension and pension lump sum payment entitlement upon retirement. Staff considering options such as a reduction in hours/ phased retirement, job share or other revised working arrangement, may therefore wish to seek further advice and information from their pension scheme or independent financial adviser as to the potential implications in respect of their pension entitlements. Our Head of Payroll, Taxation and Pension Administration can also provide information about the relevant pension schemes.

4. Further information

4.1 Pension schemes

The contact details for the three pension schemes which are available to our staff (subject to entry requirements and scheme provisions) can be found on the following websites:

- [Local Government Pension Scheme](#) (administered by the London Pensions Fund Authority),
- [Teachers' Pension Scheme](#), and
- [Universities Superannuation Scheme \(USS\)](#)

4.2 Employee Assistance Programme

The University's [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#) is available for staff to use. The EAP provides free confidential advice, counselling and support to staff via the telephone or e-mail.

- 4.3 Staff may also at anytime seek a confidential non-committal discussion on their retirement options with Human Resources.