

Retirement Guidelines

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1. Introduction

At Strathclyde we recognise that there will come a time when you start thinking about life beyond work and you will be considering your retirement. You may wish to reduce your working hours over a period of time and phase into your retirement. Alternatively, you may wish to stop working all together. If you are a member of a pension scheme you may choose to access the pension benefits you have built up.

In these guidelines you'll find information about when you may be able to retire, flexible retirement, the process for retirement and much more.

If your retirement is due to ill-health you will find more information around this in our [Capability Procedure \(Ill-Health\)](#) You can also get advice on ill-health retirement from Human Resources or the Pensions Team.

Please note, if this policy refers to additional guidance, FAQs, online forms, or training, these are accessible to University colleagues on our [People Hub](#).

2. Who is Covered by these Guidelines?

These guidelines apply to all employees of the University who are members of the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS), Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) or the Scottish Teachers Pension Scheme (SPPA).

However, you can still choose to reduce your hours as part of a flexible working application even if you are not a member of a pension scheme. You may also be entitled to additional annual leave for providing additional notice of your plans to retire. Please read on for more details.

3. When Can I Retire?

There is no longer a set retirement age meaning you can continue to work for as long as you choose. As you approach retirement you may consider reducing your hours to improve your work/life balance or to simply make the transition to retirement less abrupt. Or you may wish to continue your normal working hours until retirement.

If you are a member of a pension scheme, you can access your pension benefits if you are aged 55 or over (rising to age 57 from April 2028) and have the required qualifying service specified by your pension scheme rules. Early or late retirement factors may be applied to your pension benefits depending on when you choose to retire.

You can only be a member of the pension scheme up to the day before your 75th birthday. You can carry on working after this date but you would need to receive all your LGPS/SPPA pension benefits/USS Income Builder benefits by this date. You would also no longer be covered for the death in service payment so you may wish to make alternative life cover arrangements.

We recognise that understanding your pension can be complicated. Entitlements, eligibilities, and rules vary based on the scheme you are in and your own personal circumstances. Therefore, you are encouraged to contact our [Pensions Team](#) to discuss your situation directly when you are beginning to think about retirement.

4. What is Flexible Retirement?

Flexible retirement allows you to reduce your working hours before you progress to full retirement. For many this can improve work/life balance while maintaining a steady income. If you are in a pension scheme, you may also be able to access your pension benefits while continuing to work and receive your salary.

A request for flexible retirement follows the same principles as flexible working applications. Therefore, you should review our [Flexible Working Policy](#) to help understand the process of making and dealing with flexible working requests.

When taking flexible retirement, in order to access your pension benefits, you must reduce your working hours by a minimum of 20% of your current contracted hours. A request that does not include a reduction of at least 20% of working hours will be treated as a flexible working request and not a flexible retirement.

If you are a pension scheme member requesting flexible retirement and wish to access pension benefits, the amount of pension that you can receive is dependent on the rules of your pension scheme. You should speak to the Pensions Team to request a pension quote from your pension scheme on your behalf before deciding if you wish to submit your flexible retirement request. You should also be aware that accessing your benefits for certain pension schemes may attract a cost to the University and will require additional University approval. The Pensions Team will make you aware of this when they provide you with your quote. Further details can be also be found on www.uss.co.uk or www.spfo.org.uk.

5. Requesting Retirement

If you are considering retirement, please have an initial discussion with your line manager about your plans and to agree any proposed reductions in working hours. Early discussions help your manager plan resources and workload and offer you support.

If you wish to proceed with full retirement, please complete the Retirement Form. If you wish to formally apply for flexible retirement, you should do so using the Flexible Retirement Form.

6. Giving Notice and Additional Leave

If you wish to retire you are required to give at least the minimum notice outlined in your terms and conditions. You should be aware that pension schemes will need to receive the required documents up to three months in advance of your planned retirement date, so it is always good to begin discussions as early as possible to avoid any delay in receiving your pension benefits. The Pensions Office will be able to support you with accessing and completing the documents that are needed.

If you are able to give the University extra notice of your plans to retire, in addition to your contractual notice period, you can receive additional paid leave to use before the end date of your employment. This will allow you to prepare for retirement. You can receive 2 weeks paid leave for each additional month of notice you give beyond your contractual notice. This can be up to a maximum of 6 weeks paid leave for an additional 3 months' notice. You will need to use this before you leave the University as you will not be paid for any outstanding leave when you retire. If you have any questions in relation to this, please contact [Human Resources](#).

7. What Do I Need to Do?

If you're a member of staff, you are expected to:

- Discuss your retirement plans informally with your line manager at the earliest opportunity.
- Contact the Pensions office at to discuss your pension benefit options and the retirement process. Pensions colleagues will be happy to arrange to meet with you in-person or remotely.
- Depending on whether you wish to take full or flexible retirement you should complete the appropriate form that will then be forwarded to your line manager for them to accept that they can accommodate your request within your area. The form will then be forwarded to Human Resources to confirm final approval.
- Consider attending our [Planning a Positive Retirement](#) (staff login required) course run by OSDU. We also offer webinars and sessions in relation to retirement and flexible retirement throughout the year so you are encouraged to sign up to these.

If you're a manager, you are expected to:

- Discuss career plans with colleagues, for example as part of the ADR process, in order to support workforce planning.
- Signpost staff who may be thinking about retirement to relevant sources of support. These are available on our [Wellbeing Hub](#).
- Consider any flexible retirement requests fairly and consistently as outlined in the Flexible Working Policy ensuring that any reduction in hours meets the minimum requirements.
- Support colleagues to take outstanding leave in advance of their retirement date.
- Have regular contact with colleagues that have chosen flexible retirement to understand their longer-term plans.

8. Further Information and Support

If you have any queries about this policy, please talk to your manager or contact Human Resources. Further information and guidance, for both staff and managers, can also be found on our People Hub.

9. Review

This policy is reviewed by Human Resources on a regular basis. To see when the next review is due, please see our [Policy Review Schedule](#) (staff login required) on our People Hub.