

# Steps Toward Retirement

Eligibility, Action steps, and Benefit options for Faculty and Staff nearing retirement

---

## Eligibility for Official University Retiree Status

The following job types are eligible for retirement status from the University of Pittsburgh:

- Executives
- Full-time regular faculty
- Part-time regular faculty in the tenure stream or tenured for no less than half time
- Full-time regular librarians
- Full-time regular research associates
- Full-time regular staff who are not covered by a collective bargaining agreement.

Union-eligible employees should check their collective bargaining agreement for eligibility.

If you have not been in one of the job types listed above for your full career, the OHR Benefits Department will review your employment history to determine eligibility. In addition to working in one of the job types above, retiree status is granted if the following eligibility criteria are met:

- If recognized University of Pittsburgh start date prior to July 1, 2004:  
Must be age 62 or older on the last day of work.
- If recognized University of Pittsburgh start date on or after July 1, 2004: Must be a minimum of age 62 on last day of work with age plus years of university service in an eligible position (associated with the *recognized* Pitt start date) equal or greater than 85.
- Official retirement eligibility guidelines can be found online at <https://www.hr.pitt.edu/retirees/retiree-status-eligibility>

---

## Action Steps and Important Information



### **Review the on-demand recording of the retiree information session and retiree website.**

- The OHR Benefits Department offers an on-demand retiree informational session available to review at your convenience. While this session is not required, it is recommended that you review one several months prior to your retirement date so that you understand the benefits being offered as well as the process to sign up for the benefits. We encourage you to also review this session with your spouse/domestic partner. [Click here to view the on-demand retirement session](#)
- The retiree website can be found at: <https://www.hr.pitt.edu/retirees>



### **Request a retirement eligibility review.**

- Guidelines for official retirement eligibility can be found on the retiree website: <https://www.hr.pitt.edu/retirees/retiree-status-eligibility>
- The OHR Benefits Department will review your employment history and send you a written confirmation of your retirement eligibility. To open a case through the Salesforce application for retirement eligibility: <https://www.hr.pitt.edu/contact-ohr>.



## Notify your Department/Health coverage

- Decide upon a **termination/retirement date**, which is defined as **your actual last day at work**.
- Notify your department, **in writing**, of your retirement date. The notification period may vary by position and department. Speak with your immediate supervisor regarding specific department requirements. A longer notification period will allow for a smoother transition and timely processing of all necessary paperwork. *We recommend* notifying your department at least 2-3 months prior to your retirement date. For individuals that must enroll in Medicare B, a longer notification period allows proper time to complete this enrollment.
- Additional information on department retirement notification: Staff retirements are updated by individual departments through the department admins. Faculty retirements follow a process of approval through individual departments, the provost office, and HR Shared Services. If you need to apply for Medicare part B, you will need to open a case with the Benefits Department at: [www.hr.pitt.edu/contact-ohr](http://www.hr.pitt.edu/contact-ohr) and request a Medicare employment verification form. This form is required by Social Security when you apply after the age of 65. Please note: **The Medicare employment forms are only generated after your retirement date is updated in the University payroll system.**
- The Benefits Department will provide this form for you; ***you do not need to upload the form.*** The Medicare verification forms are sent back through email (minus SSN info) in the Salesforce system under the case the employee has opened.
- If you are a staff member and interested in keeping your Pitt email address, **please notify your department administrator at the time you submit your resignation.** Continuance of emails are approved by individual departments. Your dept administrator is responsible for updating email continuation in the Pitt Worx system at the time the termination is entered. All Emeritus faculty will retain their email address upon retirement.
- Active Health coverage, *in most cases*, will end on the last day of the month of your official retirement date. If you have any questions regarding this, please open a case by reaching out to the Benefits Department at: [www.hr.pitt.edu/contact-ohr](http://www.hr.pitt.edu/contact-ohr).
- For information on **Sick and Vacation payouts**, please refer to your handbooks for guidelines:



## Contact Social Security Administration

- Contact Social Security Administration 2-3 months prior to retirement (if age 65 and over) OR 3 months prior to turning age 65 if retiring before the age of 65. The Social Security office can assist you with collecting your Social Security benefits as well as enrolling you in Medicare Part A and Part B. If you are over age 65 when you retire, you must coordinate the effective date of Medicare with the date your active medical benefits will end. Your active benefits end the last day of the month in which you retire.
- If you or your spouse/domestic partner is over 65 at the time of retirement, **once your retirement has been processed and updated within the University payroll system**, the Benefits Department will assist you with an employment verification form. You will need this form to go along with your Medicare B application, to avoid being penalized for a late Medicare enrollment. **Medicare Part A and Part B are prerequisites to enroll in the University retiree medical Post 65 coverage.** If you haven't already, open a case with the Benefits department at: [www.hr.pitt.edu/contact-ohr](http://www.hr.pitt.edu/contact-ohr) to request this form.

Contact the Social Security Administration by calling 800-772-1213 or visiting [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)



## Review Retirement Savings Plan Options (most retirees only have one of the two options)

- **Defined Contribution Plan:** Three to six months prior to your retirement date, review your accounts and discuss potential investment and distribution strategies. TIAA is committed to continue investment advice for both TIAA and Vanguard funds during and after employment at the University of Pittsburgh. Upon retirement from the University of Pittsburgh, employees have the opportunity to continue their investment relationship with TIAA.

### Contact TIAA:

Telephone Counseling: 1-800-682-9139

Personal Appointments: 1-800-732-8353

Appointment by Web site: [www.tiaa.org/schedulenow-PITT](http://www.tiaa.org/schedulenow-PITT)

- **Defined Benefit Plan:** If applicable, contact the Pension Administration Center to learn more about your pension benefit in retirement by calling 1-866-283-0208.



## Medicare guidance

- **PA MEDI:** PA MEDI is Pennsylvania's State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP). The Pennsylvania Medicare Education and Decision Insight (PA MEDI) program helps people understand their Medicare and other health insurance benefits and assists

them in making informed decisions about their health care options. PA MEDI program provides free, unbiased insurance counseling to help Pennsylvanians of all ages who are Medicare beneficiaries understand their Medicare and other health insurance benefits.

- PA MEDI counselors assist clients over the phone, via email, and in person. Contact us today with your Medicare questions or to schedule your one-on-one counseling session: Phone: 412-661-1438 Email: PA.MEDI@wfspa.org Website: [www.wfspa.org](http://www.wfspa.org)



### Important documents you will receive following the processing of your retirement.

- **Retiree Benefits Enrollment Packet:** Mailed to your home address by the University's retiree benefits administrator, UPMC Benefit Management Services (BMS), *approximately 30-60 days* before your retirement date (*assuming that your retirement has been processed in a timely manner by your department*). Contact BMS at 888-499-6885 if you have any questions about this packet.
- **Medical Insurance Carrier Application:** *If you are over 65* and you elect University-sponsored medical insurance, you will be required to complete a separate application for the insurance carrier. This form will be mailed to your home from the insurance carrier **after** you submit your enrollment form to BMS with your health plan elections.
- New medical cards will be mailed out approximately 7-10 business days after your enrollment is complete with the *carrier*.

## Benefit Options to Consider:

### Medical Coverage

Eligible retirees and their spouse/domestic partner between **the ages of 62 and 64.99** have the following options:

- **Continue active coverage until age 65:** You are responsible for paying the cost share or difference that is not covered by the University. This cost share is the same amount paid monthly by active faculty and staff. Your cost share is paid for on an after-tax basis.
- **Use Defined Dollar Benefit (DDB) credits:** You may purchase other, non-University sponsored, health insurance and prescription coverage and receive reimbursement up to your DDB credit balance. The chosen insurance option cannot be employer sponsored, and it must be purchased on an after-tax basis.
- **Accrue the DDB credits:** You may have access to another active group health plan. This coverage may be available through the active medical plan of your spouse/domestic partner or another employer and is usually paid for on a pre-tax basis. Your credits will accrue in your account for future use if you have other active coverage.

Eligible retirees and their spouse/domestic partner who are **65 or older** have the following options:

- **Enroll in University-Sponsored coverage and use DDB credits:** Active medical coverage through the University discontinues. However, you become eligible for several University-sponsored post-65 plans and Defined Dollar Benefit (DDB) credits. The change occurs because of the integration with Medicare programs. Please refer to the section of the Web site describing post-65 medical plans. The DDB credits may be used to cover the cost of the University-sponsored post-65 coverage. Depending on the cost of the coverage, the DDB credits may cover the full cost of the coverage, and even leave you with a surplus of credits, or you may have to pay the difference between the cost of coverage and the amount of credits you receive. **Medicare part A and B are required to be in place prior to enrolling in the University's Post-65 health coverage.**
- **Use DDB credits for other coverage:** You may purchase other, non-University sponsored, health insurance and prescription coverage and receive reimbursement up to your DDB credit balance. The chosen insurance option cannot be employer sponsored and it must be purchased on an after-tax basis.
- **Accrue the DDB credits:** You may have access to another active group health plan. This coverage may be available through the active medical plan of your spouse/domestic partner or another employer and is usually paid for on a pre-tax basis. Your credits will accrue in your account for future use if you have other active coverage.

Spouses/domestic partners under the age of 65 may have access to university coverage; however, they are responsible for the *full cost of that coverage* until they reach age 62. In other words, University subsidized coverage is not provided to spouses/domestic partners under the age of 62. Spouse/Domestic partners over 62 have the same options based on age as described above.

## Dental and Vision Coverage

- Retirees/spouses/domestic partners under age 65 are eligible to continue the same dental and vision plan coverage with the same premiums as active faculty and staff. These plans are 100% voluntary and paid for by the retiree.
- Retirees/spouses/domestic partners over the age of 65 are eligible for a post-65 dental plan and a post-65 vision plan, which have monthly premiums associated with them. These plans are 100% voluntary and paid for by the retiree.

## Flexible Spending Accounts

- Participants can file claims for reimbursement for six months following the date of retirement. However, **expenses must be incurred on or before the last day of when your active benefits coverage ends.** Contact UPMC Health Plan at 888- 499-6885 with questions.

## Life Insurance

- For official retirement from the University, the University provides group life insurance at no cost in the amount of \$15,000 if you have completed 10 or more years of service. For service of less than 10 years, the amount of coverage is calculated at \$1,500 for each year of service. The University will pay the full cost of the premium and it will continue throughout your lifetime. AD&D insurance terminates upon retirement. No paperwork is required to initiate this; your "official"

retirement generates this policy. To make changes to a beneficiary, you can call 1-855-396-7655.

- You also have a portability option to continue any Optional (Supplemental) Life and Optional Dependent Life coverage at group rates through The Hartford, formerly Aetna, after you leave the University. Under this option, the value of the policy decreases and the premium increases as you get older. Subject to the terms of the Group Policy, a conversion feature allows an employee to continue the balance of Basic Life, excluding the Retiree Life amount. The conversion feature is an option for employees who do not qualify for portability or when portability is not available (Basic Life). It enables an employee to convert their coverage to an individual insurance policy when their group coverage ceases. No medical examination is required, but application and payment of the first premium must be made within 31 days of the date Group Coverage terminates.
- ***The Hartford will send out port/convert information approximately 3-4 weeks after you have retired.*** You can contact directly at 1-800-331-7234 with questions or if you would like to port/convert your basic and/or optional life insurance.

## Long Term Care

Participants can port (continue) Long Term Care insurance after retirement. Unum will automatically start direct billing the retiree for the same coverage they had as an active employee. ***Unum will send out an invoice approximately 3-4 weeks after you have retired.*** Contact Unum directly at 1-800-227-4165 with questions.

## Education Benefits

**Staff:** Please refer to University of Pittsburgh Policies ER 05 and ER 06 or contact the Benefits Department at [www.hr.pitt.edu/contact-ohr](http://www.hr.pitt.edu/contact-ohr).

**Faculty:** Please refer to University of Pittsburgh Policy AC 20 or contact the Benefits Department at [www.hr.pitt.edu/contact-ohr](http://www.hr.pitt.edu/contact-ohr).

**Learn more about additional retiree benefits by visiting**  
[www.hr.pitt.edu/retirees](http://www.hr.pitt.edu/retirees)

**Find information online including:**

- Health care options summary plan grids
- Contact information.
- Forms
- Retiree Summary Guide
- Explanation of DDB Credits
- Helpful links
- BMS contact

**DISCLOSURE:** The information presented in this “Retirement Checklist” is intended to provide a general overview and discussion of the plans. Descriptive literature is available from the carriers and the Benefits Department. Plans and administration of university plans are subject to change.