

HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS & SERVICES: RETIREMENT PLAN PARTICIPATION



Retirement Plan Participation

CITATION REFERENCE

OFFICIAL TITLE	POLICY ON RETIREMENT PLAN PARTICIPATION
VOLUME	HUMAN RESOURCES
RESPONSIBLE OFFICE	USG HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE
ORIGINALLY ISSUED	MARCH 11, 1987
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Policy Statement

It is the policy of the University System of Georgia to provide for the retirement of all regular, benefits eligible employees either through the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia or the Optional Retirement Plan. Employees eligible for the Optional Retirement Plan shall be those employees whose positions are eligible for participation in the Optional Retirement Plan pursuant to the authority granted to the Board of Regents under O.C.G.A Section 47-21-7 and whose positions have specifically been identified as meeting the criteria under this law. State employees, who are vested under the State Employee Retirement System, and subsequently transfer to the University System of Georgia, may elect to continue to participate in the State plan. Temporary employees are required to participate in the Georgia Defined Contribution Program, which serves as an alternative retirement savings plan for State of Georgia employees who are not eligible for benefits with their employing agency.

This policy ensures consistency among institutions of the University System as necessary for extending retirement benefits.

Applicability

All units of the University System of Georgia are covered by this policy; all regular, benefits eligible employees are covered by this policy.

Who Should Read This Policy

All Human Resources personnel within the University System of Georgia should be aware of this policy; all regular, benefits eligible employees should be aware of this policy.

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Definitions

These definitions apply to these terms as they are used in this policy:

- **Board of Regents (BOR):** The governing body of the University System of Georgia.
- **Teachers Retirement System of Georgia:** The Teachers Retirement System of Georgia (TRSGA) was established in 1943 by an act of the State Legislature to provide retirement security to individuals employed by the state's public educational entities. Specifically, all employees who are employed one-half time or more in covered positions of the state's public schools systems, regional libraries, country libraries, and regional educational service agencies are required to be members of the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia (TRSGA) as a condition of employment. Employees in covered positions of the University System of Georgia are required to be members of TRSGA unless eligible for participation in an optional retirement plan administered by the University System's Board of Regents. The TRSGA is a defined-benefit plan.
- **Optional Retirement Plan:** The Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) is a defined-contribution plan established in 1990 as an alternative retirement plan for designated employees of the University System of Georgia. Employees eligible for ORP shall be those employees whose positions are eligible for participation in ORP pursuant to the authority granted to the Board of Regents under O.C.G.A Section 47-21-7 and whose positions have specifically been identified by the USG institutions or the University System Office as meeting the criteria under this law.
- **Employees Retirement System (ERS):** Any *vested* member of ERS who becomes an employee of the University System of Georgia may elect to remain a member of ERS, provided that such election must be made to the Board of Trustees of TRSGA within sixty (60) days of such employment and is irrevocable once the election is made. This retirement option is not open to other employees of the University System of Georgia.
- **Georgia Defined-Contribution Program:** A retirement system for temporary, seasonal, and part-time employees of the State of Georgia who were not eligible for membership in the Employees' Retirement System (ERS) or the Teachers Retirement System (TRS).

Process and Procedures

This policy establishes the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia's commitment to provide retirement plans for its regular, benefits eligible employees. Eligible employees are required to participate in a retirement plan as a condition of employment. Employees and employers will be required to make the appropriate contributions to the respective retirement system. Contribution amounts for TRSGA and the ORP are determined annually by the TRSGA Board of Trustees and communicated to members by campus personnel.

Employees who are only eligible for TRS shall be enrolled as of the first day of employment.

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Employees who are eligible for both TRS and ORP must choose between TRS and ORP within sixty (60) days of the employee’s date of hire as required by state law. This election is irrevocable once the election is made. An employee eligible for ORP who fails to make an election within the sixty (60) day period shall automatically be enrolled in TRS with no right of appeal.

Any *vested* member of ERS who becomes an employee of the University System of Georgia may elect to remain a member of ERS, provided that such election must be made to the Board of Trustees of TRSGA within sixty (60) days of such employment and is irrevocable once the election is made.

Responsible Parties and Contact Information

Party	Responsibility	Phone/Email/URL
Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, USG	Ensure compliance with policy.	404-962-3235 usg-hr@usg.edu
Associate Vice Chancellor for Total Rewards	Provide guidance to institution human resources officers on retirement plans; serve as a liaison to TRS as appropriate. Serve as the plan administrator for the optional retirement plan; communicate information to campuses regarding changes, plan limits and the like.	404-962-3235 usg-hr@usg.edu
Institution Chief Human Resources Officers	Ensure retirement benefit options are communicated correctly and elections occur timely and accurately; ensure remittance of employee and employer contributions to retirement plans are handled timely and accurately, share information with participants as appropriate; ensure that the list of positions eligible for the ORP is maintained and that updates are submitted to the university system office timely.	See University System HR Officer Listing

Website Address for This Policy

- None

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Appendices (Internal Documents, Forms and Web Links)

- [Policy Manual Section 8](#)

Related Documents and Resources (External)

- [Teachers Retirement System of Georgia website](#)

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