

PERSONNEL SERVICES

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Acting Director of Personnel and Related Services



To all heads of departments and institutions, faculty board chairmen,
departmental administrators, faculty board secretaries

Ref. EMS/6

Copies: heads of division and divisional secretaries, Principal
Administrator of the Conference of Colleges, Mr Ellis

23 March 2012

Flexible retirement

Guidelines for the implementation of flexible retirement are now available on the Personnel Services website at <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/flexretire/>.

Flexible retirement allows an eligible employee to take partial retirement, while staying at work in a reduced capacity. This is usually achieved by cutting working hours, although a change in role may also form part of the package. The resulting reduction in salary is offset by taking a portion of pension. Pension Rules, detailed in the guidelines, govern the amounts of salary and pension which may be involved.

Flexible retirement may be an attractive option, especially for employees who are looking to achieve a better work-life balance, to free up time for caring or other responsibilities, or to taper towards eventual full retirement without paying the full financial penalty that can come with going part-time or leaving work altogether.

In all cases, flexible retirement requires departmental approval. In considering an application, departments have the right to take account of the impact on their own business needs and on other staff, as well as of the wishes of the applicant. Applications should be discussed between employee and department before any firm decisions are taken.

At present, flexible retirement is available only to eligible members of USS. Holders of joint academic appointments are currently excluded, although USS is considering changing this ruling later this year. Provision of flexible retirement for OSPS members is under consideration as part of the wider review of that scheme. Members of some other pension schemes, including the NHSPS, may also have access to flexible retirement.

1. Action required by departments and divisions

Departments and divisions should familiarised themselves with the guidelines for the implementation of flexible retirement which are now available on the Personnel Services website at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/flexretire/.

In addition to describing the background and potential benefits, these guidelines cover:

- (a) The rules governing



- Eligibility
 - How much pension the employee may take
 - The required reduction in salary
 - How many changes ('flexes') each employee may request before taking full retirement.
- (b) The application process, including
- Informal discussion
 - Linkage between flexible retirement and agreement on a final retirement date
 - Linkage between flexible retirement and requests to continue working beyond the Employer Justified Retirement Age (EJRA)
 - Making a formal application
 - Departmental approval.
- (c) Detailed guidance for departments on
- Considerations to take into account when deciding an application
 - Model letters for use with the process.

For further information on pensions aspects of flexible retirement, please consult [Pensions Office](#). For personnel aspects, please consult stephen.noakes@admin.ox.ac.uk.

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Copy for noticeboards: Yes
Website: <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/circulars/>

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