

July 21, 2009

## **OPERS STUDENT WAIVER PROCESS**

The purpose of this communication is to explain the revised process that applies to student-employees who want to request exemption from the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS). The new process is effective with the July 21, 2009 pay.

### As a reminder:

- Request for Optional Exemption as a Student (OPERS Form F-3) Forms must be signed within 30 days of a student employee's start date. Forms received after the 30 day period will not be processed. The properly completed Form F-3 is submitted to OPERS for certification.
- Forms F-3 will be applicable in the payroll period during which they are received (as long as received within 30 days of start date).

Optional exemption is only available to student employees working for the University of Cincinnati while currently enrolled at UC on at least a half time basis. Participants in the cooperative education program are not eligible for exemption during their work terms. Undergraduate students must be taking at least six (6) credit hours and graduate students five (5) credit hours to be considered enrolled half time.

## **NEW PROCESS**

### New Student Workers/Graduate Assistants

New UC student employees who want to be exempt from OPERS contributions will continue to be required to submit a Request for Optional Exemption as a Student (Form F-3) within 30 days of employment.

Initial graduate assistantships or student worker appointments that begin prior to the start of the pay period that includes the 1<sup>st</sup> day of classes will be subject to OPERS and Medicare tax contributions during the earlier pay periods. It is strongly recommended that if possible, the appointment of new graduate assistants coincide with the start of the academic year.

Effective July 1, 2009, all new UC student employees will be provided with the Form F-3 as part of the NEW Onboarding process. Student employees will be given the opportunity to sign the F-3 when they submit their employment-related forms (Form I-9, DMA); the F-3 is NOT required and UC student employees have the option of contributing to OPERS.

### Returning Student Workers/Graduate Assistants

Returning students who submitted an F-3 on July 1, 2008 or later are not required to submit a new F-3 when returning to school/work this fall. Beginning with the July 21, 2009 pay date, once a student has submitted a Request for Optional Exemption (Form F-3), NO FURTHER FORM F-3 IS REQUIRED as long as he/she remains a UC student.

Once the student has an approved Form F-3 (as certified by OPERS) on file, a break in-service as a student employee (employment is terminated and the student is later appointed as a Student Worker or Graduate Assistant) will not require a new Form F-3, as long as the student has retained his/her student status at UC.

Except during the intercessions between academic terms, OPERS contributions will be STARTED or STOPPED each pay period based upon the student's current enrollment status (based upon the information in the student information system). If the student's current credit hours fall below the required minimum (5 for graduate students; 6 for undergraduate students), OPERS contributions will START during that payroll period. If the student's enrolled hours increase to more than the required minimum, OPERS contributions WILL STOP automatically that payroll period as long as the student has a Form F-3 on file and remains a student-employee. Note that Medicare tax deductions and the applicable student exemption are based on the same enrollment criteria, and will start and stop following the same registration data.

Questions you have regarding this new process should be address to Liz Aumann at 556-6381 or Corey Lehr at 556-2467.