

FAQs for the FERP Program*

*Note that the FAQs provide answers to the FERP program outlined in the current CSU-CFA Agreement. These FAQs are meant to answer your questions in general. For more information about your situation, please contact University Personnel at 4-3737 to schedule an appointment.

Who may apply for FERP?

Eligible tenured faculty unit employees who have reached the normal retirement age (i.e., age listed in your retirement benefit formula; e.g., 2% at 55, 2% at 60, 2% at 62), consistent with CalPERS rules and pursuant to the California Code of Regulations (CCR) §586.1 may apply for FERP. Under the terms of the current [CSU-CFA Agreement](#), the FERP program is an entitlement program, as long as the relevant procedures are followed and courses appropriate for the faculty member to teach are scheduled.

When must a faculty member decide whether or not to FERP?

A faculty member must decide whether to FERP before retiring. If a faculty member retires without indicating the desire to FERP, the privilege is lost.

We encourage a prospective retiree to consult with his/her Chair/Director, Library Dean, or Counseling Services Director as early as possible. The FERP application must be completed no later than the last day in February. The completed application should be submitted to the Department Chair/Director. It will be routed to the College Dean, and Faculty Services for approval.

Which offices must a faculty member notify with intentions to retire and subsequently FERP?

In addition to working with the Faculty Services, the faculty member must also notify their Department Chair, their Benefits Representative in University Personnel, and a CalPERS Representative. University Personnel may be reached at 408-924-2250 and CalPERS may be reached at 1-888-225-7377.

Following are two important CalPERS publications that may be helpful to you, "Retirement Planning Checklist": <https://www.calpers.ca.gov/page/active-members/retirement-benefits/service-disability-retirement/retirement-planning-checklist>, & "Employment After Retirement <https://www.calpers.ca.gov/page/retirees/working-after-retirement>

Another office you may contact is the Social Security Administration to discuss Medicare and other benefits. You may reach them at 1-800-772-1213.

What is the duration of the FERP program?

Under the current CSU-CFA Agreement, faculty members who entered into the FERP program may do so for up to five (5) academic years.

When can or must a faculty member begin FERP?

A faculty member can only commence FERP after having been retired. A faculty member can only apply to FERP before retiring.

Participation in FERP must start at the beginning of an academic year. Faculty usually apply for FERP in the month of February before retirement.

Examples:

- You retire on July 1. You must have applied for FERP and had your application approved before July 1. Your FERP commences at the beginning of the Fall Semester, regardless of whether you teach that Fall Semester or the following Spring Semester, or both.

- You retire on December 31. You must have applied for FERP and had your application approved before December 31. Your FERP commences at the beginning of the following Fall Semester, regardless of whether you are teaching that Fall Semester or the following Spring Semester, or both.

How much work may a faculty member do as a FERP participant?

A faculty member may choose to FERP for up 50% of his/her regular time base in the last fiscal year of employment preceding retirement, but no more, in any given fiscal year. For example, if the faculty member had a full-time appointment prior to retirement and entrance into FERP, s/he could *either* work for each of the Fall & Spring semesters or 1.00 for *either the Fall or Spring semester*.

What if, in the year before I retire, I have a 12-month appointment?

For teaching faculty, the FERP program is based upon academic year employment. Teaching faculty who hold a 12- month appointment must be converted to an AY appointment at the time of entry into FERP. Counselors and Librarians must work with their managers to arrange a schedule that will not exceed 960 hours per fiscal year.

I am an MPP with retreat rights, may I FERP?

On one condition, you must retreat to faculty prior to or on your FERP start date. As long as you are MPP, you are not eligible for the faculty status.

May I be appointed in Special Session during FERP?

Yes. However, such appointments should be arranged prior to entering the FERP program to ensure that time base limits and the restriction of working during the Academic Year are not violated. If FERPing at the maximum rate, Special Session teaching is only possible when the Special Session program is buying out part of the appointment. If FERPing at a lower time base, a Special Session appointment must not exceed limits. For example, if you teach a 3-unit course in special session then your FERP assignment in the regular session must be reduced by 3 units.

May I earn additional compensation through any other General Fund source while in FERP?

No. There is a strict limit set by CalPERS on total employment during FERP. According to Technical Letter HR/BEN 2004-08 and pursuant to CalPERS regulations (GC 21227), "a retired person may serve without reinstatement from retirement or loss or interruption of benefits provided by this system [CalPERS] as a member of the academic staff of a California state university, if that service does not exceed, in any fiscal year, a total of 960 hours for all employers or 50 percent of the hours the member was employed during the last fiscal year of service prior to retirement." During the period of FERP participation, both the Agreement provisions and the CalPERS regulations apply.

According to HR/Benefits 2004-08, "CSU employment in summer/special session/extension is not available to participants who are employed at 50% for the academic year (or the corresponding limit for librarians or counselors), since they already have reached the allowable employment limit." CSU employees may, consistent with campus policies governing outside activities, be employed outside the CSU system. However, conflicts of interest are not permitted.

May I teach during summer session while participating in FERP?

No. FERP Instructional faculty may only work during the Academic Year (AY).

May I earn additional compensation through the SJSU Research Foundation or Tower Foundation while in FERP?

Yes. These 2 entities are not CalPERS employers. See letter of October 20, 2009 posted on http://www.sjsu.edu/up/docs/FERP_additional_employment.pdf

What is the effect on my FERP eligibility of being on leave during the last full year preceding my retirement?

Leave of absence without pay in the fiscal year prior to retirement affects how much FERP faculty may work during FERP.

Example:

- 50% leave without pay in AY 2022-23
- Retired with CalPERS 8/16/2022
- FERP beginning AY 2022-23 is limited to a 25% assignment (half of assignment in fiscal year before retirement)
- FERP schedule could be 0.25 FTE AY or 0.50 FTE for one semester

What is the effect on my FERP eligibility of doing a PRTB (Pre-Retirement Reduction in Time Base)?

A pre-retirement reduction in time base effects a permanent reduction in a faculty member's "regular time base," and therefore establishes a less than full-time basis upon which the University must calculate the 50% work load allowed during the FERP eligibility period is calculated.

How much do I earn if I FERP, and what is the effect on my retirement earnings?

Employment under FERP is at the same rank and salary rate as the participant had in the academic or fiscal year immediately prior to retirement, with the total academic year salary prorated by the time base during FERP. At the same time, a faculty member collects full retirement payments. Retirement deductions are no longer taken from the monthly FERP paycheck.

What if the year before I retire I work in a special session appointment?

Special Sessions do not count toward establishing the "regular time base" (Article 29.6) used to establish the basis for FERP pay or units.

May I choose to participate in FERP for less than 50%-time base?

Yes. A request to reduce the time base below 50% (or to change the 1.0 semester from Spring to Fall or from Fall to Spring) needs to be processed via a memo from you through your Department Chair and Dean to the Senior Director of Faculty Services. However, once approved, that reduced time base shall continue for the duration of the FERP appointment. Once you have moved to a lower time base you will not be allowed to move back to a higher time base.

May I change my teaching from one semester to another?

Yes, a request to change the "active" semester from Spring to Fall or from Fall to Spring needs to be processed via a memo from you through your Department Chair and Dean to the Senior Director of Faculty Services.

On what schedule may I work while in FERP?

Past practice at San José State University is to allow an appointment that is mutually agreeable to the faculty member and his/her Chair and Dean. Changes in the initially approved appointment (e.g. 50% over 2 semesters or 1.00 in one semester) must be recommended by the Chair and the Dean and approved by University Personnel-Faculty Services.

If it is not possible to reach mutual agreement about the change of appointment that is deemed by the President to be pragmatically necessary, the President may alter the schedule upon notice to the faculty member in FERP one hundred twenty (120) days in advance.

Note: This means that no change in appointment – which means no change in the number of units to be taught, in the semesters during which teaching is to take place, can be imposed upon the faculty member in FERP without 120 days' notice. The term appointment as it is used here does not refer to the issue of which courses are to be taught or at what time of day or day of the week they are to be taught. It only refers to the number of units per semester. Work assignments as to courses and times within a semester, and as to assignments to advising and committee work within a semester, remain the prerogative of the administration, delegated to the "appropriate administrator," usually the Dean, although the usual consultative procedures are to be followed.

Am I expected to serve on committees while FERPing? Are there any limitations as to the committees upon which I may be asked to serve?

Yes, and yes. Faculty members in the FERP program are considered tenured faculty and are expected to perform regular advising and other normal duties. When serving on a committee, you have the same voting or other rights as any tenured faculty member. You are expected to provide service and participate in shared governance activities at a level commensurate with your appointment level. With permission of the Senior Director for Faculty Services you may serve on a recruitment committee or an RTP committee.

What priority do I have in course assignments?

According to the current CSU-CFA Agreement, courses are assigned in the following priority order:

- Regular Full-Time (Probationary or Tenured) Faculty and FERP Faculty
- Teaching Associates, Volunteers, Administrators
- Temporary Faculty following Article 12.29

What happens if in a given semester there are no courses scheduled which I am qualified to teach?

If this is a short-term, one-semester, situation then the expectation is that the faculty member in FERP and his/her Chair will work out a new schedule in which the faculty member can teach his/her full FERP load that academic year. That revised schedule would then need to be approved by the relevant Dean and then by the Senior Director of Faculty Services. If the Chair/Dean and the faculty member in FERP cannot reach agreement then the procedures described below, in the next question and answer, will be used.

What happens if, for budgetary or programmatic reasons, my department will not offer during a given academic year a sufficient number of classes which I am qualified to teach to permit me to teach my full FERP load? Might I be laid off?

The simple answer is, yes – but only after all other possibilities are explored and exhausted, only in accord with detailed procedures described below, and only as the last available option.

If, for programmatic or budgetary reasons, the department to which the faculty member in FERP belongs will not offer a sufficient selection of classes during an academic year in the areas of expertise of the faculty member in FERP to employ the faculty member to the extent to which s/he is otherwise entitled, we would have to consider the possibility of a layoff of the faculty member in FERP.

If layoffs become necessary, Article 38 of the current CSU-CFA Agreement would prevail, and Article 38.11 determines the order of layoff – namely a faculty member in FERP could not be laid off if there were Part-Time or Full-Time Temporary faculty in the department scheduled to teach courses for which the faculty

member in FERP was qualified. But, according to the same article, faculty members in FERP do not have a priority over full-time Tenured or Probationary faculty.

Other than a layoff due to insufficient course availability, are the other circumstances under which a faculty member in FERP can be terminated?

There are special circumstances when there may be exceptions to the "Order of Layoff" and these are described in detail in Article 38.20 of the current [CSU-CFA Agreement](#). In brief, the exceptions could result from a faculty member having an academic/professional specialization that is needed and non-interchangeable.

While the "Unit of Layoff" is the academic Department (or its equivalent), and while being in the FERP program is a Departmental-specific appointment, at San José State University, efforts would be made to explore whether teaching in another Department/Division/Program might be substituted for work in the home Department.

However, it must be understood that this is not entitlement, but rather something that must be mutually acceptable to the faculty member in FERP, to all Department/Program Chairs/Directors, Deans involved, and to University Personnel-Faulty Services.

In any event, it should be understood that layoffs would be the last option chosen and that, ultimately, all layoffs must be approved by the President.

In addition, as with any faculty member, a faculty member in FERP may be terminated for cause or for failure to meet the employment commitment.

May I choose to have Social Security contributions continue?

No. Some faculty retire under CalPERS and enter the FERP program, but choose to delay receiving their Social Security until they are older to avoid reductions in those payments. In that case, they might wish to have Social Security contributions continue from their FERP salary, but that is not possible. Under the agreement between the State of California and the federal government, once a faculty member retires under CalPERS, the State may not withdraw Social Security from your check and it will not make contributions on your behalf.

Can someone be hired as a part-time lecturer and also receive the FERP salary? - No. Someone who has retired under CalPERS cannot for any reason work more than half-time (for the State of California) without jeopardizing his/her retirement status. Also, "half-time" is defined on the basis of half of the final year of appointment (up to the maximum of a full-time academic year load of 30 units) during the last full year before s/he retired.

Can faculty work as Part-Time lecturers in the years after they complete FERP?

Yes, but they start out at the bottom of the order of assignment and have no preference for work over incumbent lecturers. The 180 day clock starts running as of the date of retirement, so people who have completed FERP do not have to then sit out an additional 180 days before coming back as a retired annuitant lecturer.

Such faculty can commence teaching as a part-time lecturer up to the maximum of half-time (50% of the regular time base in the last full year proceeding retirement), as described above. Therefore, a faculty member who had been full-time, and then 50% in the FERP program could, at the conclusion of the FERP appointment, work as a part-time lecturer at no more than 50%.

However, the faculty member who was formerly in the FERP program would be in a new category in the Order of Work, and that is the last category (See answer for [What Priority do I have for course assignments?](#) on page 4). So, as a part-time lecturer a new salary would be based on an agreement between the faculty member and his/her Department/School. S/he does not automatically resume at the salary rate and rank at which s/he was previously paid. Also, part-time faculty are not compensated for committee work. If a part-time faculty member teaches a 3-unit course, such a period of part-time employment would be the same as that of any temporary faculty unit employee, rather than the entitlement afforded to faculty members in FERP.

Can I carry over any sick leave time into my FERP period? Do I accumulate sick leave while in FERP?

Yes, and yes. You may carry over up to forty-eight (48) hours of sick leave from your pre-FERP total, if you choose to reduce your accumulated sick leave by that amount for service retirement credit. During any semester in which you FERP full-time, you can continue to accrue eight (8) hours of sick leave per qualifying academic pay period up to a maximum of 160 hours. Such accumulation shall be pro-rata for less-than-full-time participants.

May a faculty member take a leave of absence while in the FERP program and what is the effect of such a leave?

A request for a leave of absence without pay will be considered only for reasons of personal illness (that is, the FERP participant's illness) and may extend up to a maximum of one full year within any one fiscal or academic year of FERP eligibility. Under the current [CSU-CFA Agreement](#), a FERP participant is entitled to a *single* such leave during the entire period of FERP eligibility (note that Article 22 does not apply to FERP participants). Any leave time taken, regardless of type or duration, will not extend the total period of FERP eligibility.

For example, if a FERP faculty member takes a one year leave without pay, that faculty member would then actively participate in FERP for only the total number of years minus one. The year of leave may not be added to the end of the FERP period to extend the period of eligibility.

The University is committed to complying with both the Federal Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and with the California Family Rights Act (CFRA) and does so under the terms of the Revised CSU Family Medical Leaves (FML) Policy ([Technical Letter HR 2014 02](#), dated 9-15-14). Under the terms of this CSU policy, FERP faculty, like all other faculty, are eligible for FML for any one of the following reasons:

1. To care for a child following the birth or placement with the employee for adoption or foster care;
2. To care for the employee's spouse, registered domestic partner, child, or parent (not parent-in-law) who has a serious health condition,
3. The employee is unable to perform the essential functions of his/her job due to a serious health condition.
4. Qualifying Military Exigency Leave (MEL) arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, registered domestic partner, son, daughter, or parent is on active military duty in the National Guard or Reserve, or has been called to active duty in the National Guard or Reserve in a "contingency" military operation.
5. Service Member Care Leave (SMCL) for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness, if the employee is the spouse, registered domestic partner, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of the service member.

For numbers 1-4 above, the maximum leave without pay during any year under the FML policy is 12 weeks in a rolling 12-month period beginning with the date that FML commences. For number 5 above, the maximum leave without pay during any year under the FML policy is 26 weeks in a rolling 12-month period beginning with the date that FML commences.

FERP participants are also entitled to both carry-overs up to 48 hours of sick leave into their FERP period and to accumulate new sick leave while in FERP.

The combined effect of these two leave policies is that

1. no requests for leaves without pay will be accepted unless they are either for reasons of personal illness or for other purposes covered under the FMLA policy;
2. under the current CSU-CFA Agreement, only one leave of absence without pay will be granted during the entire FERP period and that leave may be for up to one academic year, but must be for reasons of personal illness only;
3. if a faculty member takes a leave without pay under (2), the first twelve weeks also satisfies the obligation under the FML policy in (3) for that year (12 month period);
4. If one takes FML-qualifying sick leave with pay, that time also satisfies a portion of the twelve-week obligation under the FML policy for that year (12-month period).

What other benefits am I entitled to while in FERP?

The benefits available to faculty members in FERP if eligible are:

- Health Insurance and dental insurance at the same benefit level that was in effect at the time of retirement. After FERP is completed, the dental drops to the basic benefit. Both health and basic dental continue for life, even after the FERP program ends.
- The vision plan is given each year to faculty who are in FERP. After FERP, the vision plan ceases.
- Employee contributions to TSAs may continue during the semester(s) faculty are teaching under FERP, but not during the rest of the year. Such contributions cease when FERP ceases.
- As explained earlier, no Social Security contributions may be made while in FERP, but you have the option to collect Social Security payments if eligible and if a faculty member so chooses. Post retirement income is subject to mandatory Medicare coverage.
- State provided life insurance and long term disability insurance do not continue after retirement; that is, these insurance programs are not in effect either during the FERP period or thereafter. Due to their retirement status, FERP faculty are not eligible for NDI and IDL programs; FERP faculty are eligible to receive Workers' Compensation Temporary Disability payments for work-related injuries.
- FERP faculty are eligible for fee waiver only during the semester(s) they are actively employed.

I am currently a full-time tenured faculty member. If I receive a five-year University Faculty RSCA Assigned Time award and decide to FERP in two years, will I continue to receive the RSCA assigned time while I'm in FERP?

No. Only full-time faculty members can receive the benefit of the University Faculty RSCA Assigned Time award. Once you begin the FERP program, you would no longer be eligible.

How can I compare entering into the FERP program with entering into the PRTB program?

There is a PRTB/FERP Comparison Calculator at the following link:

https://www.sjsu.edu/up/mybenefits/retirement/ferp/ferp_calculator.php.

For more information on the PRTB program see [Article 30 of the current CSU-CFA Agreement](#).