

Faculty Retirement Transition Leave

Purpose

The guidance below is designed to assist Mason's tenured faculty in transitioning from full-time active service to retirement. The Faculty Retirement Transition Leave guidance should be utilized by academic units as a management tool and a strategic opportunity to address staffing needs within the academic unit and by faculty in their retirement planning. The utilization of the process outlined below will be based on available funding at the academic unit and staffing resources.

Eligibility for Participation:

Participants must:

1. be at least 60 years of age;
2. be a tenured full-time faculty member and **have worked** (prior to the transitional leave) at George Mason University for at least a total of either
 - 15 years
 - 25 years

(Full-time service may include periods of leave with full or partial pay, but not periods of leave without pay);

3. agree to retire at the conclusion of this transition leave period from active membership in the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) or Optional Retirement Plan (ORP). Mason will cease to make payments to VRS or ORP.
4. voluntarily participate in the program
5. have the approval of both the Dean or Director of their academic unit and the Provost. Transition leave is funded by the faculty member's academic unit. Timing of transition leave must be approved by the Dean or Director of the academic unit in consultation with the Provost in order to prevent overtaxing teaching capacity in any given year. The Dean or Director may limit the number of faculty who can participate in any particular year.

Tier 1: 15 Years of Service:

| Transition Option | Impact |
|--|--|
| <p>One year, at full pay, teaching a total of two courses, with no expected service activities. The faculty member may select to teach both courses during fall or spring or teach one course each semester. If the transitional leave is scheduled for spring-fall and with approval of the dean/director, one course may be taught during summer of the transitional year. If taught in the summer, the faculty member will not be paid the additional 10% summer salary. If one course is not taught during the semester immediately prior to retirement, the faculty member must work at least 20% of normal work duties during that semester. This work may involve research, internal or professional external committee work, advising, or a special project approved by the faculty member's supervisor.</p> | <p>Faculty will receive full benefits.</p> |

Tier 2: 25 Years of service:

| Transition Option | Impact |
|--|--|
| <p>Two years, at full pay, teaching a total of two courses each year, plus a reduction of expected service activities by 50% in the first year and no expected service activities in the second. The faculty member may choose to teach a 2:0, 1:1, or 0:2 load each year. With approval of the dean/director, one of the courses may be taught in summer(s) of the transitional years. If taught in the summer, the faculty member will not be paid the additional 10% summer salary. If one course is not taught during the semester immediately prior to retirement, the faculty member must work at least 20% of normal work duties during that semester. This work may involve, research, internal or professional external committee work, advising, or a special project approved by the faculty member's supervisor.</p> | <p>Faculty will receive full benefits.</p> |
| <p>OR</p> | |
| <p>One year at full pay, teaching a total of one course during the year with no expected service activities. If the course is not taught during the semester immediately prior to retirement, the faculty member must work at least 20% of normal duties during that semester. This work may involve research, internal or professional external committee work, advising, or a special project approved by the faculty member's supervisor.</p> | <p>Faculty will receive full benefits.</p> |

Eligibility Period:

Each November, eligible faculty may apply to participate in the Faculty Retirement Transition Leave Program by completing an election form and submitting the form to his/her Dean or Director. The Dean or Director will make a recommendation to the Provost based on student/faculty scheduling needs and finances available to the unit. The Provost will then forward the form (whether approved, not approved, or delayed up to a year) to Human Resources. A Dean or Director making the recommendation not to approve the election will communicate the decision and the reason for the decision to the faculty member as well as to the Provost.

It is understood that occasionally conditions may require the Provost to delay the implementation of a transitional leave for a semester or even a year. However, every effort will be made to accommodate transitional leave requests in timely fashion, and a delay of more than a year will occur only under extraordinary circumstances. In all cases, the faculty member must agree in writing to any delay to the requested implementation date.

An election form must be received by **November 1** in any given year for participation in the Faculty Retirement Transition Leave Program during the following year.

Notes:

1. Faculty members in transitional retirement leave may still participate in tax shelter annuities (TSAs).
2. Faculty members in the 2-year transitional retirement leave option remain eligible for salary increases in the second year.
3. Unless scheduling needs and finances preclude it, faculty with the greatest number of years teaching at George Mason University will have priority in having their transitional retirement leave applications approved.
4. Acceptance into one of the retirement options constitutes a binding contract between the faculty member and the university. Exceptions will be made only for personal or family health reasons or for death.
5. During transitional retirement leave, faculty under contract for nine months should elect to be paid over nine months rather than twelve with a normal retirement date of June 1.