What are minimum required distributions (MRDs)?

Once you reach age 70½ and are no longer working, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and UC’s Retirement Savings Program require you to start withdrawing money from your tax-deferred retirement savings plan(s), such as UC’s 403(b), 457(b) and DC Pre-Tax Plans. These mandatory withdrawals are known as “minimum required distributions” (or sometimes “required minimum distributions”).

Minimum required distributions (MRDs) apply to all of UC’s plans, and you must satisfy the requirements for each plan separately. Distributions from one plan do not satisfy the requirements for another plan, and MRDs are not eligible for rollover to other tax-deferred accounts. Further, distributions from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) or any other non-UC plans that you might have do not satisfy the requirements for the UC plans.

What are the dates for my first and subsequent MRDs?

Your first MRD must be withdrawn by April 1 of the year following the year you turn age 70½ or leave UC employment (whichever is later).

All subsequent MRDs must be received by December 31 of the year. Once you begin receiving your MRD, you must continue to receive an MRD each year, even if you return to work at UC.

For example: If you reach age 70½ and leave UC employment in 2019, you must receive your first MRD by April 1, 2020 to satisfy the requirement for 2019. You must receive a second MRD by December 31, 2020 to satisfy the requirement for 2020, by December 31, 2021 to satisfy the requirement for 2021, and so on. Note that in this example you may have two required distributions in 2020—a distribution in March that is for 2019, and a distribution in December for 2020.

If you are age 70½ or older and did not work for UC through the end of the calendar year, you are required to take your MRD.

What if I don’t take my MRD?

The penalty for not taking your MRD is severe: If you don’t receive a distribution that satisfies the requirements, you must pay the IRS an additional nondeductible 50% tax on the amount that you should have received.
Who must receive an MRD?
If you are age 70½ or older and did not work for UC through the calendar year, you must receive your MRD. If you are age 70½ and still paid by UC through the end of the year, you can defer your first MRD.

Your MRD will be automatically processed
To ensure UC’s plan participants are compliant, UC’s Plan record keeper (Fidelity® Retirement Services) determines if you are still actively employed and paid by the University based on transmitted payroll status information from UC in December of each year. If you are over age 70½ and not shown as active and paid by UC, then Fidelity will automatically issue your first year MRD by mid-March of the following year (as described above). Then MRDs must continue each year, before the end of each year, regardless of whether you return to work at UC.

If you believe you should receive an MRD but did not receive an automated distribution, please make sure you contact Fidelity before the deadlines to start you MRDs. You should always consider consulting with your tax advisor if you have any additional concerns and questions.

How is my MRD determined?
The amount of your MRD is calculated by dividing your previous year-end plan balance by an IRS factor based on your life expectancy. For your calculation each year, the IRS factor corresponding to your age on your birthday in that year is applied. For instance, if you turn age 71 in August, the calculation for your MRD that year will be based on the factor corresponding to age 71.

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MRDs must be calculated using the Uniform Lifetime Table (see below), unless your sole primary beneficiary for the entire tax year is your spouse who is more than 10 years younger than you. In this case, the Joint Life Expectancy Table can be used (resulting in a longer distribution period).

How does the MRD process work?
If you take no action, Fidelity® Retirement Services will automatically send your MRD payment to your home address, normally in mid-to late December. For 2019, MRDs will be distributed on December 13, 2019. If this is the first year you are required to receive your MRD, automatic payment will take place in mid-March 2020, as described on the first page. In this case, to avoid having two MRDs in the 2019, you can request that Fidelity issue your first MRD by December 31 of 2019.

You also have the option of establishing “systematic withdrawal payments” (SWP) for the current and future years. This service will allow you to establish an electronic funds transfer (EFT) payment, so that your distribution will be deposited directly to your chosen bank account, as well as choose the specific date(s) of your MRD payment every year. With SWP you will also be able to customize your tax withholding.
EXAMPLE

A 71-year-old participant has a UC-sponsored 403(b) Plan from which no distributions have been taken during 2019. This 403(b) Plan is subject to the MRDs.

YOUR CALCULATION

Log on to your accounts or call Fidelity for 12/31 balance
Call Fidelity for balance
A – B
Use table on page 2
C + D

$100,000
$20,000
$80,000
26.5
$3,019
($80,000 ÷ 26.5)

Beneficiary accounts
The beneficiaries of deceased retirees who maintain 403(b), 457(b), or DC Plan balances in the University’s Retirement Savings Program are also subject to the IRS rules regarding MRDs.

Name your beneficiary for your 403(b), 457(b), and DC plans
If you have not named a beneficiary for your account and want to do so, log on to www.myUCretirement.com, click Update Beneficiaries in the menu on the right to name your beneficiary online. Be sure to name a beneficiary for each of your plans. You may also name your beneficiary by calling Fidelity Retirement Services and requesting a paper beneficiary designation form at 1-866-682-7787.

Special rule if you had a 403(b) plan balance on 12/31/86
A special federal tax rule will exclude your 403(b) Plan balance as of December 31, 1986, from your MRD calculation. This special federal tax rule will be applied until the year in which you reach the age of 75.

The amount you can exclude will be reduced by the amount of any voluntary withdrawals since January 1987, except for MRDs. If you are eligible, Fidelity® Retirement Services will automatically exclude any pre-1987 balance when calculating your MRD. Account balances in the 457(b) Plan or the DC Plan are not subject to this rule.

EXAMPLE

A 71-year-old participant has a UC-sponsored 403(b) Plan from which no distributions have been taken during 2019. This 403(b) Plan is subject to the MRDs.

A – B
= C
÷ D
= 2019
MRD

Previous year-end balance
12/31/86 balance in 403(b) Plan
Amount subject to 2019 MRD
Uniform Lifetime Table factor

SAMPLE

$100,000
$20,000
$80,000
26.5

Tax withholding
You can provide specific withholding instructions, including electing to not have income tax withheld. If you do not provide instructions, Fidelity Retirement Services is required to automatically withhold federal income tax from your gross MRD amount. The amount withheld is determined by the IRS wage withholding tables and assumes you are married with three withholding allowances. The withholding tax tables are available at www.irs.gov.

Source of distribution
If you have money invested in more than one investment fund, Fidelity Retirement Services will withdraw your MRD proportionately from each fund in which you are invested, unless you ask to have your MRD withdrawn from a specific fund or funds.* Because investments can change throughout the year, you cannot identify the specific fund(s) from which you want to withdraw your distribution until just prior to your desired distribution date. Call Fidelity Retirement Services for more information.

*MRDs cannot be processed automatically from BrokerageLink®. Sufficient funds must be available and invested in the UC fund menu lineup. If all of your investments in any UC Plan are in BrokerageLink, you must call Fidelity Retirement Services to initiate your MRD. Direction to move sufficient funds into the UC Fund line-up will be provided.
Questions about the 403(b), 457(b), or DC Plans?

For questions about the 403(b), 457(b), or DC Plans, please call Fidelity Retirement Services at 1-866-682-7787. Representatives are available Monday through Friday, 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Pacific time.

Need additional information?

You can get additional information about your individual plan accounts and name beneficiaries online at www.myUCretirement.com. Click Go to NetBenefits®.

Tax questions?

For tax questions, you may wish to obtain a copy of IRS Publication 575, which discusses taxation of retirement plan distributions. This publication also discusses minimum required distributions and amounts that can be rolled over to an IRA. Publication 571 discusses unique taxation rules for 403(b) plans. Publication 590-B provides the joint life table and the table that applies to beneficiaries. These publications are available from local IRS offices or on the Web at www.irs.gov. You may also wish to consult a tax advisor to discuss your individual situation.

The University of California intends to continue the benefits described here indefinitely; however, the benefits of all employees, retirees, and plan beneficiaries are subject to change or termination at the time of contract renewal or at any other time by the University or other governing authorities. If you belong to an exclusively represented bargaining unit, some of your benefits may differ from the ones described here.

In conformance with applicable law and University policy, the University asserts that it is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer. Please send inquiries regarding the University’s affirmative action and equal opportunity policies for staff to Director of Diversity and Employee Programs, University of California Office of the President, 300 Lakeside Drive, Oakland, CA 94612, and for faculty to Director of Academic Affirmative Action, University of California Office of the President, 1111 Franklin Street, Oakland, CA 94607.