

# Retirement Benefits Decision Guide

For rehired, newly eligible and former  
CalPERS-covered employees

UNIVERSITY  
OF  
CALIFORNIA





## Your UC Retirement Benefits

As a University of California employee, you help shape the quality of life for people throughout California and around the world. Every faculty and staff member plays an important role in UC's mission of education, research and public service.

UC's comprehensive benefits are among the ways we recognize our employees for their contributions, and are an important part of your compensation.

UC offers you a choice of primary retirement benefit options—Pension Choice or Savings Choice. Participation in one of the options is required, and you choose the one that's right for you.

# 1.

## Helping You Prepare for a Successful Retirement

Preparing for a successful retirement is one of the biggest financial responsibilities you'll face. All eligible new employees have a choice of primary (required) retirement benefits, with costs shared by you and UC. With this guide, we'll show you your options, explain how each one works, and highlight resources to help you choose the best option for your personal situation.

## Steps to Making Your Choice

**LEARN ABOUT YOUR PRIMARY RETIREMENT BENEFIT OPTIONS— PENSION CHOICE OR SAVINGS CHOICE**

**SEE HOW EACH OPTION WORKS**

Pages 6–9

**COMPARE THE OPTIONS AND DECIDE WHICH PLAN IS RIGHT FOR YOU**

[myUCretirement.com/choose](https://myUCretirement.com/choose)

**GET HELP WITH YOUR DECISION**

**ATTEND A WORKSHOP OR WEBINAR**

[myUCretirement.com/classes](https://myUCretirement.com/classes)

**TALK WITH A RETIREMENT PLANNER**

800-558-9182 or  
[getguidance.fidelity.com/universityofcalifornia](https://getguidance.fidelity.com/universityofcalifornia)

**MAKE YOUR SELECTION**

**CHOOSE YOUR OPTION ONLINE**

[myUCretirement.com/choose](https://myUCretirement.com/choose)

### **IMPORTANT:**

The sooner you enroll in Pension Choice or Saving Choice, the sooner you start receiving UC contributions (and service credit under Pension Choice). See page 11 to learn more about reasons to make your choice as soon as possible. Your enrollment window closes once you submit a choice.

If you don't choose a primary retirement option within 90 days of the date you became eligible, you automatically will be enrolled in Pension Choice (effective with your next pay period). In general, your eligibility date is your hire date. If you are uncertain about your eligibility date, please contact your benefits office.

# 2.

## Your Primary Retirement Benefit Options: Pension Choice or Savings Choice

When it comes to choosing your primary retirement benefits, you have two options—Pension Choice or Savings Choice. Both options help you build valuable retirement income in addition to Social Security benefits and any savings you may have. Here's an overview of who's eligible for these benefits, how each option works, and how long you have to make your choice. For complete details, please see your Summary Plan Description.

### ELIGIBILITY

You are eligible for the choice of primary retirement benefits described in this guide if you:

- Are a prior active member of UCRP who was rehired on or after July 1, 2016 into an eligible faculty or staff appointment, after a qualified break in UC service (between one and two months);
- Were hired by UC before July 1, 2016 and became eligible for retirement choice benefits on or after that date; OR
- Were hired by UC on or after July 1, 2016 and are classified as a "Classic Member" under CalPERS eligible for reciprocity with UC. If so, you will need to self-identify with the UC Retirement Administration Service Center (800-888-8267) to ensure you are enrolled in the appropriate benefits.

Note: For employees eligible for retirement choice who do not meet the conditions above, the amount of compensation that counts toward retirement benefits is subject to the 2013 California Public Employees' Pension Reform Act (PEPRA) maximum on pensionable earnings. These employees should refer to the *Retirement Benefits Decision Guide for faculty and staff hired on or after July 1, 2016* ([ucal.us/decisionguide](http://ucal.us/decisionguide)) for more information about the PEPRA maximum and their primary retirement benefit options.

If you have questions about your eligibility, please contact the UC Retirement Administration Service Center at 800-888-8267.

### UNION-REPRESENTED EMPLOYEES

If you're represented by a union, your retirement benefits are governed by your union's contract with UC and may be different than the benefits outlined here. Please refer to your collective bargaining agreement (available at [ucal.us/agreements](http://ucal.us/agreements)) for details.

### ABOUT RETIREMENT EARNINGS MAXIMUMS

The maximum amount of your compensation that counts toward your retirement benefits may be affected by a number of factors, including the IRS dollar maximum and UC guidelines about eligible pay.

#### **IRS Maximum**

The IRS sets a dollar maximum for annual earnings upon which retirement benefits and contributions may be based. This maximum is reviewed and may be adjusted annually. For 2017, this maximum is \$270,000.

#### **Eligible Pay**

Retirement benefits are calculated based on "eligible pay," which does not include certain types of compensation. For a list of types of compensation that are not considered "eligible pay" when calculating retirement benefits, see *A Complete Guide to Your UC Retirement Benefits* on UCnet ([ucal.us/guidetoretirementben](http://ucal.us/guidetoretirementben)).

**HOW YOUR OPTIONS COMPARE**

**PENSION CHOICE**

**How it Works**

Pension Choice includes a pension benefit under the UC Retirement Plan (UCRP), offering a predictable level of lifetime retirement income. Your pension benefit is based on annual eligible pay<sup>1</sup> up to the IRS maximum (\$270,000 for 2017).

UC makes decisions about the investments of the UCRP and assumes the investment risk.

**Shared Contributions<sup>2</sup>**

**You contribute** 7% of your eligible pay, before taxes, up to the annual IRS pay maximum. Your 7% contribution will be automatically deducted from your paycheck.

**UC contributes** 8% of your eligible pay, up to the IRS pay maximum.

**Your Retirement Income**

You will “vest” in UCRP (become eligible to receive pension benefits, subject to plan rules) once you have earned five years of UCRP service credit. You begin to earn service credit for your time worked when you start making contributions.

When you retire, you will receive lifetime monthly retirement income based on your highest average 36 months of eligible pay (up to the IRS maximum), the amount of your service credit in UCRP, and your age at retirement.

UCRP also includes benefits for your eligible survivors, as well as disability income if you become totally and permanently disabled before retirement.

**Choice Window**

If you choose to participate in Pension Choice, it is best to enroll as soon as possible during your initial 90-day enrollment window. Employees who do not make a choice within the 90-day period will be enrolled prospectively in Pension Choice by default. The decision to participate in Pension Choice is irrevocable—you cannot change your participation to Savings Choice later.

**SAVINGS CHOICE**

**How it Works**

Savings Choice works much like a 401(k) plan. Your mandatory pretax contributions, contributions from UC (based on your eligible pay<sup>1</sup>) and any investment earnings accumulate in a tax-deferred retirement account.

You select how to invest the contributions made to your account from a menu of available funds and you assume the investment risk. UC provides tools and resources to help you understand how to plan and invest for retirement.

**Shared Contributions<sup>2</sup>**

**You contribute** 7% of your eligible pay, before taxes, up to the annual IRS pay maximum (\$270,000 for 2017). Your 7% contribution will be automatically deducted from your paycheck.

**UC contributes** 8% of your eligible pay, up to the IRS pay maximum.

**Your Retirement Income**

Your contributions to your account will vest immediately. UC’s contributions will vest after one year. The timing of distributions is governed by plan rules.

When you retire, you can draw money from your account. Your account balance will depend on the amount contributed by you and UC and the performance of your investments.

Savings Choice does not include disability or survivor benefits, but you can designate a beneficiary for your account balance. Employee-paid disability coverage and employee-paid supplemental life insurance are available.

**Choice Window**

If you choose to participate in Savings Choice, enroll as soon as possible during your initial 90-day enrollment window. UC is requesting IRS approval to offer you a one-time future opportunity to change your participation from Savings Choice to Pension Choice (see page 13).

<sup>1</sup> Some types of compensation not considered “eligible pay” when calculating retirement benefits are:

- Pay that exceeds the full-time rate or established base pay rates for regular, normal positions;
- Pay that exceeds the base salary (X+X’) under the Health Sciences Compensation Plan.
- Overtime pay (unless for compensatory time off);

For more about eligible pay, see *A Complete Guide to Your UC Retirement Benefits* on UCnet

<sup>2</sup> Employer and employee contribution rates are set periodically by the UC Regents. The total UC contribution rate to UCRP is currently 14%, which includes approximately 6% toward UC’s unfunded pension liability. Provisions of the Retirement Choice Program are subject to collective bargaining for represented employees. Please refer to the appropriate collective bargaining agreement, as benefits and other provisions may vary.



# 3.

## Pension Choice or Savings Choice: Which One is Right for You?

Deciding which option is right for you depends on a number of factors, including your age, the length of time you expect to work for UC, your personal financial situation, your investing style and risk tolerance, and how much retirement income you expect from other sources (e.g., Social Security).

### HOW YOUR OPTIONS COMPARE

#### CONSIDER PENSION CHOICE IF YOU

- Expect to work for UC for most of your career.
- Want predictable retirement income payments.

#### CONSIDER SAVINGS CHOICE IF YOU

- Want a portable retirement benefit you can roll over into an IRA or another employer's retirement plan if you leave UC.
- Are comfortable choosing and managing your retirement investments.

### RESOURCES TO HELP YOU CHOOSE

#### RETIREMENT DECISION TOOL

Use this interactive tool to compare your primary retirement benefit options and make your choice.

[myUCretirement.com/choose](https://myUCretirement.com/choose)

#### PERSONAL RETIREMENT COUNSELING

UC offers you one-on-one, personal help answering your enrollment questions or discussing your retirement benefits decisions. Talk with a Retirement Planner by phone or in person, when and where it's convenient for you. This service is available at no cost to you.

800-558-9182

[getguidance.fidelity.com/universityofcalifornia](https://getguidance.fidelity.com/universityofcalifornia)

#### CLASSES AND WEBINARS

Attend an onsite class or webinar to learn about your retirement benefit options, understand how to make your choice and get answers to your questions. A schedule of upcoming classes and webinars is available online.

[myUCretirement.com/classes](https://myUCretirement.com/classes)

### THE SOONER THE BETTER:

This is an important decision, so make sure you take advantage of UC's resources to help you make the choice that's right for you.

At the same time, it pays to enroll as soon as you've decided.

Here's why:

- If you wait 90 days to enroll or default into Pension Choice, you lose up to three months of UC contributions and service credit—delaying vesting and decreasing your benefits.
- If you wait until the deadline to enroll in Savings Choice, you lose up to three months of UC and personal pretax contributions—significantly reducing your retirement savings contributions for the year.

So make your choice and start building your retirement benefits as soon as you can.

# 4.

## Making Your Choice

Remember, the sooner you enroll in Pension Choice or Savings Choice, the sooner you start receiving UC contributions (and service credit under Pension Choice). Your enrollment window closes once you submit a choice. If you don't choose a primary retirement option, you automatically will be enrolled in Pension Choice at the end of the 90-day period.

### **READY TO MAKE YOUR SELECTION?**

1. Go to [myUCretirement.com/choose](http://myUCretirement.com/choose). You can begin the tutorial for a quick refresher on the options, and use an interactive modeler to compare how your retirement benefits may grow over time with Pension Choice or Savings Choice.
2. When you're ready to choose, you'll need to log in. If you haven't already registered, you'll be taken to the NetBenefits site to complete the registration process.
3. There are several steps before you make and confirm your choice, with the option along the way to return to the tutorial for more information. Your election is final once you click confirm choice.
4. You'll receive a confirmation statement—check to ensure it accurately records your enrollment in Pension Choice or Savings Choice.
5. Your contributions will begin to be deducted from your paycheck following your choice (usually within one to two pay periods).

### **IMPORTANT:**

UC is requesting IRS approval to offer employees who initially selected Savings Choice a one-time future opportunity to change from Savings Choice to Pension Choice prospectively. Enrollment in Pension Choice is irrevocable. If UC's request is approved, it's important to understand that, if an employee switches from Savings Choice to Pension Choice:

- The time spent in Savings Choice will count toward vesting in Pension Choice benefits. Service credit toward Pension Choice benefits will begin to accrue at the point the employee switches to Pension Choice.
- Accumulated balances in the Savings Choice account will remain in the employee's account until retirement. Distributions are governed by plan rules.
- The timing of the one-time future opportunity to switch to Pension Choice may depend on job type.

### **For rehired employees with previous UCRP service credit:**

Please note that time spent in Savings Choice will only count toward vesting in UCRP 2016 Tier benefits.

# 5.

## After You've Enrolled: Additional Opportunities to Save

Once you've enrolled in Pension Choice or Savings Choice, it's a good idea to consider whether you'll need additional savings to reach your retirement goals. UC's voluntary savings opportunities and retirement planning resources can help.

### VOLUNTARY RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLANS

#### **UC 403(b), 457(b) AND DEFINED CONTRIBUTION PLANS**

In addition to your primary retirement benefits, you may need to save additional money to prepare for retirement. UC's 403(b) and 457(b) pretax savings plans and after-tax Defined Contribution Plan help you build additional retirement savings to augment your primary UC retirement benefits, Social Security, and other non-UC retirement income.

- UC's 403(b) and 457(b) Plans let you add to your retirement savings with pretax contributions. Taxes are deferred until you withdraw the money.
- UC's Defined Contribution Plan also lets you add to your retirement savings, but with after-tax contributions. Taxes on your investment earnings are deferred until you withdraw the money.

You can enroll in these voluntary plans at any time, choosing the contribution level that works for you (within IRS limits). For more information, see the Retirement Savings Program page on UCnet ([ucal.us/ucrs](http://ucal.us/ucrs)).

### RETIREMENT EDUCATION AND COUNSELING RESOURCES

UC offers comprehensive resources to help you with all of your retirement benefits decisions.

#### **PERSONAL RETIREMENT COUNSELING**

Whether you have a quick question or would like a comprehensive consultation, Retirement Planners are available to talk with you. Talk on the phone or meet in person, at no cost to you.

800-558-9182

[getguidance.fidelity.com/universityofcalifornia](http://getguidance.fidelity.com/universityofcalifornia)

#### **RETIREMENT CLASSES AND WEBINARS**

Onsite classes or webinars offer information about all of UC's retirement plans and programs, and about creating a budget, building a portfolio and saving for your children's college expenses. A schedule of upcoming classes and webinars is available online.

[myUCretirement.com/classes](http://myUCretirement.com/classes)

#### **MYUCRETIREMENT.COM**

Explore articles and classes designed to help you make informed financial decisions.

[myUCretirement.com](http://myUCretirement.com)

#### **UCNET**

UCnet is your source for information about UC benefits. You'll find videos, fact sheets and FAQs about your retirement plan options here, as well as tools and resources, information about the university, and more.

[ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu](http://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu)



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