

## Employee-Initiated Reduction In Time (ERIT) Program Frequently Asked Questions

Effective: July 1, 2017 ~~through June 30, 2020~~

### **FORMAL REVIEW/EMPLOYEE COMMENT DRAFT – MASTER REDLINE**

#### **Basic Information about Participating in ERIT**

**1. What is ERIT?**

-The ERIT program allows eligible employees to voluntarily reduce their appointment percentage and corresponding pay for a specified period of time.

**2. Why is ERIT being offered?**

ERIT is being offered as an optional tool the University can be used as a temporary cost savings resource. Check with your Human Resources Office and department head to find out if your location and department are offering ERIT.

**3. Where will the savings from ERIT be allocated?**

The cost savings will be retained by the departments of the employees who participate in ERIT.

**4. Are exclusively represented employees eligible to participate in ERIT?**

Participation in ERIT by exclusively represented employees is subject to agreement by the applicable union. Check with your local Human Resources Office regarding your eligibility to participate.

**5. Does the reduced percentage of time need to be the same during each month of my ERIT contract or can it vary as long as the average percentage reduction over the entire period of my participation in ERIT is the same as the percentage reduction reflected on my ERIT contract?**

You should have the same reduction in time and pay in each pay period of your ERIT contract. However, with your department head's approval, your work schedule within a pay period may be flexible from week to week as long as the total time reduced during the pay period is the same as the percentage time reflected in your ERIT contract.

**6. Is the minimum reduction of 5% of full-time equivalent to a specified amount of time?**

Yes, based on a 40-hour week, 5% of full-time would be 2 hours per week, regardless of whether your previous appointment was 100% or some other percentage.

**7. If I am already on a temporary reduction in time (voluntary or involuntary) before I have the chance to sign up for ERIT, can I still participate in the program?**

Yes, if you have a temporary voluntary or involuntary reduction in time prior to the starting date of ERIT, you may request to participate in ERIT prospectively. If your request is granted, you

may enter into an ERIT contract and you need not increase to your regular appointment prior to ERIT in order to reduce your time under ERIT. However, your appointment percentage under ERIT may not be less than 50%.

**8. If I have a part-time appointment, can I participate in ERIT?**

Yes, you may participate in ERIT by reducing your time at least 5% of full-time (2 hours per week). -However, your appointment percentage under ERIT may not be less than 50%.

**9. ~~How long may I participate in ERIT? I would like to enroll in a class next September. Can I sign up for ERIT beginning in September or must my ERIT contract begin on July 1, 2017?~~**

~~Department heads may offer ERIT any time beginning between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2020. Some departments may elect to offer the program for the entire period; others may elect to offer the program only during certain months (such as the summer months); while some may elect to not offer ERIT at all. Check with your department head regarding the availability of the program in your department during the period of time you are interested in reducing your time. The minimum length of participation is one month (or one quadriweekly cycle); the maximum length of participation is 36 months.~~

**10. Must an ERIT contract begin only on the first day of a month and end only on the last day of the month?**

For employees who are paid monthly, an ERIT contract must begin on the first day of a month and end on the last day of a month. For employees who are paid bi-weekly, time reductions are to be made in two bi-weekly increments, so an ERIT contract would begin on the first day of the bi-weekly pay period and end on the last day of the second bi-weekly pay period.

**11. Can I continue my participation in ERIT if I transfer or if I am promoted to another position in the same or different department?**

If the relevant department head approves, you may continue your participation in ERIT for the term of your ERIT contract when you accept another position in the same or a different department.

**12. If I sign up for ERIT, will my workload be adjusted to reflect my reduction in time?**

ERIT participants should review their assigned workloads with their supervisors to work out a corresponding reduction in workload or assignments.

**13. Can an employee who has a variable appointment participate in ERIT?**

Employees with variable appointments are not specifically excluded from participating in ERIT; however, because of the fluctuating nature of variable appointments, it would be difficult to determine the pre-ERIT appointment percentage on which time reductions and benefits under the program would be based.

**14. Can an employee who works a 4/10 or 9/80 schedule participate in ERIT?**

Yes, employees who work these alternative schedules can participate in ERIT. For example, an employee on a 4/10 schedule who wants to reduce to 90 percent time could work a 4/9 schedule by reducing each work day by 10% (an hour each day); while an employee on a 9/80 schedule can work a 9/72 schedule by working 8 hours per day (a 10% reduction).

**15. How can an exempt (salaried) employee participate in ERIT, since the employee works whatever time it takes to get the job done?**

An exempt employee may reduce his or her time and corresponding pay from 5% to 50% of full-time under ERIT. An appropriate workload reduction and a focus on working to meet job responsibilities rather than working a specified period of time are the intended approaches to ERIT for exempt employees. Because time records for purposes of pay cannot be kept for exempt employees who receive the same salary each pay period regardless of hours worked, exempt employees who participate in ERIT may find a schedule involving full days off useful. However, this would not preclude occasionally working some time on those days if necessary to meet a deadline.

**Changes in My Benefits Once I Am Participating**

**16. Does ~~my ERIT reduction in time~~ affect the amount of vacation and sick leave that I earn?**

No, you will continue to accrue vacation and sick leave at your pre-ERIT appointment percentage.

**17. How does my participation in ERIT affect my holiday pay?**

Under ERIT, you will receive holiday pay in proportion to your reduced time, in accordance with the applicable personnel policy or collective bargaining agreement.

**18. How does ERIT affect my retirement service credit and retirement contributions?**

Under ERIT, UCRP service credit will accrue in accordance with your ERIT appointment percentage, so if you reduce your appointment from 100% to 75%, you will accrue 75% service credit. Your retirement contributions under ERIT, they will be 75% of the prior 100% contribution.

**19. Can I buy back the additional UCRP service credit that I would have accrued if I didn't participate in ERIT?**

No. Buyback of UCRP service credit applies to leaves of absence. There is no provision in UCRP for buying back service credit for reductions in time.

**20. Does ERIT affect my eligibility for health and welfare (medical, dental, vision) benefits?**

No, your eligibility for health and welfare benefits will not be affected by ERIT because your percentage of time on pay status under ERIT cannot be reduced below 50% time.

**21. What effect will a lower salary under ERIT have on my current pre-tax contributions to the Defined Contribution Plan (DCP)?**

The DCP requires contributions as a specific percentage of eligible salary; therefore, contributions will be lower.

**22. Will ~~my ERIT reduction in time~~ affect my Highest Average Plan Compensation (HAPC) used for calculating my retirement benefit or my Final Salary used for calculating Preretirement Survivor Income or Disability Income benefits?**

Highest Average Plan Compensation (HAPC), which is used to calculate UCRP Monthly Retirement Income or Lump Sum Cashout, is based on monthly Full-Time Equivalent Compensation and does not change as a result of participation in the ERIT Program.

Final Salary, which is used to calculate Preretirement Survivor Income, Death Benefits for Members who became active before October 1, 1990, and Disability Income, will be adjusted to reflect the average percent of time on pay status during the preceding 36 months if an employee dies or becomes disabled while participating in the ERIT program.

**23. Will ERIT affect my exempt status?**

Exempt employees participating in ERIT may become non-exempt if their resulting salary falls below the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) salary threshold. Both the manager and employee should consider the impact of becoming non-exempt on the employee's overtime eligibility, time reporting and pay dates.

**23-24. Does my lower salary under ERIT have any effect on my disability and life insurance benefits?**

Disability benefit payments ~~for both the Short-term Disability Plan and the Supplemental Disability Plan~~ will be based on your pre-ERIT salary and your premiums will continue to be based on your pre-ERIT salary.

Supplemental and Dependent Life Insurance will not be impacted by participation in ERIT—premiums and coverage will continue to be based on your full-time salary rate. Basic Life Insurance will be calculated using your full-time salary rate and your pre-ERIT appointment percentage.

**24-25. What is the impact of ERIT on my 403(b) Plan or 457(b) Plan contributions?**

If your Tax-Deferred 403(b) Plan or 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan contributions are deducted as a percentage of your compensation, your contributions will be reduced if you participate in ERIT.

In addition, your maximum annual contribution to the Tax-Deferred 403(b) Plan or 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan may be affected by your participation in ERIT because it is based on the lesser of your adjusted gross salary or a fixed amount based on age.

**25-26. Are there other effects of ERIT that I should know about?**

Refer to the list of “Important Considerations” in the [ERIT contract \(U280\)](#).

**Changes in My Contract Once I Am Participating****26-27. What if I change my mind about reducing my time after ERIT begins?**

Deciding to participate in ERIT represents a commitment. However, an unforeseen change of circumstances during your participation may occur that requires you to end your contract. If you wish to return to your pre-ERIT percentage of time, you may do so provided that you give your supervisor at least 30 days advance notice. Advance notice of termination will be waived if your request to terminate your contract is due to an emergency situation. You must complete the [ERIT Contract Amendment \(page 2\)](#) and return it in accordance with local ERIT procedures.

**27-28. Can a department “call back” an employee to his or her original percentage of time?**

ERIT is intended to be two-way commitment between the employee and his or her department for the benefit of both. However, when there is a business need, a department head may end an ERIT contract with 30 days advance notice.

**28-29. Can I adjust my ERIT percentage of time after initial approval?**

Since ERIT commitments will be used to project departmental savings and for planning purposes during the fiscal year, percentages of time should not be changed. However, circumstances beyond your control may warrant an increase or decrease in the percentage reduction. ERIT participants may change their percentage reduction once during the ERIT contract with 30 days advance notice. You must complete the ERIT contract amendment and return it in accordance with local ERIT procedures.

**Relationship Between ERIT and Other Budget-Related Actions****29-30. Can I be laid off while on ERIT?**

~~Yes, ERIT does not protect employees from being laid off.~~ With programs like ERIT, the University hopes to minimize layoffs. ~~However, the current budget uncertainties make it impossible to guarantee protection from a permanent or temporary layoff for employees who volunteer for ERIT.~~

**30-31. If I am laid off while on ERIT, are my recall and preferential rehire rights limited to positions at the same or lesser percentage of time as the ERIT position?**

No, you will retain recall and preferential rehire rights to positions at the same or lesser percentage of time as your position prior to ~~the ERIT reduction in time~~, in accordance with applicable personnel policies or collective bargaining agreements.

**31-32. What happens to my seniority for purposes of determining the order of indefinite layoff while I am on ERIT?**

Your seniority for the purpose of indefinite layoff will be treated the same as if you had not volunteered for ERIT. When calculating seniority for the purpose of layoff, departments will need to be sure ERIT participants are credited appropriately.

### **How to Sign Up**

#### **32-33. How do I sign up for ERIT?**

After you have worked out an appropriate work schedule which has been approved by your department head, you and your department head must sign the [ERIT Contract \(U280\)](#) and return it, keeping a copy for yourself, in accordance with local ERIT procedures.

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