



# TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER EL PASO

## Operating Policy and Procedure

**HSCEP OP:** 70.02, **Retirement**

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Health Sciences Center El Paso Operating Policy/Procedure (HSCEP OP) is to establish procedures for retirement of employees.

**REVIEW:** This HSCEP OP will be reviewed in September of each even-numbered year (ENY) by the vice president for Human Resources and the Director of Benefits with recommendations for substantial change submitted to the President.

### **POLICY/PROCEDURE:**

#### **1. Voluntary Retirement.**

##### **a. Policy.**

- (1) Voluntary retirement of an employee will occur when the employee voluntarily ceases employment and elects to retire and receive or is eligible to receive benefits under a retirement provision under the jurisdiction of the Teacher Retirement System (TRS), the Optional Retirement Program (ORP), the Employees Retirement System (ERS), or any other federal or state statutory retirement program to which the University has made employer contributions. Refer to the following for additional information on retirement eligibility:
  - TRS Benefits Handbook <http://www.trs.state.tx.us>
  - Overview of TRS and ORP [http://www.ttuhscc.edu/hr/Benefits/documents/Overview TRS ORP 2011.pdf](http://www.ttuhscc.edu/hr/Benefits/documents/Overview_TRS_ORP_2011.pdf)
  - Employees Retirement System <http://www.ers.state.tx.us/>
- (2) Effective September 1, 2001, a member of the Teacher Retirement System may, upon retirement, purchase one year of membership service credit for 50 days or 400 hours of accumulated state sick leave that is unused as of the last day of employment before retirement. Only five days per year of unused sick leave may be accumulated toward the 50 days or 400 hours. To estimate cost, use the calculator on the TRS website.
- (3) Employees may transfer retirement service credit between TRS and ERS. The member must have at least three years of service credit in the present system to transfer credit from the previous system and retire under the rules of the system to which credit was transferred. The transfer may also apply to payment of in- service death benefits.
- (4) Persons who have rendered the appropriate amount of state service, but who are not eligible for a retirement benefit without establishing credit for all previous unreported eligible services under TRS, may be considered retired employees of Texas Tech; however, they are not eligible for retiree insurance.
- (5) An employee who is not receiving a retirement annuity from one of Texas Tech's retirement programs and continues employment that accrues creditable service under such retirement plan is not considered a retiree. Special conditions exist with regard to participation in the Group Benefits Program (see HSCEP OP

70.05).

2. **Disability Retirement.**

a. **Policy.**

Employees who are not eligible for full regular retirement benefits but who become permanently and totally disabled as defined by Teacher Retirement System rules may be granted disability retirement benefits. Employees are eligible to enroll in the State's insurance program if they are certified as TRS or ORP disabled retiree and have at least 10 years of service credit in ERS, TRS, ORP, or any entity that participates in the state retirement program; of that service, employees hired after 8/31/01 must have 10 years of actual service in a Group Benefits Program (GBP) participating agency, employees hired prior to 8/31/01 must have only three years of actual GBP participating service; and your last Texas public employment prior to retirement was with an agency that participates in the GBP. A disability retiree with at least 10 years of service may continue state insurance participation as long as they continue to be certified as disabled.

b. **Procedure.**

(1) A regular employee who becomes physically disabled may be eligible, after exhausting all paid leave entitlements, for disability leave without pay for up to 12 months as a waiting period to qualify for a disability benefit from one or more of Texas Tech's disability or retirement programs. (See Leave Without Pay, found in HSCEP OP 70.01).

(2) The Human Resources Office will assist employees in making application for disability retirement benefits.

3. **Delayed Retirement.**

A former employee who meets the retirement eligibility criteria under the Optional Retirement Program, the Teacher Retirement System, or the Employees Retirement System is eligible to retire from Texas Tech upon electing to receive a retirement annuity from the Teacher Retirement System or the Employees Retirement System or by enrolling in the group insurance program as an ORP retiree provided:

a. The employee has not obtained other state employment within the State of Texas which earned additional retirement credits under one of Texas Tech's retirement programs, and

b. The employee has not forfeited eligibility to retirement benefits by withdrawing contributions before being eligible to receive a retirement annuity.

4. **Insurance Programs for Retirees.**

Refer to HSCEP OP 70.05, Insurance and Other Benefits, for information on insurance programs for retirees.

5. **Right to Change Policy.**

TTUHSCEP reserves the right to interpret, change, modify, amend, or rescind this policy in whole or in part at any time without the consent of employees.