URI 2027 Voluntary Retirement Program FAQs, Faculty

Updated Question 14 on 11/19/2026

These FAQs describe the basic terms and conditions associated with the University of Rhode Island's 2027 Voluntary Retirement Program ("VRP"). This FAQ document does not cover all elements of the VRP and does not represent a contract or other legal document.

Eligibility & Timeline

1. **Who is eligible for the Voluntary Retirement Program (VRP)?**
   The VRP will be available to all faculty, non-classified staff, and interim executives who meet all of the following criteria:
   - Regular, benefits eligible faculty and non-classified staff who are regularly scheduled to work a minimum of 20 hours per week;
   - Age 62 or greater as of the date of retirement;
   - Employed by the State of Rhode Island, according to base entry date, for at least 10 years as of the date of retirement.

   The University reserves the discretion to approve or deny the participation of any eligible employee who elects to participate in the Program. The University may also require delayed retirement dates on a case-by-case basis if necessary to meet operational or legal needs.

2. **Who is not eligible for the Voluntary Retirement Program?**
   Classified staff; any temporary employee in a non-benefits-eligible role; individuals whose positions are supported by sponsored funds at 100%; athletics coaches with employment contracts; and executives (president, provost, dean, senior vice president, or vice president) are not eligible to participate.

3. **Am I eligible if I already have declared retirement or I am currently on phased retirement?**
   Yes, you are eligible to participate in the VRP, provided you meet all other eligibility criteria. However, your timeline and process will be slightly different and your retirement date may need to be modified with HR approval. If you are interested in benefitting from this program, please submit your Election Form and your previously submitted formal notice of retirement **as soon as possible - and by Monday, November 30, 2026 at 2:00pm at the latest -** to

HRSharedServices-group@uri.edu and let your manager know. HR will contact you to review the details of your participation in the program.

You will be notified of whether you are accepted into the program no later than **December 9, 2026**, and you will receive a separation agreement that will need to be signed and returned to HR no sooner than the last day of employment.

4. **I am on a leave of absence. Do I need to return from my leave of absence to participate in VRP?**
   No, an approved leave of absence does not automatically disqualify an employee from VRP participation. Accordingly, employees on approved leave will be treated like any other employee and evaluated under the same VRP eligibility criteria.

5. **How do I participate in the program?**
   To volunteer for participation in the program, you must meet all the eligibility criteria outlined above. You must sign and submit a completed Election Form to the University by January 8, 2027 at 2:00 PM.

   Election Forms can be completed and signed via AdobeSign or you can scan and return a completed, signed form via email to HRSharedServices-group@uri.edu. A hard copy may also be mailed to University of Rhode Island, Office of Human Resources, 80 Lower College Road (Room 10), Kingston, R.I. 02881 or dropped off at the Shared Service Center located at the same address in Room 10. You will receive confirmation electronically of receipt of your completed and signed Election Form. We encourage you to use the AdobeSign process to sign the form whenever possible and will provide support if needed via request to HRSharedServices-group@uri.edu. AdobeSign ensures a faster, safer and completely accurate process with the ability to review, sign, and download a copy without needing a printer.

6. **When is the deadline to submit my Election Form to participate?**
   All completed and signed Election Forms must be received by 2:00 PM on January 8, 2027 in order to elect participation in this program. Forms will not be accepted after this time and date.

7. **Can I change my mind after I submit my Election Form?**
   Yes. Employees electing to participate may rescind their intent to participate by providing written notice via email by January 18, 2027 at 2:00 PM to HRSharedServices-group@uri.edu.

8. **When and how will I be notified that my intent to participate in the program has been accepted?**
   We will notify all employees accepted into the program no later than January 29, 2027 via email. The review process is to confirm eligibility for the program and to review department staffing needs.

9. **Once accepted to participate in the program, is there other documentation I must complete and sign in order to participate?**
   If accepted to participate, the University will send you a written notice of selection along with a standard separation agreement and release. You will then have 45 days to review, sign, and return the separation agreement and release. Your separation agreement and release can be scanned and returned via email to HRSharedServices-group@uri.edu. A hard copy may also be mailed to University of Rhode Island, Office of Human Resources, 80 Lower College Road, Kingston, R.I. 02881 or dropped off at the Shared Service Center located at the same address. If you do not timely submit a signed separation agreement and release, you will be removed from participation in the program.

   In addition, you must sign a secondary release on your last day of employment. An eligible employee's failure to sign and return either the separation agreement and release or the secondary release will disqualify the employee from receiving the VRP payout. Please note that both separation agreements must be notarized to be accepted. HR has many notaries available to you on staff; the HR Shared Services team will be happy to assist with ensuring your documents are notarized.

10. **I am eligible for the VRP, but do not wish to participate. Do I need to submit something that says I am not participating?**
    No, only employees who want to participate should submit the Election Form. If you do not submit an Election Form , you will not be included in the voluntary retirement program.

11. **When is the final day of employment for those selected to participate in the VRP?**
    The last day of employment is June 26, 2027 for faculty. Please be advised, however, that the University may need to extend a participating faculty member's separation date to meet operational needs. In the event of such an extension, the University will notify you upon your selection to participate in the Program.

12. **What is the official retirement date for those selected to participate in the VRP?**
    The first day you are officially retired is June 27, 2027 for faculty. These dates may be extended to meet operational needs, as discussed above.

Voluntary Retirement Program Details

13. **How will I receive my VRP payout?**

    You will receive the VRP payout as a lump sum payment in an amount equal to 50% of your base salary without benefit continuation. For faculty who are currently on phased retirement the VRP lump sum payout will be equal to 50% of the phased retirement salary. As a condition of receiving the VRP payout, you must sign and return the separation agreement and release within 45 days of receipt (while you are still employed), then you must sign and submit a secondary release by May 21, 2027. An eligible employee's failure to sign and return either the separation agreement and release or the secondary release will disqualify the employee from receiving the VRP payout.

14. **How will the VRP lump sum payments be calculated for employees who participate in the program?**

    The total VRP lump sum payment will be equal to 50% of your base salary as of the effective date of your retirement. The payment will be net of any deductions and withholdings required by law or authorized by you. Base salary does not include any allowance plans, pay supplements, or overtime payments.
    Contact HR at HRSharedServices-group@uri.edu or 401-874-2416 to confirm your base salary or with questions.

15. **When will I receive the VRP lump sum payment?**

    Your VRP lump sum payment will be paid via direct deposit within 45 days of your retirement date respectively for staff and faculty.

16. **Are the VRP payments treated as wages that are subject to income tax withholding, Social Security tax withholding, and W-2 reporting?**

    Yes, the VRP payments are taxable wages and will have all required taxes withheld in accordance with federal and state tax laws and your withholding elections. Please note that the VRP payments will not include retirement contributions from either URI or the employee, and they will not include medical plan coshare deductions.

17. **Can I defer the VRP payment?**

    No, the VRP payment is not deferrable.

Benefits

18. **Will vacation and sick time accrual continue through my last day of employment?**

Yes, all accruals will continue until your last day of employment. Vacation and sick time will not accrue past your last day of employment.

19. When will I receive my vacation accruals?

Your vacation accruals will be paid out in alignment with State payroll processing upon termination of employment.

20. When does my health and dental insurance end?

Your health, dental and vision insurance ends the last day of the pay period during which you are actively employed. The retirement dates identified for faculty and staff are the final day of the pay period, so your insurance will end on your retirement date.

21. How do I apply for Medicare?

If you are eligible for Medicare, you must submit a Medicare application before coverage begins—it does not happen automatically. You can apply for Medicare at www.medicare.gov. If you or your spouse are age 65 when you retire you will need a Request for Employment Information form from Benefits. This form will ensure that you are not charged a penalty for signing up for Medicare beyond age 65. The HR Shared Services Team will fill this out when they have been notified of your retirement.

22. I am not 65; can I elect COBRA for dependents and myself for health insurance after my retirement? Are there additional resources to help identify health care providers until I am age 65?

If you are under age 65 you may elect to continue your health and dental insurance under COBRA for you and any dependents active on your plans under age 65 for a period of up to 18 months. You may also look for other health insurance options at the health exchange in the state that you live in. For RI residents, visit HealthSource RI or call 1-855-840-4774.

23. How do I obtain an estimate of my Social Security retirement benefit?

You can calculate your Social Security benefits online at www.ssa.gov. You can also estimate life expectancy, access your Social Security statement, and take advantage of additional planning tools on the website. Log in to view your most recent statement at https://secure.ssa.gov/RIL/SiView.do.

24. When should I apply for Social Security?

Provided you meet the eligibility criteria for Social Security at the time of retirement, you should allow at least three months from the time you submit your application to the time you would like to receive your first Social Security payment.

25. What happens with my Flexible Spending Account?

Your active FSA coverage ends on your official retirement date. You may only claim expenses incurred on or before your last day of employment. You have until March 2028 to submit receipts for services received in 2027 prior to your last day of employment. Log in to asiflex to access your account balance.

26. What happens with my Health Savings Account (HSA)?

The money in your HSA is yours to keep. To access your current HSA balance please log onto BlueCareConnect or call the State of Rhode Island Employee CARE Center at 1-866-987-3705. When you retire and enroll in Medicare, you may no longer contribute to your HSA. However, you may withdraw money from your HSA for medical and non-medical purposes without penalty. When your Medicare coverage starts, you can use your HSA to pay your Medicare premiums, deductibles, and copayments. You will need to stop contributing to your HSA six months before you apply for Social Security retirement benefits to avoid tax penalties.

27. What happens to my eligibility for the Tuition Waiver?

You and/or your dependent will be covered to complete the current semester during which your employment ends, as long as the waiver has been requested and approved prior to your retirement date. After your retirement date, you will no longer be eligible.

28. Can I continue with Group Life Insurance coverage?

Yes, you will have the option to continue basic coverage only upon retirement; the benefit cannot be reenrolled once discontinued. The frozen valuation is salary at the age of retirement or the age of 65 with value reduction depending on age.

29. Can I continue to contribute to my 403b plan with my ongoing payment after retirement as a payroll deduction?

No, since you are no longer an active employee.

30. How do I get access to my retirement savings?

You will need to contact TIAA directly to initiate this process and work with an advisor.
Call the Counseling Center at 800-842-2776 or to schedule an appointment call 800-732-8353 or visit www.tiaa.org/schedulenow.

31. Are there other resources available to assist in my decision to participate?

Additional information and resources to assist you on planning your retirement can be found on the Human Resources website and the Voluntary Retirement Program: Resources document.

We encourage you to sign up for a group information session and reach out to Benefits via benefits@etal.uri.edu.

General

32. Can I return to work at URI as a regular employee after taking the VRP?

Some faculty retirees may have the opportunity for post-retirement employment as a Part Time Faculty on a part-time basis in a non-benefits-eligible capacity to teach up to a maximum of two courses per semester, subject to the needs of each individual college and applicable laws, regulations, collective bargaining agreements, university policies and procedures.

33. Will I be able to file for unemployment if I participate in the VRP?

Although participants can always apply for unemployment insurance benefits, their eligibility to receive unemployment benefits will depend upon state law. Typically, voluntary retirements – such as those governed by VRP – make employees ineligible for unemployment benefits.

34. Does my manager know I am eligible and that I may be electing to retire?

Human Resources has not informed your manager of your eligibility.

35. Do I need to inform my manager that I have elected the VRP?

As with any separation of employment, employees must share their decision to leave the university with their manager. You must inform your manager if you choose to participate in this program and inform them of your pending retirement date in order to begin planning the successful transition of your current job responsibilities accordingly.