**ENROLMENT INTO UNIVERSITY PENSION SCHEME**

As an academic or academic-related employee of the University, you are automatically deemed to be a member of the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) from the day you join the University. The only exception is if you are entitled to continue membership of another pension schemes recognised by the University[[1]](#footnote-1). USS is a national scheme for academic and academic-related staff.

The University is, therefore, enrolling you into USS, with effect from the date you start your employment. You can choose to opt out if you wish (see below).

**If you want to stay in the pension scheme**

You do not need to do anything. You have a decision to make about salary sacrifice.

*Contributions*

All employees who join USS pay personal contributions to the scheme in accordance with the rules, as amended from time to time, of the pension scheme. From 1 April 2019 your monthly contribution will be 8.8% of your pensionable pay and the University’s monthly contribution will be the equivalent of 19.5% of your pensionable pay, with further increases expected in October 2019. The current employee and employer contribution rates can be found on the USS website at <https://www.uss.co.uk/members/members-home/the-uss-scheme>. Your personal contributions will usually be collected by the University by way of deductions from your salary and paid over to USS, together with the University’s contribution. You will get tax relief on your contributions.

*Salary sacrifice*

All employees who join USS, save for those who are earning close to the National Insurance contributions lower earnings limit, are automatically enrolled into Salary Exchange from three months after the date of joining the pension scheme, unless they give notice in writing to the Payroll Manager that they do not wish to be enrolled. In this case, the appropriate opt-out form should be completed and returned to the Payroll Manager at least one month before automatic enrolment. The opt-out form can be obtained from departmental administrators, or is available to download from the Salary Exchange website (see below). Eligible employees may change their decision annually on 1 April or if they experience a ‘life change’ event.

Under Salary Exchange, the deduction for an employee’s personal pension contributions is reduced to nil. At the same time the employee’s pensionable salary is reduced by an amount equal to the employee’s pension contributions and the University increases its contributions to the pension scheme by an equivalent amount. Pensionable salary and pension scheme benefits for the employee are not reduced. Salary Exchange enables participating employees to achieve a reduction in their National Insurance contributions. Salary Exchange may not be of benefit to employees whose initial contract is for less than two years and who are expecting a refund of pension contributions at the end of the contract.

Employees who do not participate in Salary Exchange will continue to pay to USS the personal contributions as described above.

If you are under 75, work or usually work in the UK, and earn over the National Insurance Lower Earnings Limit[[2]](#footnote-2), we must by law continue to maintain your membership of a scheme that meets certain government standards and, if your membership of such a scheme ends (and it is not because of something you do or fail to do), we must by law put you into another scheme that meets government standards straightaway.

**If you want to leave the scheme**

You need to take action.

*Leaving USS*

If you leave USS within three months from the date of joining the University you will receive a refund of any contributions and will be considered not to have been an active member of the scheme. You may do this by completing and returning the form which is available from [www.uss.co.uk](http://www.uss.co.uk).

If you want to cease active membership of USS after the end of this three month period, you can do so in accordance with the rules of USS. Any refund of payments will be determined by those rules.

*Re-joining*

You can opt in to or re-join USS at a later date. To do so, contact uss@admin.ox.ac.uk. You may only re-join once in any 12 month period. Any written notice from you must either be signed by you or, if you send it by email, it must include the phrase

“I confirm I personally submitted this notice to join a workplace pension scheme”.

**The University’s automatic enrolment duties**

The law now requires the University to assess its workers and automatically enrol those who are eligible into a workplace pension scheme. This applies to employees and other workers who are not already in a qualifying pension scheme and who

* earn more than £10,000 a year
* are aged between 22 and the State Pension Age
* work in the UK

This requirement does not affect you because, on your automatic enrolment date (your first day at the University) you were enrolled in one of the University’s pension schemes, which have been confirmed as qualifying pension schemes, in that they meet or exceed the government’s new standards.

You should be aware, however, that the University has continuing duties that might affect you if you cease membership of USS or another University pension scheme. In particular, any eligible employee who has ceased active membership of USS will be automatically re-enrolled into USS, or another appropriate scheme, at a later date (usually every three years). We will write to you with further information if that happens.

**Further information**

USS may be contacted at:

Universities Superannuation Scheme Limited
2nd Floor, Royal Liver Building
Liverpool
L3 1PY

Tel: (0151) 227 4711
Local rate number: 0845 068 1110 (local rate call charge number)
Fax: (0151) 236 3173

Website: [www.uss.co.uk](http://www.uss.co.uk)

Further information on USS may be obtained from:

* University Pensions Office: tel. Oxford 616067, email uss@admin.ox.ac.uk

More general information on pensions and saving for later life is available through:

* Government pensions website: [www.gov.uk/workplacepensions](http://www.gov.uk/workplacepensions)
* University pensions website: [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/finance/epp/pensions/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/finance/epp/pensions/)

Further information on Salary Exchange is available from:

* University Payroll Team, tel. Oxford 616301, email payroll@admin.ox.ac.uk
* [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/finance/epp/payroll/salaryexchange/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/finance/epp/payroll/salaryexchange/)

Financial advice on pensions and other matters must be obtained from an Independent Financial Adviser.

1. In certain circumstances new employees may continue membership of other schemes including the National Health Service Pension Scheme (NHSPS). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For the current year’s thresholds see: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/rates-and-allowances-national-insurance-contributions/rates-and-allowances-national-insurance-contributions](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rates-and-allowances-national-insurance-contributions/rates-and-allowances-national-insurance-contributions) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)