



## Staff Phased Retirement FAQ

Updated July 2016. Inception, March 2009

Staff Phased Retirement Program Features	Definitions
Must be eligible to retire	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Age 55</li> <li>2. Ten years of service</li> </ol>
Supervisory Approval Required	This is not a voluntary, employee election. Supervisor must approve the arrangement based on the business rationale of the change.
<p>ENDOWED Steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Surrender full time position</li> <li>2. Sign agreement for limited term appointment from 6 months to 3 years</li> <li>3. Agreement also sets irrevocable retirement date.</li> <li>4. New term is for 20 hours per week or exempt equivalent</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Full time: 30 hours per week or more</li> <li>2. New part-time appointment for a limited term set by the supervisor.</li> <li>3. Retirement date is at end of new term appointment</li> <li>4. 20 hours/week or exempt equivalent retains benefits eligibility</li> </ol>
<p>CONTRACT COLLEGE Steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Surrender full time position</li> <li>2. Sign agreement for limited term appointment from 6 months to 3 three years</li> <li>3. Agreement also sets irrevocable retirement date.</li> <li>4. New term is for 20 hours per week or exempt equivalent</li> <li>5. NYSERS &amp; SUNY-ORP participants</li> </ol> <p>have special considerations.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Full time: 30 hours per week or more</li> <li>2. New part-time appointment for a limited term from 6 months to 3 years as set by supervisor.</li> <li>3. Retirement date is at end of new term appointment</li> <li>4. 20 hours/week or exempt equivalent retains benefits eligibility</li> <li>5. Contract college supervisors and staff should consult with Benefit Services before signing agreement to optimize benefit choices.</li> </ol>
Wages & Salaries: fixed to actual effort	Pay matches new part time term appointment.
<p>Benefit Enhancements</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CURP contributions *</li> <li>2. CURP accumulations *</li> <li>3. Life Insurance</li> <li>4. Educational Programs</li> <li>5. CCTS</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. See note below *</li> <li>2. See note below *</li> <li>3. Maintain pre-phased benefit levels</li> <li>4. Continued access as for full time.</li> <li>5. Continued access as for full time.</li> </ol>

<p>Standard Benefits</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Health/Dental/Vision Insurance</li> <li>2. Short/Long Term Disability</li> <li>3. Workers' Comp</li> <li>4. Select Benefits, Long Term Care, Home &amp;Auto, Pet Insurances</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain current health plans</li> <li>2. Benefit keyed to phased earnings levels</li> <li>3. Benefit keyed to phased earnings levels</li> <li>4. Maintain current involvement, or add, delete or change participation as needed.</li> </ol>
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\*Note: CURP contributions during phased appointment will be 10 percent of earnings during the phased period in addition to the basic retirement plan coverage. CURP accumulations will be available for taxable withdrawal.

## Retirement Plan Investment Vendors

Recent changes in federal regulations have set very high standards for providing investment advice and retirement counseling. The retirement plan companies listed below require extensive training of their representatives and stand behind the materials and advice these representatives give to you, the investor.

Benefit Services strongly recommends that you contact one or more of the investment companies below when you seek advice about the allocations of your retirement accounts and how best to use your accumulations to meet your income needs.

Vendor	To Arrange a Personal Appointment	To Get General Information	Visit Their Website
TIAA	800-732-8353	800-842-2776	<a href="http://www.tiaa.org">www.tiaa.org</a>
Fidelity Investments	800-642-7131	800-343-0860	<a href="http://www.fidelity.com">www.fidelity.com</a>
MetLife	888-883-6380	800-560-5001	<a href="http://www.metlife.com/suny">www.metlife.com/suny</a>
VALIC	315-530-7458	800-448-2542	<a href="http://www.valic.com/suny">www.valic.com/suny</a>

## STAFF PHASED RETIREMENT PROGRAM QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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### Explain the CURP contributions I will receive.

Endowed staff members: If you are an endowed employee currently receiving a CURP contribution, you will get 10 percent of your actual earnings in the Phased program as a basic retirement plan benefit, plus an additional 10 percent of your earnings in the Phased program.

Contract College staff members participating in SUNY-ORP: You will receive your basic SUNY- ORP contribution from your Phased earnings, plus an additional 10 percent of your earnings in the Phased program from CURP.

Contract College staff members participating in the NYSERS plan: You will receive your basic NYSERS credit based on your Phased earnings, plus an additional 10 percent of your earnings in the Phased program from CURP.

### I don't have a CURP account. I work in a contract college job. How does CURP work?

Contract college staff members who participate in a Staff Phased Retirement program do get a CURP contribution that

equals 10 percent of their earnings in the phased program. These contributions will be tax deferred and invested in accounts in your name with TIAA and/or Fidelity. You do not have to make a contribution from your pay to get the CURP contribution. You pick the funds in which you want the money to be invested. At any time during your Staff Phased Retirement term, you may withdraw the money in your CURP account and it becomes taxable upon withdrawal. You should contact Benefit Services to learn more, and to set up your CURP contributions in Workday with TIAA and/or Fidelity.

## **Why is Cornell offering a Staff Phased Retirement program?**

The Staff Phased Retirement Program (Phased) is being offered to provide an alternative to full, immediate retirement, if the department has needs that will fit the model.

## **Who should I talk to about considering a Phased program for me?**

You should talk to your supervisor about the potential in your department or unit for such a model. Phased will not work in every situation. Your supervisor must create the business plan and seek approval for any Phased program before it becomes a formal offer for you to sign.

## **What if I have a good plan, but my supervisor or department won't approve it?**

This is not a voluntary program that you can choose to create for yourself. The first steps are to collaborate with your supervisor to create a plan that has a good chance for success for you and for your department. It must make good business sense to be approved.

## **What do you mean by a need to sign an agreement?**

Cornell's legal counsel has drawn up a model agreement for departments to use. If you enter a Phased agreement, you will have surrendered your current, regular position and will start a new, term appointment under certain conditions outlined in the agreement.

## **How long can the Phased program last for me? Does it have to be for three years?**

Your supervisor will include in the business plan an estimate of the length of time that will be appropriate for your Phased program. Durations can run from six (6) months up to but not exceeding three (3) years.

## **Do you have to be age 55 or older and with 10 years of service or more before entering the Phased program? Or, can I meet those requirements by the end of the Phased period?**

You must be eligible to retire before signing the Phased agreement, so you must meet the eligibility requirements beforehand.

## **Will my pay be the same as I receive now but reduced to 20 hours per week?**

Your pay will be based on the design approved for your Phased program. You may be doing the same type of work or working on other projects or tasks in your unit. You will know the compensation level before you are asked to sign the agreement.

## **Once I am on a Phased program, my salary will be half what it is now. Can I access my CURP account to supplement my pay?**

Yes, you may access your CURP account once you are in a Phased program. If you are younger than age 59 ½ during the Phased period, you may have some limitations on how much you can withdraw from CURP due to federal regulations. Beyond age 59 ½, you can withdraw the money in any manner that meets your needs.

## **What happens to the rest of my benefits?**

You will continue to have your health insurance coverage, since you will be in a benefits eligible position in the Phased

program. Your life insurance will remain at the same levels you had before the Phased program began. If you were eligible for the educational programs and CCTS before entering the Phased program, you will continue to be eligible for them.

The only benefits that will change will be plans that are directly linked to actual wage or salary you are earning. These are short and long term disability or workers' compensation.

### **As a contract college employee, how do I know if I will be eligible to continue health insurance coverage under the New York State Health Insurance Program (NYSHIP)?**

In general, contract college employees must have at least ten years of state service, or ten years combined service with the state and one or more participating state agencies to continue health insurance benefits as a retiree. In addition, you must be enrolled in NYSHIP as an employee or a dependent at the time of your retirement. You can review the NYSHIP eligibility requirements in the Retirement and Beyond booklet. You can also call Benefit Services at 607- 255-3936 to set up a time to review your health insurance plan.

### **Can I get help figuring out whether I can afford to retire at the end of the Phased program?**

Yes, TIAA, Fidelity, MetLife, VALIC and Voya professional advisors are ready to meet with you to discuss your current situation. Representatives of these companies are available on campus regularly. Please see the listing of vendors at the end of this publication for contact information.

### **I am a contract college employee participating in NYSERS. Who can I contact for help understanding how my retirement plan works with Phased retirement?**

The Retirement and Beyond booklet includes the formula for determining your benefits under NYSERS. You can estimate your benefit using the calculator on the [NYSERS website](#).

The NYSERS website includes a list of frequently asked questions and other relevant information on your benefit from NYSERS. You can access the NYSERS call center at 1-866-805-0990 if you want to speak with a NYSERS representative.

Please call Benefits at 607-255-3936 to set up a time to discuss your NYSERS benefit.

### **At the end of my Phased program, may I still work at Cornell?**

Based on the University's needs, you may find work at Cornell once you are fully retired.

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