

Retirement Plans

New York City Employees' Retirement System (NYCERS)

NYCERS is a defined benefit plan. Defined benefit retirement plans offer benefits which are defined in law. Generally, retirement allowances payable from such plans are based on a member's years of service, age and compensation base. Other types of benefits such as loans, disability and death benefits are also offered and specified in law. All benefits payable are funded by employee and employer contributions and from earnings on the invested assets of the system. NYCERS is a cost-sharing, multiple employer public employee retirement system. Civil service employees, continuing Education Teachers, 220 titles, and full-time instructional members who elect to stay in the plan as transfer contributors are eligible to join this plan. In addition, NYCERS has a number of tiers and plan specific programs according to occupation type and the date a staff member joins NYCERS.

Employee contribution is 4.85% of regular compensation including overtime on a federally tax-deferred basis for the first 10 years of public employment. This amount is lower for staff members who joined NYCERS before July 26, 1976. There is a higher contribution for certain occupational program and plans. Employer contributes a lump-sum annually to its pension funds, not to individual accounts. Annual amount is determined by the actuary of the pension systems.

Vesting is the right to a future retirement allowance even if you leave the College employment. Vesting requirement is met after five years of total service credit.

New Instructional Staff who are members of NYCERS and are on a leave of absence from a civil service position must remain in NYCERS until they have relinquished their leave, generally upon attainment of 13.3b status in the Instructional Staff position. Once this status is attained, you have sixty days (60) to elect to remain in NYCERS, transfer to TRS or elect membership in the ORP.

For more information including enrollment application, please visit www.NYCERS.ORG.

TIAA-CREF (Optional Retirement Program – ORP)

TIAA is a defined contribution plan. Benefits are based on the amounts contributed by the employer and the employee and the success of the employee's choice of investments. Full-Time Instructional members are eligible to join this plan. Members of the instructional staff are mandated by New York State Law to participate in a retirement system. New staff members have 30 days from the effective date of their appointment to choose a retirement program, and the choice is irrevocable. If no choice is filed within 30 days, the law mandates that the member be assigned to the New York City Teachers' Retirement System.

Employee contribution is 3% of regular compensation including overtime on a federally tax-deferred basis (for the first 10 years of public employment. Employer contribution is 8% of salary for first seven years of employment and 10% thereafter (tier 5). For detailed information on tiers 1, 2, 3, and 4, please refer to the instructional benefits manual. Loans are available from your Group Retirement Annuity and TDA accounts, subject to limitations.

Vesting occurs after the first 366 days of continuous employment as an Instructional Staff member. During the vesting period, employee contributions are held in a deposit fund at TIAA-CREF if you receive your paycheck from the City of New York or in an escrow account at the office of the State Comptroller if you receive your paycheck from the State of New York. A one-time lump sum employer retroactive contribution, plus 2% interest, for the first 366-days will be credited to your account upon completion of the vesting period; thereafter TIAA-CREF will mail you quarterly statements.

If you are on a leave of absence (with or without pay), you are considered to be employed, therefore, you will receive credit for this time when determining the completion date of your vesting period. However, if you have a break in service (termination or retirement) this time will not count toward the completion of the vesting period.

Vesting and participation will be immediate if you have a preexisting vested open TIAA-CREF retirement plan contract. You must notify your College Benefits Officer of your pre-existing contract and provide the contract number in order to avoid delays of employer and employee contributions credited to your account.

If you separate from CUNY service prior to completing the vesting period, you must contact your

College Human Resources Office to initiate the refund process of employee contributions.

Teachers' Retirement System of the City of New York (TRS)

TRS is a defined benefit plan. Benefits are based on a formula, average of highest three year's consecutive salary and years of employment. Adjuncts, full time instructional members, and continuing education teachers who work 30 hours or more are eligible to join TRS.

Employee contribution is 3% of regular compensation including overtime on a federally tax-deferred basis for the first 10 years of public employment. Employer contribution is a lump-sum annually to its pension funds, not to individual accounts. The annual amount is determined by the actuary of the pension systems.

In addition, TRS has a number of tiers depending on the date a staff member joins TRS. You are vested when you complete five years of Total Service Credit, which means you will be eligible to receive a monthly retirement allowance after you retire and meet applicable age requirements. The amount of your retirement allowance is based on your Total Service Credit, your age, and your Final Average Salary (FAS). (Your FAS is generally the average of your three highest consecutive annual salaries, with some restrictions.)

As a TRS member, you may participate in TRS' optional Tax-Deferred Annuity (TDA) program. You may provide a death benefit for beneficiaries. You may qualify for disability retirement benefits if you become physically and/or mentally incapable of performing your work duties.

If you are already a member of the TRS, the Board of Education Retirement System (BERS) or NYCERS, you may remain in that program. If you were recently appointed to an Instructional Staff title and were previously a member of BERS or NYCERS you may elect to remain a member by filing an application for Transferred Contributor status within 30 days of your appointment.

For detailed information on tiers 1, 2, and 3, please refer to the instructional benefits manual or visit TRS web site at www.trs.nyc.ny.us. All TRS forms are also available on the website.