

UCI Human Resources

Retirement FAQ's

1. Why can I not choose my retirement plan?

Represented employees may have their retirement elections dictated by their collective bargaining agreement. You should have been notified of your union during your onboarding process. You do not get to choose your retirement plan if your position is represented by a union who made the decision on your behalf. If you are unsure if you are in a union-represented position, please consult with your supervisor.

2. How do I enroll into 403b/457b/DCP?

Please visit myucretirement.com to enroll in our voluntary retirement savings programs. On the top of the webpage, there is a dropdown menu for "Supplemental Retirement Benefits," which provides enrollment instructions and will lead you to Fidelity's UCI-dedicated website, netbenefits.com.

3. I am separating from UC. What will happen to my pension?

If you reach 5 years of service, you are considered vested and are entitled to UCRP retirement benefits when you are of eligible age to retire. You may leave your contributions in the pension, where it will accrue ~6% interest per year. Should you return to an eligible UC appointment, you would resume earning retirement service credit from where you left off if your contributions remain in the pension plan.

If you are not vested, you have two options.

- a) You may leave your contributions in the pension, where it will accrue ~6% interest per year. Should you return to an eligible UC appointment, you would resume earning retirement service credit from where you left off if your contributions remain in the pension plan.
- b) You may also request a refund of accumulations, which can be rolled over to another eligible retirement account or distributed as income, subject to applicable taxes and early-withdrawal penalties. Please note: If you take a refund of your plan accumulations, your service credits will be forfeited, and you will no longer be eligible for future retirement benefits if vested. RASC will process their refund request. You may reach out to RASC directly or submit a [UBEN-142](#) form. Refund requests can be initiated online via UCRays once the termination status has been recorded in Redwood. You may also wish to review the [Leaving UC Employment Roadmap](#).

4. How do I initiate my retirement?

You should register for a [UCRAYS](#) account to create a Personal Retirement Profile (PRP). Please consider attending webinars or review recorded webinars and PowerPoint slides presented by UCOP that address retirement processes such as how to retire step by step. You can review here: <https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/compensation-and-benefits/retirement-benefits/preparing-for-retirement-presentation/index.html>. Please review the [Retirement Roadmap](#), which has an extensive amount of retirement resources.

5. I think my service credit years are incorrect.

To understand UC's retirement service credit, it is important to know that UC has two distinct types of service credit: retirement (UCRAYS) service credit and employment (UCPath) service credit. They do not always match up. Retirement service credit starts when an employee becomes a UCRP member, and employment service credit starts when an employee starts their employment. **Retirement credit accrues proportionally to time on pay status. To be eligible to accrue retirement service credit your appointment needs to be 50% FTE or more for 12 months or beyond. Service credits are based on the fiscal year, July 1st to June 30th.**

Retirement service credit is used to help calculate your retirement benefits, and employment service credit is used to help determine benefits (medical, vision, dental, etc.) eligibility and vacation accrual.

Did you ever take a leave without pay? A pregnancy or medical leave that took you off work? Were you in a position that was non-UCRP eligible such as a temporary appointment? Certain employees, such as temporary employees, may accrue employment service credit, but are not eligible to accrue retirement service credit.

6. I need to reset my UCRAYS password.

Please call the EEC at 949-824-0500 so that one of our team members can assist with resetting your password. Please note that you will need to be on a computer during the time of the call for us to send a one-time password. Otherwise, you can call UCRAYS directly to reset your password as well at 1-800-888-8267.

7. Why should I retire on July 1st?

All Pension members receiving a monthly income payment are eligible to receive an annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) after receiving benefits for one year. A COLA boosts your highest average plan compensation (HAPC) also known as the average of your highest earnings within a 36-month measuring period. One full fiscal year is July 1 to July 1 of the following year. If prospective retirees choose to retire earlier or later than July 1st, they will have to wait until they complete a full fiscal year before the COLA is effective. As an example, if you retire on July 1, 2022, you will be eligible for your first retirement COLA on July 1, 2023. If you retire before or after July 1, 2023, you will not be retired for one full year by July 1, 2024 and will have to wait until July 1, 2025 to receive your first Retirement COLA. After that, you will receive the COLA annually and it will apply to your August 1st check.

Those in the 1976 Tier (or Safety members) are eligible to receive an inactive COLA in addition to a regular COLA which takes effect on July 1st as well. Your Highest Average Plan Compensation (HAPC) will earn an Inactive COLA each July 1st after you have had at least one day break in service. June 30th being the one unpaid day break in service. This is a COLA that is earned on the HAPC and increases your benefits when you retire. For example, if you separate at age 45 and retire at age 60, the inactive COLA would apply to your HAPC since separation. ***It is in 1976 Tier's or Safety Tier's best interest to initiate their retirement using the separation date of June 29th and retirement date of July 1st if planning to elect a monthly income payment.*** You need only be inactive for one business day so if you separate on June 29th and retire July 1st, you earn an Inactive COLA. The Inactive COLA is typically limited to 2%.

8. What UCRP tier am I in?

You can confirm which UC Retirement Plan tier you are in by visiting your benefits summary page on UCPath. You can do so here: <https://ucpath.universityofcalifornia.edu/health-and-welfare/benefits-summary>. It should list the year in the box on the bottom left corner.

Please read more about your specific pension plan here:

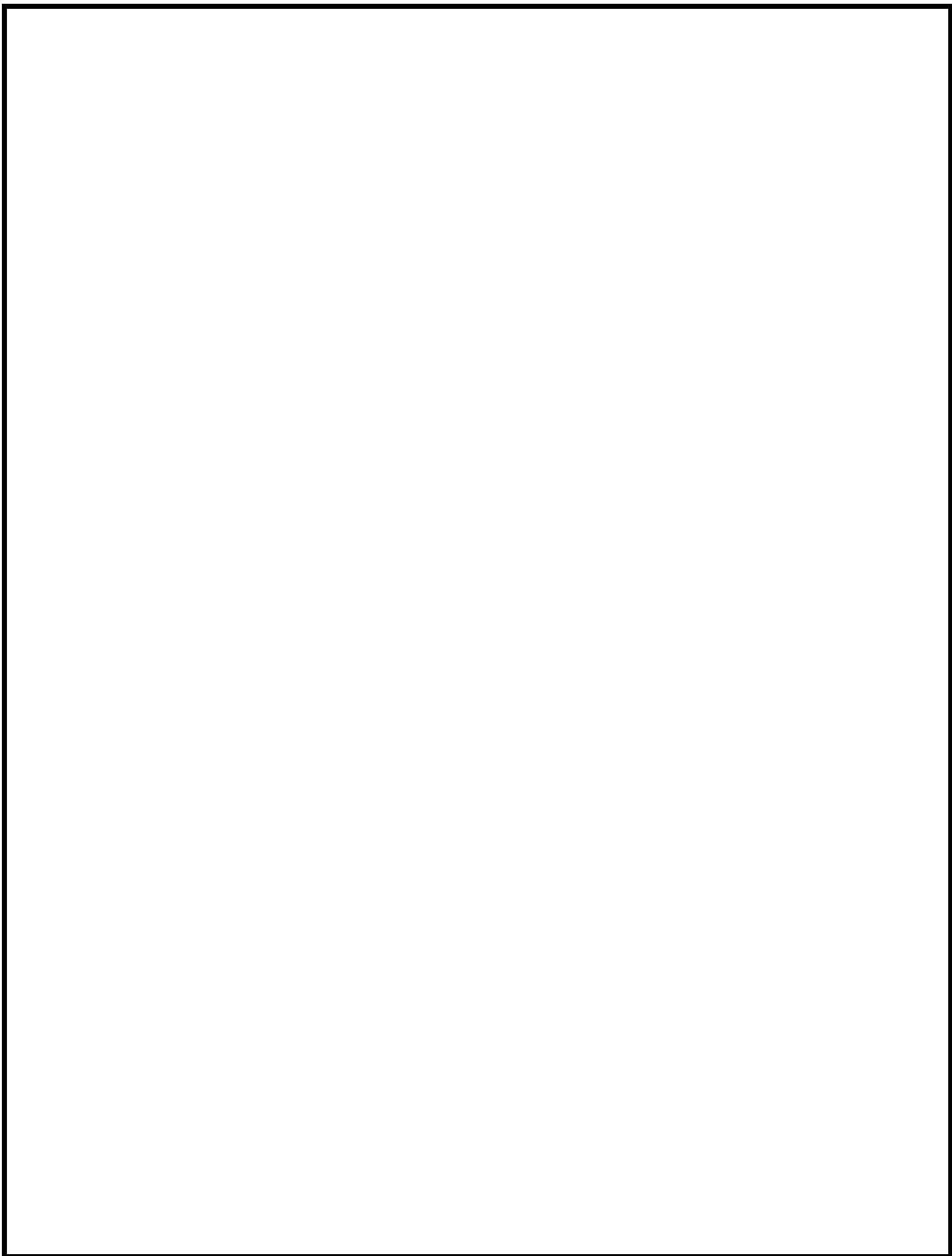
- a) 1976 Tier: <https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/compensation-and-benefits/retirement-benefits/ucrp/1976-tier-benefits.html>
- b) 2013 Tier: <https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/compensation-and-benefits/retirement-benefits/ucrp/2013-tier-benefits.html>
- c) 2016 Tier: <https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/forms/pdf/complete-retirement-benefits-guide-for-employees.pdf>
- d) Safety members: <https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/forms/pdf/ucrp-safety-members-summary-plan-description.pdf>

9. When will I receive my first retirement income?

Soon to retire employees should expect to receive their retirement income the month following their retirement date contingent on a properly completed retirement documentation. For example, those who retire July 1st should expect to receive their first retirement check on August 1st.

10. If I leave my current position and get rehired in the future, will I still be in the same tier?

Active UCRP members in the 1976 Tier or 2013 Tier who leave UC employment and then return to a UCRP-eligible position **BEFORE** the first day of the second month following the month the member left employment will remain in their tier and continue to accrue benefits under the terms of that tier. For example, if a member leaves UC employment on July 5, 2017, and returns to a UCRP-eligible appointment before Sept. 1, 2017, for purposes of determining tier membership, the member will not have incurred a break in service. In this case, the rehired member will not be eligible for the Retirement Choice Program.



11. Am I eligible for retiree health benefits when I retire? How much will my retiree health benefits cost?

In order to understand if you are eligible for health benefits, please visit the following website: <https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/compensation-and-benefits/retirement-benefits/health-welfare/index.html>. It will list the different groups in which have different eligibility requirements. I encourage you to review the group you are in to find out if you are or will be eligible for retiree health benefits. Once you initiate retirement and create a Personal Retirement Profile, it will provide you a personal calculation of how much your retiree health benefits will cost after retirement. You can visit UCNet to review more information on retiree health benefits here: <https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/compensation-and-benefits/health-plans/medical/retiree-plan-costs.html>.

12. How long in advance do I start the process when I am ready to retire?

The retirement process takes 60-90 days to complete from the start to finish. Therefore, we recommend starting THREE months in advance. Three months allows enough time to properly complete the entire retirement process as well as give you an accurate estimate.

as possible of your predicted retirement income since it will be close to your retirement date and. For example, if you plan to retire on July 1st then you would need to initiate your retirement starting April 1st.

13. When is the best time to retire for me?

We recommend that you run multiple estimates to figure out what date is best for you, your situation, and future. You can run as many estimates as you may want on UCRAYS. It is a good idea to use retirement dates near significant dates such as milestone work anniversaries (such as 15 years of service) or birthdays. Then you can compare the different retirement dates for yourself based on how much you would receive and how soon you would like to retire.

14. How much will I get when I retire?

To estimate your own retirement income, you can log on to UC Retirement at Your Service, or UCRAYS. On the left, you can view your "Membership Details" which will show you the amount of service credit you have, in what tier, your contribution balances to UCRP, your CAP account, if you have one, and your HAPC. Click on the "Retirement" button to prepare retirement estimates and even apply for and elect your UC retirement. By clicking on "Create a Retirement Estimate", you can prepare your own estimates and model different scenarios.

15. How soon after I retire can I withdraw funds from my voluntary retirement savings plan? Can I withdraw from my voluntary retirement savings plans earlier?

You can request to withdraw funds and can be initiated 31 days (a holding period) from your last day of work if retiring. Please direct your request to Fidelity who is the broker for UCI's voluntary retirement savings plans who can be reached at 1-866-682-7787.

The mandatory age to withdraw from these accounts is 73 years old but can defer if still an active employee. Once you are 59 ½ years old, you can do an in-service rollover and withdraw. Rollovers and withdrawal of these accounts are individualized and extremely flexible so please consult with Fidelity to speak about how you would like to manage your accounts.

16. I used to work at a state agency with my previous employer. How do I establish reciprocity?

You will need to complete and send a UBEN 157 form to UC Retirement Administration Service Center (RASC) to establish reciprocity which will be utilized when it is time for you to retire. The form can be found on page 7 of this booklet:

<https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/forms/pdf/ucrpcalpers-reciprocity.pdf>. The address to send the form to is on the bottom left-hand corner of the form that is addressed to RASC's office. Note that it is important to review the eligibility requirements on the booklet to see if you are eligible to establish reciprocity.

17. What happens to my sick time if I retire?

If you elect to receive a monthly pension payment, your unused sick time would be converted into service credits and would be included in your estimate. You can also view your unused sick and vacation time on your UCPath dashboard. Approximately 2,000 hours of sick is equal to 1 year of service credit. Please note: If you elect to receive a lump sum cash out then you would forfeit this sick to service credit conversion.

18. When should I apply for Medicare Part B?

It is recommended to apply for Medicare Part B as soon as you are eligible. However, if you are eligible and are currently employed with UC and enrolled in UC medical coverage you may defer your enrollment for Medicare Part B. You will not be penalized for delaying Medicare Part B enrollment if you are actively working and covered with UC. You would then enroll for Medicare when you initiate retirement.

If you need a CMS-L564E form completed, please inquire with the Employee Experience Center at 949-824-0500 or eec@uci.edu.

19. How many years of service do I have in which tier?

You can log on to your UCRAYS account to review your years of service. It will display your years on the homepage. You can then click "Membership Details" to see what tier you are in. To review your retirement membership, please visit <https://retirementatyourservice.ucop.edu/>.

20. Does UCI offer a 401k plan and match contributions? If yes what is the limit per year that I can contribute?

UCI offers two primary retirement plans known as the Pension Choice or the Savings Choice. The Savings Choice is a 401k style retirement plan and UC contributes 8% of eligible annual pay up to IRS maximum. You can only contribute 7% of your annual eligible pay (or more depending on if your position is represented by a union), before taxes, up to IRS maximum.

21. Is there a website to see retiree benefits available and the costs?

You will see the cost of your health coverages for your retirement when you run your Personal Retirement Profile (PRP) which is shown when you initiate your retirement on UCRAYS. Please note that the same benefits that you are enrolled in before retiring will be the same coverages post-retirement if you chose to continue UC health benefits.

22. What happens to my unused vacation hours?

Your unused vacation hours will be paid out to you on your final paycheck. This is an automatic process. You can arrange a contribution change to your 403b, 457b, or your DCP account so that your vacation payout is deferred to it. You would do so by logging onto your Fidelity website and defer a flat dollar amount during the window of payroll deadlines. If you enter the flat dollar amount too early, it can result in a deduction from your second to last paycheck. It is recommended to submit the vacation deferral towards the end when closer to your retirement date. You cannot defer your vacation payout to your voluntary retirement accounts if your accounts have reached the max annual contribution limit due to IRS guidelines. It is STRONGLY recommended to speak to a financial consultant at Fidelity to ensure that the vacation payment deferral is within the annual limits of your voluntary retirement account and to correctly time the contribution change.

23. What is a Capital Accumulation Payment (CAP) account and what do I do with it?

If you were a UCRP member in 1992, 1993, 1994, 2002 and/or 2003, you may have a separate account balance in UCRP known as the Capital Accumulation Payment (CAP). If you were not employed during these years, then it does not apply to you. These accounts consist of money that UC allocated to eligible Plan members on various dates during those years to supplement other UCRP benefits. The allocations were based on a percentage of your covered compensation for a period prior to the allocation date. CAP balances earn interest at an annual percentage yield. You can see your CAP balances by signing into your personal account online.

You can have it paid out to you as taxable income, but it is not required. You can choose to have it rolled over into a tax deferred account once retiring. This is asked and can be confirmed when you go through your retirement initiation or Personal Retirement Profile.

24. Should I do the monthly payment or the lumpsum cash out?

It is STRONGLY recommended you meet with a financial retirement consultant to ask this question. Fidelity can provide you a personally tailored recommendation by analyzing your financial situation using their own credited knowledge and retirement estimator tools. PLEASE NOTE: If you choose the lumpsum cash out, you will forfeit the right to obtain retiree medical benefits, no longer eligible for your survivor to be paid \$7,500 survivor death benefit, and your unused sick hours will not be converted to service credits.

25. Am I eligible for retiree health and welfare benefits?

Retiree health and welfare benefits eligibility require different qualifications for different tiers. The amount of retirement service credits will also affect how much your retiree health and welfare premiums will cost, also known as “graduated” eligibility. To learn more about your situation in particular, please visit <https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/compensation-and-benefits/retirement-benefits/health-welfare/index.html>.

26. Where do I get an estimate of my social security income?

If you would like a social security income estimate, please go to the following link:
<https://www.ssa.gov/>

27. I will retire soon or have recently retired. Can I keep my UCI email?

All eligible UCI Faculty and Staff Retirees have the option to maintain UCInetIDs and email addresses through sponsorship via the UCI Center for Emeriti & Retirees (CER). This benefit enables you to maintain key contacts, register for programs, obtain a discounted rate on parking permits as well as other discounts, and access library and OIT services on campus. CER will keep your email on a confidential listserv and only send you updates about any benefit changes, pension and medical plan information and programs available to you as a retiree. Please visit this website for more information: <https://ucinetid.service.uci.edu/retiree>. If you have questions on using this form, please contact retirees@uci.edu or call (949) 824–7769.

28. If a retiree moves out of state, does the employee have to pay taxes from CA and the new state they have moved to?

As part of the retirement election process, you will have the opportunity to choose your tax withholding status. UCRP will withhold only federal and California state taxes. If you move outside of California, you should consult with your tax advisor regarding payment of any non-California state income taxes. For more information, please read the following:
<https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/forms/pdf/retirement-handbook.pdf>.

29. If I am not eligible for retirement benefits at the time of my retirement, will I have the chance to eventually be eligible for retirement?

If you are not eligible for benefits at the time of retirement, then you will NOT be eligible for retiree health benefits.

30. What is the guidance for retiree gifts?

Please refer to UC policy here: <https://www.policies.uci.edu/policies/procs/700-13.php>

31. If I am taking a lump sum cash-out from my retirement account, can I transfer the lump sum cash-out to a voluntary retirement account like a 403(b) or 457(b)?

Yes, it is possible to transfer a lump sum cash-out to a voluntary retirement account following IRS guidelines. Fidelity can assist with this process.

32. If I am moving out of state, where do I update my new address?

If you move out of state while still an active UC employee you can update your address with UCPATH here: <https://ucpath.universityofcalifornia.edu/personal-information/personal-information-summary>. However, if you have already retired then you must update your address with RASC at <https://retirementatyourservice.ucop.edu/>.

33. I used to work at a State Agency where I am vested with CalPERS. Can I establish Reciprocity if I am now enrolled in UCRP?

Reciprocity is only available for CalPERS members. You do need to submit the UBEN157 to identify yourself as a reciprocal member. UBEN157 form can be found on page 7 of the UCRP/CalPERS booklet (here: <https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/forms/pdf/ucrpalpers-reciprocity.pdf>) where you would complete and send via mail to RASC's address listed on the bottom left corner of the same form. Please review the Reciprocity booklet as this information and questions are addressed. Please note that the booklet specifically lists the eligibility and requirements for your form to be accepted and approved. Specifically, employee must have begun employment with their new system (in a position eligible for membership in UCRP or CalPERS) within 180 days of leaving employment with the other system.

Your credit earned as a CalPERS member will remain in your account at CalPERS. If you are a vested CalPERS member, then you can assume you are a vested UCRP member. Per the UCRP/CalPERS booklet, reciprocity is confirmed at the time of retirement. At the time of retirement reciprocity is confirmed and you would receive retirement income from each public pension independently. You may want to reach out to CalPERS to confirm they have your current details and to notify them you are now an active UCRP member with reciprocity between UCRP and CalPERS. If you have questions, you can submit questions via the secure message feature in your UCRAYS account to RASC (Retirement Administration Service Center) in Oakland.

34. How do I establish reciprocity regarding my vacation and sick leave?

Please review page 5 of the following booklet: <https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/forms/pdf/ucrpalpers-reciprocity.pdf>. You may be able to transfer your accrued vacation and sick leave between employers which can increase your vacation accrual rate and increase your sick leave balance. You will need to submit a <https://ucpath.universityofcalifornia.edu/state-agency-prior-service-form> on your UCPath account. For more help on how to complete the form, please contact UCPath to help at 855-982-7284.