

COTC Introduction to Retirement Programs

This section of the Student employment booklet briefly explains your retirement options under the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS).

Please note the following:

IF:

- You are currently working for another COTC department.
- or**
- You have worked for another COTC department during the previous 12 months.

and

- You have previously completed one of the OPERS forms (either the Request for Optional Exemption as a Student or the Personal History Record) while employed at COTC.

THEN:

Only complete the Social Security form included in this handbook.

IF:

- You have not worked for another COTC department for at least 12 months.
- or**
- You have **not** previously completed one of the OPERS forms (either the Request for Optional Exemption as a Student or the Personal History Record) while working for COTC.

Note: If you are unsure of whether you have previously completed the Personal History Record while working at COTC you may verify by contacting OPERS at 1-800-222-7377.

THEN:

You **must** complete the following forms:

- Retirement Plan Election Form
- Social Security form

and

- one of the OPERS forms (either the Request for Optional Exemption as a Student or the Personal History Record)

COTC Student Employee Retirement Programs

Ohio public institutions do not participate in the federal Social Security system, other than contributions to Medicare. You can get more information about Social Security online at ssa.gov. While employed with the university, you may be eligible for exemption from contributing to a retirement program or you may elect to have your retirement contributions invested with one of the state retirement programs, based on eligibility.

Retirement programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS)
Eligibility	OPERS: All Student Employees enrolled at least 6 credit hours are eligible.
Enrollment	
OPERS	<p>Staff employees are automatically enrolled in OPERS upon employment. If you contribute to OPERS, you have 180 days from your eligible appointment date to elect enrollment in one of the three OPERS options: Traditional Pension Plan, Member-Directed Plan, and Combined Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrollment in OPERS is irrevocable while employed at COTC. View the OPERS Plan Comparison Chart online at opers.org. <p>You may be eligible for exemption from the OPERS retirement contribution. If you elect this exemption, the OPERS Request for Optional Exemption as a Student form, available online at http://www.cotc.edu/Departmental/HR/forms.asp, must be filed within 30 days of your eligible employment. Refer to the Retirement Options section of this document for information regarding your options.</p>
Service credit calculation	<p>Service credit is the length of service accumulated and is applicable for OPERS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OPERS awards a full month of service credit for every month that an OPERS member earns at least \$250 in an OPERS eligible appointment.
Where to find additional information	<p>Office of Human Resources (OHR) web site, http://www.newarkcampus.org/Departmental/HR/default.asp program information</p> <p>OPERS, opers.org—additional program material</p>

Note: This is intended to be a summary of plan provisions. For additional information, refer to online plan detail.

COTC Student Employee Retirement Options

This retirement section is intended to assist you in understanding your retirement plan options. This critical choice may have long-term effects on your financial future.

Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a Student Employee at COTC you may have the choice of contributing to Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS), or being exempt from retirement plan withholding.
Social Security	Ohio public institutions do not participate in the federal Social Security system, other than contributions to the Medicare Hospital insurance fund (Medicare-Part A). (You can get more information about Social Security by visiting ssa.gov .) Instead, while you are employed at the college you are eligible to contribute to a public retirement system.
Retirement Plan Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once you have read through these options, you must complete the Retirement Plan Election form and the OPERS forms as appropriate.
Retirement Program Highlights	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A defined benefit plan option. Your retirement benefit is determined by a formula based on age, years of service and final average salary. OPERS controls the investing for this plan. A defined contribution plan. Employee and employer contributions and gains/losses on investment options determine your retirement benefit. You control the investments. A combined plan. Offers components of both the defined benefit and defined contribution plans. The defined benefit portion is determined by a formula, and the defined contribution portion is based on contributions and gains/losses of investment options. Note: Membership in OPERS may also include access to retirement health care, disability and death benefits depending on your plan election.
The OPERS retirement plan options are available to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees who establish OPERS membership on or after January 1, 2003. <p>Note: The enrollment deadline is 180 days from your appointment date.</p>
Exemption Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COTC has established the following criteria and procedures for determining student enrollment status and withholding for retirement/MHIT (Medicare Hospitalization Insurance Tax). Students who are enrolled and regularly attending classes at the institution where they work may elect exemption from retirement withholding. During periods of non-enrollment or when not meeting the following criteria, retirement contributions must be withheld. At COTC the following criteria is used to determine exemption eligibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Employees must be enrolled for a minimum of 6 credit hours while working for COTC. General and Instructional Fees must be paid. A Student Employee who meets the exemption criteria above and elects to be exempt from retirement contributions, must complete the OPERS Request for Optional Exemption as a Student form. Whenever a break occurs during which you do not meet the exemption criteria above, retirement/MHIT will be withheld (for example, when working during summer quarter while not taking classes). All forms must be completed and returned to the Office of Human Resources, within the first 30 days an enrolled student is employed. For example: if you were hired and attending classes on September 22, your form must be signed and received by October 22.
Exemption Highlights	<p>By signing the OPERS Request for Optional Exemption as a Student form, you are making an irrevocable decision to be exempt from OPERS during the entire period that you are continuously employed and working as an eligible Student Employee.</p> <p>Continuously employed – a period in which you are working and attending classes at COTC and do not have a break in service of at least twelve months and a day between each period of employment and/or enrollment.</p> <p>Note: during periods of employment at COTC in which you do not meet the exemption criteria, retirement plan contributions will be withheld even if you have signed the exemption form.</p> <p>For example: if you are working during summer quarter and are not attending classes, OPERS contributions will automatically be deducted from your pay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At any time that you meet the exemption criteria again, you will then automatically be returned to exempt status from retirement contributions. If you experience a break in employment and/or enrollment of more than twelve months, and meet the

	<p>exemption eligibility requirements when you return to employment, you are eligible to make another election to either contribute to or be exempt from OPERS.</p>
<p>Reasons for being a retirement plan member may include:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After graduation, you plan to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Work for COTC or some other state school – Work for the State of Ohio – Teach in Ohio – Work for another public employer in Ohio • You are not sure of your future career path
<p>Reasons for exempting from the retirement plan:</p>	<p>After graduation, you plan to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work only in the private sector • Leave Ohio and work out-of-state • Leave the United States
<p>Note:</p>	<p>If you are not sure of your future career path, it is important that you understand the consequences of your decision. Regardless of future employment plans, an exemption can be filed, if eligible. Currently the OPERS Retirement System offers the opportunity to purchase exempted service credit at a later time if employment circumstances change. However, this purchase could be quite costly as the cost is based on compounded interest and the salary you are receiving at the time of purchase.</p>
<p>Final Steps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All forms must be signed within 30 days of the enrolled student's hire date. • The completed forms must be returned to the Office of Human Resources at Newark. • You may either drop the form off in person or you may mail the completed forms via U.S. or Campus Mail to the Office of Human Resources, 1179 University Dr., Newark, OH 43055. • Contact the Office of Human Resources at extension 367 or 550 for assistance.