
Public Service Pension Plan (PSPP) Procedure

Policy Sponsor:	Vice President, Finance and Administration
Name of Parent Policy:	Public Service Pension Plan (PSPP) Policy
Policy Contact:	Director, Human Resources
Procedure Contact:	Manager, Compensation & Benefits
Effective Date of Procedures:	December 8, 2016
Review Date:	Biennially

Purpose

To outline the employment requirements for participation by Athabasca University Staff Members in the Alberta Public Service Pension Plan (PSPP), and to provide a summary of information to Staff Members regarding eligibility for participation, participant status, participant obligations, service recognition and contribution requirements, benefits, and pension plan administrative processes. Detailed pension plan regulations can be obtained on-line at www.pspp.ca.

Definitions

Agreements	The Collective Agreements between the Governors of Athabasca University and Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE) Local 69 or Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 3911.
AUPE	Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, Local 69, and its members.
Combined Pensionable Service (CPS)	The total number of years of pensionable service earned with the same employer by a Staff Member who has moved between the Universities Academic Pension Plan (UAPP)



and the PSPP after 1993 with no break in pensionable service.

CUPE

Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3911, and its members.

Excluded Support Staff

Staff Members in support roles who are not otherwise represented by one of the Certified Collective Bargaining Representatives. This designation generally relies on legislative/regulatory criteria (i.e., the Alberta *Public Service Employee Relations Act*) and the nature of the employment work assigned by the University.

Full-time

Regularly scheduled hours of work not fewer than 30 hours per week over a normal working year.

MEPP

Management Employees Pension Plan as administered by Alberta Pensions Services Corporation (APS).

Normal Working Year

The year specified by Athabasca University as the annual payroll pay period cycle.

Non pensionable salary

Earnings on which pension contributions are not calculated.

Part-time

Regularly scheduled hours of work must be a minimum of 14 hours per week (728 hours over a normal working year) and must be less than 30 hours a week.

Pensionable Service Full-time Equivalency

The base unit for determining Full-time is 1820 hours per Normal Working Year (pro-rated for part-time service).

Permanent

A Staff Member who has no pre-determined date on which employment will end, this includes a Permanent Staff Member temporarily assigned to a non-Permanent position.

**PSPP**

The Public Service Pension Plan as administered by Alberta Pensions Services Corporation (APS).

Staff Members

Permanent or Temporary employees as defined in the Agreements and those employees who have been hired on an Excluded Support (permanent or temporary) employment contract.

Temporary

A Staff Member who is hired for a contractually limited period, for non-Permanent Full- or Part-time employment where there are pre-determined dates on which employment will begin and end.

Term Appointment

The contractually limited period for which a Temporary Staff Member is hired. The start date and end date are pre-determined and stated in the employment contract.

YMPE

Year's Maximum Pensionable Earnings as defined by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) within the meaning of the Canada Pension Plan.

Procedure**1.0 General Information:**

- 1.1 Athabasca University (the University) administers the PSPP in accordance with the *Public Services Pension Act*, the associated Regulations, and Alberta Pensions Services Corporation (APS) PSPP guidelines tailored to suit the requirements of the University and its Staff Members.
- 1.2 Based on APS reciprocal transfer agreements in place for the PSPP, Staff Members may be eligible to transfer prior service and pension contributions to the PSPP. It is the Staff member's responsibility to contact the APS administration office regarding reciprocal transfer requests. Contact information and assistance is available through the University's Compensation & Benefits unit – Human Resources.
- 1.3 In the event that the University policy or procedure conflicts with current legislation or regulation, the legislation or regulation will prevail.



- 1.4 Additional information regarding the University policy guidelines, employment status and eligibility to participate, is available by contacting the Compensation & Benefits unit – Human Resources or online at the PSPP website at <http://www.pspp.ca>.

2.0 Membership Eligibility:

2.1 General conditions of Eligibility:

A Staff Member will be advised of their membership eligibility status at the time of hire and subsequently should their status change in the future. The following general conditions for eligibility apply to all Staff Member groups in addition to the specific eligibility criteria specified in Sections 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 below:

2.1.1 Staff Members who are under the age of 71 years at the time of hire.

2.1.2 Where a Staff Member is employed in more than one position by the University, eligibility for participation in the PSPP is determined on assessment of each position separately (i.e., eligibility to participate in the PSPP is not determined based on the multiple positions cumulatively).

2.2 Eligibility to participate in the PSPP for **AUPE Local 69** Staff Members is determined according to the following criteria:

2.2.1 A Permanent Full-time Staff Member must participate from the date of hire.

2.2.2 A Permanent Part-time Staff Member must participate from the date of hire.

2.2.3 A Temporary Full-time Staff Member where the Term Appointment is greater than one (1) year must participate from the date of hire.

2.2.4 A Temporary Part-time Staff Member is NOT eligible to participate.

2.3 Eligibility to participate in the PSPP for **CUPE Local 3911** Staff Members is determined according to the following criteria:

2.3.1 A Permanent Full-time Staff Member must participate from the date of hire.

2.3.2 A Permanent Part-time Staff Member is NOT eligible to participate.

2.3.3 A Temporary Full-time Staff Member where the Term Appointment is greater than (1) year must participate from the date of hire.

2.3.4 A Temporary Part-time Staff Member is NOT eligible to participate.

2.4 Eligibility to participate in PSPP for Excluded Support Staff Members is determined according to the following criteria:



- 2.4.1 A Permanent Full-time Staff Member must participate from the date of hire.
- 2.4.2 A Permanent Part-time Staff Member must participate from the date of hire.
- 2.4.3 A Temporary Full-time Staff Member where the Term Appointment is greater than one (1) year must participate from the date of hire.
- 2.4.4 A Temporary Part-time Staff Member is NOT eligible to participate.

2.5 Exclusions from Membership occur:

- 2.5.1 When a Staff Member moves from an eligible position to an ineligible position.
- 2.5.2 When a Staff Member is in receipt of a pension benefit from the PSPP, MEPP or the Public Service Management (Closed Membership) Pension Plan after December 31, 2000.
- 2.5.3 After the end of the year in which a Staff Member reaches 71 years of age.
- 2.5.4 After attaining a maximum of 35 years of pensionable service including Combined Pensionable Service (CPS), membership continues although employee and employer contributions will no longer continue.

3.0 Enrollment:

- 3.1 The Compensation & Benefits unit in Human Resources determines, for each Staff Member, their eligibility to participate in the PSPP.
- 3.2 This determination will be made at the time of initial hire and it will be reviewed periodically over the course of a Staff Member's term of appointment or when the Staff Member's Position or term of appointment changes.
- 3.3 In the month a Staff Member becomes eligible for participation in the PSPP, the Compensation & Benefits unit – Human Resources will forward to the Staff Member information about the PSPP and the appropriate Enrollment Form.
- 3.4 The Staff Member must complete the Enrollment Form following the instructions provided and return the Enrollment Form to the Compensation & Benefits unit – Human Resources.
- 3.5 The Compensation & Benefits unit – Human Resources will submit the Enrollment Form to Alberta Pension Services Corporation (APS) and will initiate the appropriate payroll deduction from the Staff Member's pay consistent with the date of commencement of the Staff Member's participation in the PSPP.



4.0 Contributions:

- 4.1 Both the eligible Staff Member and the University contribute to individual Staff Member's pension plans at rates determined by the [Public Service Pension Board](#).
- 4.2 Pensionable salary on which pension contributions will be based include gross basic pay for performing the regular duties of employment and retroactive salary changes.
- 4.3 Staff Members will not have contributions deducted from their pay nor remitted to the plan after attaining 35 years of Pensionable Service in the plan. This includes PSPP service from all employers and Combined Pensionable Service.
- 4.4 Staff Members on paid leaves, full or partial, must continue to participate in the PSPP. Both the employee and the University will continue to make contributions on a regular basis through the University payroll system.
- 4.5 Staff Members on sporadic leaves of absence without pay will continue to participate in the PSPP. Both the employee and the University will continue to make contributions on a regular basis through the University payroll system.
- 4.6 In the event a Staff Member is on a leave of absence without pay, or pursuant to the Compassionate Care Policy, the Staff Member may choose to make ongoing contributions or not, subject to the following conditions, and will confirm that choice in writing to the Compensation & Benefits unit – Human Resources at that time:
 - 4.6.1 If the Staff Member chooses to continue contributions, the Staff Member is responsible for the Staff Member's contributions and, the University is responsible for the University's share of contributions for the first twelve months of leave of absence without pay. Thereafter, the Staff Member is responsible for both the Staff Member's and the University's share of contributions and must make arrangements through the Compensation & Benefits unit – Human Resources for these remittances to APS.
 - 4.6.2 If the Staff Member chooses not to continue contributions, arrangements to purchase service for leaves without pay may be subsequently requested. For a contribution based costing, application for purchase of the leave must be made, in writing, by April 30th of the year following the completion of the leave.
- 4.7 Pursuant to the Income Tax Act, a maximum of five (5) years leave without pay may be established as pensionable during a Staff Member's entire period of service under the PSPP, including service with other employers. Staff Members who commence parental leave after June 30, 2002 may have up to an additional three (3) years of leave without pay recognized as pensionable service.
- 4.8 Staff Members in receipt of Worker's Compensation disability payments must continue to participate in the PSPP. Both the employee and the University will



continue to make contributions on a regular basis through the University payroll system. The Staff Member and the University continue to pay contributions.

- 4.9 Staff Members receiving benefits under the Short Term Disability Plan or Long Term Disability Plan must continue to participate.
- 4.10 Staff Members who are absent because of illness during the health-related portion of Maternity Leave, which may include a maximum of eight (8) weeks prior to delivery and/or the standard 6-weeks post-delivery period, will continue to participate in the PSPP and deductions and contributions will continue on a regular basis through the University payroll system. Contributions will continue beyond the standard 6-weeks post-delivery health related absence with support documentation from the Staff Member's doctor. Both the Staff Member and the University continue to pay contributions to the PSPP under these circumstances.
- 4.11 Non-pensionable salary types include: acting pay, shift differential, standby pay or weekend premium, overtime payments, lump sum payments or bonuses, vacation pay paid in a lump sum payment, and expense allowance payments.

5.0 Receipt of Pension Benefits:

- 5.1 A Staff Member must terminate employment or move to a position that does not require participation before commencing receipt of a pension benefit.
- 5.2 On retirement or termination of employment, the Compensation & Benefits unit – Human Resources will provide the Staff Member with appropriate information, contact information at APS, and assistance on a case-by-case basis to ensure the Staff Member has access to the information required to make informed choices regarding their PSPP benefit entitlement.

Applicable Legislation and Regulations

Alberta [Public Sector Pension Plans Act](#)

Alberta [Public Sector Pension Plans \(Legislative Provisions\) Regulation \(A.R. 365/93\)](#)

Alberta [Public Service Pension Plan Regulation \(A.R. 368/93\)](#)

Canada [Income Tax Act](#)

Related References, Policies, Procedures and Forms

[Public Service Pension Plan Policy](#)

[PSPP Member Handbook](#)

[AUPE- Governors of Athabasca University Collective Agreement](#)

[CUPE – Governors of Athabasca University Collective Agreement](#)

[Compassionate Care Benefit Leave Policy](#)



History

Governors of Athabasca University – Human Resources Committee, December 8, 2016,
Motion # 182-03 (associated policy approved)