

# SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY

*A Member of the Texas State University System*

**SRSU Policy:** Early Retirement

**SRSU Policy ID:** FH 2.15

**Policy Reviewed by:** Executive Vice President and Provost

**Approval Authority:** President of the University

**Approval Date:** July 10, 2023

**Next Review Date:** July 10, 2028

Sul Ross State University maintains a post-retirement employment policy specifically for faculty that adheres to the general modified-retirement policy of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS).

## A. Purpose

As a benefit of employment and an accommodation of the faculty, the purpose of this policy is to provide the basis for an early-retirement program for qualified faculty members who wish to petition the university for permission to continue to serve on less than a full-time basis after retirement.

## B. Background

1. TRS provides for retirement at various combinations of age and years of service and permits the retired individual to continue to work up to one-half time without the forfeiture of any pension benefits. TRS eligibility for full-formula benefits or for reduced-annuity benefits is determined by TRS guidelines.
2. Faculty members who decide to retire should find that the contemplated arrangement is a means of making the transition from full-time employment to complete retirement.

## C. Procedures

1. Full-time tenured faculty members at Sul Ross State University who have reached the age of 55 years and who meet minimum retirement-eligibility criteria established by the Teacher Retirement System of Texas for TRS or ORP retirees may petition the university for permission to participate in this program if they so desire. The university retains the option to decide on a case-by-case basis whether such an arrangement is to be made.
2. A faculty member who desires to participate in this program will notify the university in writing of the desire to participate not less than 90 days prior to the beginning of the academic year in which said election is requested to take effect. The university will indicate whether or not it will accept the faculty member's request to participate within 30 days of the receipt of the written request.

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3. The period following an approved early retirement during which Sul Ross State University shall have any commitment to the individual under this policy is one year. Should the one year of part-time employment be completed under the terms of this policy, the university, upon request of the faculty member, may opt to continue to permit part-time employment on a year-to-year basis dependent entirely upon compelling need of the academic department and with the subsequent approval of the department chair, the dean of the college, the executive vice president and provost, and the president. Payment for courses taught under this arrangement will be at the rate per class paid during the one year of employment under the terms of the Early Retirement Policy.
4. The faculty member shall relinquish full-time status and tenure in exchange for an early-retirement agreement between Sul Ross State University and the faculty member. The Early Retirement Agreement form is located in the Appendix.
5. Office assignments will be subject to the availability of office space and to the needs of the appropriate department, division, or college.
6. A faculty member participating in the early-retirement program will be a retiree for benefits purposes. A participant may continue to take part in the insurance benefits of the university as a retiree, if they meet the minimum age and service requirements established by the Employees Retirement System (ERS) of Texas. The responsibility to maintain insurance benefits rests entirely with the retiree. Contributions to TRS or ORP will cease on the part of the retiree and the university. Social Security contributions will continue as required by law.

## D. Application

Under provisions of this policy, qualified faculty members may apply to the executive vice president and provost for the Early Retirement Plan, using the appropriate channels.

## E. Terms

Participants will retain, as applicable, rank and one-half salary on a nine-month basis. No summer employment or annual raises are assured or committed. Class assignments up to one-half normal teaching load shall be defined by the appropriate academic dean or after consultation with the executive vice president and provost. Faculty will be committed to teach two courses or the equivalent during the fall and spring semester. Any deviation from this distribution of the course load must be based on the compelling need of the department and recommended by the department head with subsequent approval of the appropriate dean, the executive vice president and provost, and the president.

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## F. Service Break

Faculty members wishing to participate in this early-retirement program must have a minimum break in service of one full calendar month after the last day of their full-time employment with Sul Ross State University. This required break in service is a TRS requirement, not a Sul Ross State University requirement.

## G. Termination of Modified Service Plan

A participant in this program may elect to modify their status to full retirement at any time by written notification to the department chair of this intent not less than 90 days prior to the beginning of the semester when this change in status is to become effective.

## H. Impact of this Policy on TRS or ORP Rules

A participant's eligibility to draw retirement benefits from TRS or an ORP contract and their eligibility for membership in TRS or ORP will be governed by the laws and rules governing such eligibility and not by this policy. The faculty member assumes all responsibility for determining their status with regard to TRS or ORP benefits which may be impacted by this policy.

## I. Dismissal Procedure

Termination by the university of the part-time employment of a faculty member participating in the Early Retirement Program before the expiration of the stated period of their Early Retirement Agreement will be only for good cause, as described in Chapter V, Section 4.51, of the *Rules and Regulations, Texas State University System*, or under the special circumstances for termination of the faculty employment as described in Chapter V, Section 4.6, of the *Rules and Regulations, Texas State University System*.

## J. Reports

For each individual on early retirement under the provisions of this policy, the appropriate academic dean shall prepare a report detailing both workload and compensation which will be reported at a subsequent meeting of the board of regents.