# Introduction

Federation University Australia (**the University**) is running a Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme (VERS). The purpose of the VERS is to recognise long serving continuing employees who wish to retire from the University with an enhanced exit opportunity. The VERS will also support workforce regeneration.

The Federation University Australia Union Collective Agreement 2015–2018 (**the Agreement**) provides for voluntary early retirement for Academic employees: Clause 35. The University is intending—as provided for in Clause 35.2 of the Agreement—to broaden this scheme to apply to general/professional and TAFE teaching staff.

| Question | Answer |
| --- | --- |
| General | |
| **Who is eligible to apply?** | University Academic, TAFE and general/professional staff (including transferred Monash Gippsland staff) who:   * hold a full-time or part-time, continuing appointment; and * are aged over 55 years of age at the closing date of applications (i.e. 31 January 2017); and * have at least 5 years’ service in a continuing appointment. |
| **Who is not eligible to apply?** | The following employees are excluded from participating in the Scheme:   * Vice-Chancellor; * Deputy Vice-Chancellors; * Chief Operating Officer/Chief Financial Officer; * Pro Vice-Chancellors; * Faculty Executive Deans; * Head of Schools; * Directors of Centres; * Chair of Academic Board; * WorkCover recipients; and * Staff who have resigned prior to 6 November 2016 or who have entered into a pre-retirement agreement. |
| **What is the incentive?** | In exchange for voluntarily retiring early, staff will receive an incentive benefit in the form of a lump sum benefit of a minimum of two weeks’ salary for each year of service, with a maximum payment of fifty-two weeks’ salary.  To calculate your entitlements, an estimates calculator is available from the Human Resources web page [*Staff*](http://federation.edu.au/staff)*>*[*Working at FedUni*](http://federation.edu.au/staff/working-at-feduni)*>*[*Human Resources*](http://federation.edu.au/staff/working-at-feduni/human-resources)*> Workplace relations > Voluntary Early Retirement* (<http://federation.edu.au/staff/working-at-feduni/human-resources/workplace-relations/voluntary-early-retirement>). |
| **When is this happening?** | **Staff will be invited to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) from 6 November 2016.**  EOIs close 31 January 2017. |
| **If my EOI is approved, when would I depart?** | A mutually acceptable departure date will be determined, but will be no later than 31 December 2017. |
| **Is participation in VERS on a voluntary basis?** | Yes, participation in VERS is on an entirely voluntary basis. No staff member will be forced or coerced to participate. |
| **Is there any difference if I am 65 or over?** | Payments made under the VERS to staff over 65 are not eligible for the tax-free base limits that otherwise apply. |
| **If I submit an EOI, am I guaranteed it will be approved?** | No, acceptance of an EOI for voluntary early retirement is entirely at the discretion of the University. |
| **What happens if I make an EOI that is not accepted? Am I prejudicing my future employment in any way?** | No. The VERS is offered to allow you to explore options for your future. Your EOI will not be perceived as a lack of commitment to or interest in your work, and will not prejudice your future employment with the University. |
| **If I take a VERS package can I be re-employed by the University?** | Staff who take a VERS package cannot be re-employed on a continuous, fixed-term, casual or sessional basis for a minimum period of three years from the date of separation and will be required to sign a Deed of Release. A draft is available on the Human Resources web page [*Staff*](http://federation.edu.au/staff)*>*[*Working at FedUni*](http://federation.edu.au/staff/working-at-feduni)*>*[*Human Resources*](http://federation.edu.au/staff/working-at-feduni/human-resources)*> Workplace relations >* [*Voluntary Early Retirement*](http://federation.edu.au/staff/working-at-feduni/human-resources/workplace-relations/voluntary-early-retirement). |
| **Will the University be holding information sessions?** | Yes, a range of information sessions will be conducted for staff. Sessions will cover:   * Pre‐Retirement and Transition-to-Retirement options; * the Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme; and * general information on superannuation, taxation and benefits.   Calculators and other supporting material are available to staff to support their consideration of a voluntary early retirement on the Human Resources web page [*Staff*](http://federation.edu.au/staff)*>*[*Working at FedUni*](http://federation.edu.au/staff/working-at-feduni)*>*[*Human Resources*](http://federation.edu.au/staff/working-at-feduni/human-resources)*> Workplace relations >* [*Voluntary Early Retirement*](http://federation.edu.au/staff/working-at-feduni/human-resources/workplace-relations/voluntary-early-retirement). |
| **What support is available to assist me determine what I will do once I have ceased employment with the University?** | The University’s EAP provider Converge International is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by phoning 1300 OUR EAP (1300 687 327). |
| Applications | |
| **How do I submit an EOI?** | A VERS EOI is available from the Human Resources web page, [*Staff*](http://federation.edu.au/staff)*>*[*Working at FedUni*](http://federation.edu.au/staff/working-at-feduni)*>*[*Human Resources*](http://federation.edu.au/staff/working-at-feduni/human-resources)*> Workplace relations >* [*Voluntary Early Retirement*](http://federation.edu.au/staff/working-at-feduni/human-resources/workplace-relations/voluntary-early-retirement). |
| **What if I submit an EOI, then change my mind?** | EOIs can be withdrawn up until a Deed of Release is signed, or the close of business on 31 January 2017, whichever comes first. |
| **Who decides if my EOI will be approved?** | The relevant Executive Dean/Director will make a recommendation to the relevant Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Chief Operating Officer and Director, Human Resources who will develop a final recommendation, on a case-by-case basis, for the Vice-Chancellor’s decision. |
| **How will I know if my VERS EOI has been accepted (or not)?** | Staff members who submit an EOI will be advised the outcome within three weeks via their work email address.  A staff member approved for Voluntary Early Retirement:   * will receive formal notification and an offer of Voluntary Early Retirement from the University; * will cease employment on a mutually agreed date, but no later than 31 December 2017; and * will receive written confirmation of the agreed date of their retirement from Human Resources. |
| Financial | |
| **Are all my leave entitlements paid out?** | Staff will receive their accrued annual and long service leave entitlements.  Staff will be eligible for payment of their long service leave upon retirement if they have a minimum qualifying period of four years of continuous service. |
| **If accepted to receive a VERS, when would I receive my wages, benefits and accrued leave entitlements?** | Your final pay, including all entitlements due to you, will be deposited into your nominated banking details on the next pay day after your cessation date. |
| **What will my benefit be if my VERS EOI is accepted?** | The packages vary for each of the three groups (Academic, General/Professional and TAFE Teaching staff).  The formulas for Academic, General/Professional and TAFE Teaching staff are set out below. |

**Academic Staff**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Application** | | **Maximum entitlement** |
| Payment in lieu of notice/options period | | 20 weeks |
| Lump sum payment | Two weeks’ pay for each year of completed service (pro-rata for partially completed years). | 52 weeks |
| Payment of pro-rata long service leave | Provided continuous service is four years or more. | No maximum |
| Payment of unused accrued annual leave | | No maximum |

General/Professional Staff

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Application** | | **Maximum entitlement** |
| Payment in lieu of notice/options period | | 10 weeks |
| Lump sum payment | Two weeks’ pay for each year of completed service (pro-rata for partially completed years). | 52 weeks |
| Payment of pro-rata long service leave | Provided continuous service is four years or more. | No maximum |
| Payment of unused accrued annual leave | | No maximum |

TAFE Teaching Staff

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Application** | | **Maximum entitlement** |
| Payment in lieu of notice/options period | | 10 weeks |
| Lump sum payment | Two weeks’ pay for each year of completed service (pro-rata for partially completed years). | 30 weeks |
| Payment of pro-rata long service leave | Provided continuous service is four years or more. | No maximum |
| Payment of unused accrued annual leave | | No maximum |
| One-off payment (pro-rata for part-time) | | $10,000 |
|  | Staff can access an estimate calculator from the Human Resources web page, [*Staff*](http://federation.edu.au/staff)*>*[*Working at FedUni*](http://federation.edu.au/staff/working-at-feduni)*>*[*Human Resources*](http://federation.edu.au/staff/working-at-feduni/human-resources)*> Workplace relations >* [*Voluntary Early Retirement*](http://federation.edu.au/staff/working-at-feduni/human-resources/workplace-relations/voluntary-early-retirement).  Select your staff type—Academic, General/Professional or TAFE teacher—from the drop-down menu, and enter all other requested information to receive a **confidential estimate of the potential benefit, and an indication of the tax treatment**. | | |
| **I have another question that is not answered here?** | Unanswered questions can be directed on a confidential basis to VERS@federation.edu.au. | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Warning: uncontrolled when printed. | | | |
| Authorised by: | Director, Human Resources. | Original Issue: | 07/11/2016 | |
| Document owner: | Manager, Workplace Relations | Current Version: | 07/11/2016 | |