

UC Merced Voluntary Separation Program – Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. What will be taken into consideration by the campus when reviewing application submissions?** Consideration will be based on the operational needs of the unit as determined by the department head/dean in conjunction with the vice chancellor/provost. Approval of an application rests with the vice chancellor/provost subject to review by the Human Resources Office.
- 2. Why are department head/dean's not permitted to fill the vacated positions for at least 12 months?** The purpose of the program is to create salary savings. By leaving positions vacant, the department can realize salary savings from the vacated positions. For example, if an eligible employee applies and is approved for the program and receives severance of 16 weeks (approximately 4 months) pay, the department will save 8 months' salary over the course of the following 12 months. If the department reorganizes so that the position is eliminated altogether, the department can realize even greater savings.
- 3. Is there anything else I need to do once I submit my application?** If your application is accepted by your department, approved by your leadership and HR, you will receive and be required to sign a release of claims in order to receive your severance pay.
 - If you are age 40 or older, you will have 45 calendar days to consider and seek legal advice about the release. If you decide to participate, you may sign the release anytime within that period after you receive the document. You will then have 7 calendar days to revoke your release of claims if you change your mind after you submit the signed release.
 - If you are under age 40, you will have 14 calendar days to consider and seek advice about the release. You may sign and return the release any time during that 14-day period.
- 4. If I sign the application form but later decide not to sign the release or decide to revoke my decision, does it also rescind my separation request? In other words, can I keep my job if I change my mind?** Yes. If you do not sign the release or if you revoke your decision within accepted timeframes, you may remain in your position. However, once you have submitted your signed release and the revocation period (if any) has expired, your decision to participate in the program cannot be rescinded.
- 5. What are the circumstances for a department to deny an employee's application?** Department heads/deans must consider the business skills needed for critical operations and to meet future needs. If there is an on-going need for your position and the manager cannot eliminate it, then the department may not be able to justify accepting your application. Departments should make decisions based upon bona fide business reasons.
- 6. Why are employees who separate under UCMVSP prohibited from returning to any UC employment for 3 years?** Employees who agree to the early separation and take the severance incentive may only return during the next three years if they repay a portion of the severance. If you want to keep the entire severance amount, then per UC policy you may not return to work at a UC location in any capacity for three years. The campus needs to reduce the staffing costs.

The budget is not expected to recover soon. Funds saved from this program will be used to cover those reductions as well as the severance costs.
- 7. Does the 3-year restriction on reemployment include independent consultant agreements?** Yes. It includes employment in any capacity, including contract, rehired retirees, temporary or consulting.

- 8. What will happen to my accrued sick leave if I participate in UCMVSP?** How sick leave is treated depends on your plans after separation from UC:
- If you retire within 120 days of separation, your sick leave will be converted to service credit and used in determining your UC retirement income unless you elect a lump sum retirement option.
 - Sick leave is not, however, paid out upon separation from employment.
- 9. What will happen to my unused vacation time if I participate in UCMVSP?** You will be paid for any accrued vacation hours upon separation from employment.
- 10. Can I use vacation leave time to carry me to my separation date?** Use of vacation accruals is subject to the manager's approval. Situations vary and the decision to approve use of accruals prior to separation from the University is influenced by the amount accrued as well as the operational needs of the unit.
- 11. How will severance be calculated?** Severance pay is based on appointment type:
- PSS appointments receive one week's pay for each full year of service (16 weeks' max)
 - MSP appointments receive one month's pay for each full year of service (6 months max)
 - For represented employees, the severance amount will be determined by the layoff provision of the appropriate collective bargaining agreement
- 12. Is the separation date of April 30, 2021 flexible?** No.
- 13. When will my benefits be terminated?** The University's normal contribution (if applicable) to the employee's medical, dental, vision, and basic life insurance coverage will continue through the last day of the last month for which premiums are paid. Coverage will terminate on this date.

More information can be reviewed here:

<https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/compensation-and-benefits/roadmaps/leaving-uc-employment.html>