

Benefits Department-New Hire Retirement FAQs

Initial Enrollment

- 1) Q: Who is required to participate in state retirement?

A: Participation is mandatory for employees in classified, unclassified non-faculty, faculty or temporary returned retiree positions. One exemption to this rule is if an employee has a **deposit** (active or inactive account) with SCRS or PORS; he/she will be required to participate in retirement regardless of the position classification. More information can be found regarding this on page 3 of the [SCRS Handbook](#).

- 2) Q: Who is eligible for Optional participation in retirement?

A: Participation is optional for employees in temporary, research grant, resident or postdoctoral fellow positions. If your new position is optional participation, you may elect Non-Membership until you are assigned to a position that requires your participation. One exemption to this rule is if an employee has a **deposit** (active or inactive account) with SCRS or PORS; he/she will be required to participate in retirement regardless of the position classification. If you select Non-Membership as a new hire, you cannot join a retirement plan later unless you are assigned to a position that requires mandatory participation.

- 3) Q: How would I know what type of position classification that I belong to?

A: Please review your offer letter. It will indicate the category of position classification that you are in. If you are unable to locate your offer letter, please reach out to our Onboarding Department at univ-hr-onboarding@musc.edu for assistance.

- 4) Q: How will I enroll in a state retirement plan?

A: MUSC University HR Benefits Office will initiate the retirement enrollment process. You will then receive an email from noreply@peba.sc.gov to your MUSC email address with a link to make your election. Please refer to the [Retirement Enrollment Guide for New Hires](#).

- 5) Q: In the new hire orientation, it was communicated that I will receive an email link to enroll in a retirement plan. I have not received my PEBA retirement enrollment link, what should I do?

A: Check your junk/spam folder first. If you have not received the PEBA retirement email link, please email benefits@musc.edu.

- 6) Q: How long do I have to enroll in a state retirement plan?

A: You will have **30 days** from your date of hire to enroll in one of the state retirement plans.

7) Q: What happens if I do not make an election within the 30-day period?

A: If you do not elect a retirement plan (or Non-Membership for those that are eligible) within your first 30-days of employment, you will default into [the South Carolina Retirement System \(SCRS\)](#).

8) Q: What state retirement plans does MUSC offer?

A: MUSC offers three state retirement plans – State Optional Retirement Plan (ORP), Police Officers Retirement System (PORS) and the South Carolina Retirement System (SCRS). The employee contribution rate for ORP and SCRS is 9% pre-tax. The employee contribution rate for PORS is 9.75% pre-tax. The vesting schedule for each of these plans is different.

To be a member of PORS, you must be employed as a police officer, firefighter or peace officer for an employer that participates in PORS. Magistrates and probate judges are also eligible to participate in PORS. Unless state law exempts your position, you must earn at least \$2,000 per year and devote at least 1,600 hours per year to this work.

Please review the links below for more information regarding these plans:

- [ORP Plan Information](#)
- [PORS Plan Information](#)
- [SCRS Plan information](#)

9) Q: Can I change my contribution rate to my PEBA-administered retirement account (SCRS, ORP or PORS)?

A: No. Contribution rates for SCRS/PORS/ORP are preset by PEBA retirement and a statutory schedule, subject to additional increases to meet certain funding requirements.

10) Q: I can't change my contribution rate to my PEBA-Administered retirement plan, but I wish to contribute more towards my retirement. What are my options?

A: As an MUSC employee, you can save additional money for retirement by opening a Supplemental Retirement Account (401k, 457 and/or 403b). Supplemental Retirement Accounts consist of employee contributions only; there is no MUSC match. Please visit the [MUSC University Benefits Supplemental Retirement website](#) for more information and enrollment instructions.

11) Q: I completed my online retirement enrollment however, I would like to make another change during my initial enrollment (30 days of hire), what should I do?

A: Email benefits@musc.edu to make your changes. The HR Benefits team will then provide you with the appropriate form to complete. Once you have completed the form, send to benefits@musc.edu and we will mail the paperwork to PEBA retirement. It takes 7 to 10 business days for PEBA Retirement to review and approve the changes.

12) Q: Once your initial enrollment period ends, can I make changes to my retirement plan later?

A: SCRS participants may not change their retirement plan. ORP participants who have a minimum of 12 months of participation, but no more than 60 months are eligible to switch from State ORP to SCRS during the retirement enrollment period. ORP participants may change investment providers regardless of participation time. The enrollment period for State Optional Retirement Program (ORP) participants is January 1 through March 1 of each year. During the enrollment period, ORP participants may change investment providers or, if eligible, irrevocably elect to join the South Carolina Retirement System (SCRS).

13) Q: Would an assignment change allow you to enroll in retirement?

A: It depends. If you are currently participating in one of the State retirement plans (SCRS, ORP, or PORS), an assignment change does not allow you to change your plan. If you are not currently participating in one of the State retirement plans, an assignment change may allow you to enroll in a retirement plan if you are assigned to a position that requires mandatory participation.

14) Q: My paycheck shows "Undec-retirement" as a deduction, what is this?

A: Retirement contributions will be withheld from your paycheck and listed as "Undecided" on your pay stub automatically when you start employment. Depending on when you make a retirement plan decision you will see the deduction change to State Retirement or ORP- (vendor name) on future paychecks. Alternatively, if you are in an optional participation category and select Non-Membership, you should be refunded any retirement contributions taken on a future paycheck. Please check with payroll at 843-792-2191 if you have questions regarding contribution refunds.

15) Q: I logged into to my ORP account and it shows a zero balance?

A: ORP contributions are remitted to the ORP vendors on the 10th day of the following month for all employees (monthly-paid and bi-weekly paid). The vendor does not automatically post payments until they reconcile all accounts, which usually ends up being the end of the second week. Please contact HR payroll at 843-792-2191 for further assistance.

16) Q: What is the difference between state service and retirement service credit?

A: **State service** is time worked in an FTE position; while **retirement service credit** is time participating/contributing in the state retirement plan specifically SC Retirement System (SCRS) or the Police Officers Retirement System (PORS).

Transfers

17) Q: I am coming from another state agency and already participate in a state retirement plan (ORP, SCRS or PORS), do I need to complete an enrollment?

A: Yes, as a transfer, you will still need to follow the instructions and use the link to make your election. You may elect to keep your current plan or switch plans. If you have questions, please email benefits@musc.edu or contact PEBA Retirement at 1-888-260-9430. If you do not elect a retirement plan within your first 30-days of employment, you will default into [the South Carolina Retirement System \(SCRS\)](#).

18) Q: How can I view my PORS or SCRS retirement account?

A: You can log into [Member Access](#) to view your account. Keep in mind the balance in this portal will only be your contributions and interest until you are eligible to receive retirement benefits.

19) Q: How do State ORP participants access information on their account balance?

A: State Optional Retirement Program (State ORP) investment providers deliver quarterly statements to participants, which contain the account balance and other details. You can also get this information by logging in to your account on your investment provider's State ORP website or by calling your investment provider's toll-free State ORP participant customer service number. Please visit the [ORP Provider page](#) for contact information.

After Initial Enrollment

20) Q: What is a beneficiary?

A: A beneficiary is the person or people who will receive your retirement account balance if you pass away. You can change your beneficiaries at any time. If you have no eligible beneficiaries named, death benefits will be paid to: 1) your estate, 2) your lawful spouse, if living; otherwise; 3) your natural or legally adopted child or children, in equal shares, if living; otherwise; 4) Your parents, in equal shares, if living; otherwise, 5) Your siblings, in equal shares, if living.

21) Q: What is the difference between my state retirement plan account balance (SCRS, ORP, or PORS) and the incidental death benefit?

A: State employees with at least one year of service are eligible for an incidental death benefit equal to one times their annual state salary. This benefit remains in place if the employee is working for a state agency participating in state retirement (SCRS, ORP or PORS). When you die, your beneficiary would receive your retirement account balance and your incidental death benefit. Please note, you can have different beneficiaries or the same beneficiaries for both benefits. If you do not take any action to update your incidental death beneficiary information, it will default to your estate.

22) Q: How do I change beneficiaries?

A: If you participate in SCRS or PORS retirement, you can update your incidental death beneficiary or state retirement beneficiary information anytime through [Member Access](#). If you do not take any action to update your beneficiary information, it will default to your estate.

If you participate in the ORP plan, to update your incidental death beneficiary, register/log into [Member Access](#). To update your retirement account beneficiary, please login to your ORP account. If you do not take any action to update your beneficiary information, it will default to your estate.

23) Q: When I look in "My Records", it says that MUSC contributes 22.81% to my ORP plan. I thought it was 5%?

A: MUSC contributes 22.81%, however 5% of that goes directly to the employee's ORP account. The remaining contribution goes to the PEBA Retirement System for fees (ORP plan, admin fees, etc.), the retiree insurance surcharge and to pay for the group life benefit (equal to one times the employee's annual salary).

24) Q: I have additional questions regarding eligibility for retirement, are there any other resources available for me to review?

A: Yes, please review our Retirement FAQs on our [Benefits website](#) for a comprehensive listing of additional common questions/answers. Please also visit the [PEBA website](#) and PEBA's [Retirement Enrollment Guide \(PDF\)](#) for additional information.