

# Research Councils' Pension Scheme

## Administration Standards

---

### Purpose of this document

This document details the administration standards that JSS and employers adhere to.

The document is owned and approved by the RCPS Management Board who; act as managers of the scheme and applies to scheme employer and the administrator of the scheme; Joint Superannuation Services (JSS)

The Management Board responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that the scheme rules are adhered to
- Ensuring that the scheme is operated according to legislation
- Ensuring that the scheme is administered efficiently and effectively

JSS and employers must:

- Work effectively together to ensure that the scheme is administered and delivered to its statutory requirements
- Ensure that scheme stakeholders receive good value for public money

The scheme has specific requirements from employers and their organisations and this document explains what those requirements are (Employer Obligations).

Being a member employer of the RCPS automatically requires the employer to abide by these obligations.

JSS also have a set of obligations which set out the primary activities and services provided (JSS Obligations).

**The RCPS is governed by law laid before Parliament in The Superannuation Act 1972 and therefore failure to adhere to the obligations could have a detrimental effect on the scheme.**

# Research Councils' Pension Scheme

## Administration Standards

---

### 1. Employer Obligations

#### General Principles

All employers or organisations that are members of the RCPS, (past or present), are expected to follow these obligations at all times.

Where the employer has outsourced / subcontracted the management of their HR, Finance and/or Payroll it is the employer's responsibility to ensure that the third party service provider meets these obligations.

Any non-compliance to these obligations will be escalated to and dealt with by the RCPS Management Board.

Employers must provide a named contact(s) within their organisation who is the point of contact for matters affecting their RCPS members. The contact details for this person must be provided to JSS and updated where appropriate. This also applies to any organisation that the employer has outsourced to.

JSS are dependent on scheme employers to provide accurate data at the right intervals as set out in the **Table of Responsibilities** and when requested.

The accuracy of this information is critical to ensuring that:

- Member's records are updated and correct
- Information can be provided to members quickly
- Pension benefits can be paid correctly and on time.

# Research Councils' Pension Scheme

## Administration Standards

---

**Table of Employer Responsibilities**

Activity	What needs to be done	When it needs to be done
Abatement	Manage additional hours worked to reduce risk of abatement of pension and inform employee	As appropriate
Added Pension	Payroll to set up contributions upon receiving notification from JSS that member wishes to purchase added pension	Effective from notification date; implement in next pay run
	Payroll to amend any added pension contributions as notified by JSS	Effective from notification date; implement in next pay run
Annual Benefit Statements	Provide JSS with accurate and complete information to specified criteria as requested to enable production of annual benefit statements; Pensionable salaries, allowances, earnings, change of hours, added pension contributions, normal working hours, unpaid absences and any other information as appropriate	Within deadline notified to employer by JSS
Attendance	Notify JSS of any changes to members contracted hours	Within 5 working days of receipt of change
	Notify JSS of any additional hours worked (for reckonable service and partial retirement abatement purposes)	Within 5 working days of change
	Notify JSS of any reckonable service absences (e.g. Unpaid leave, strike days, career breaks etc.	Within 5 working days of change
	Notify JSS of any sick leave that affects the members pay	Within 5 working days of change
Auto Enrolment / Re-Staging	Automatically enrol new starters that are eligible for membership in the RCPS	On Appointment / Re-Staging (every 3 years from employers original staging date)
Change of personal details	Notify JSS of a change of details e.g. name, address,	Within 10 working days of notification by employee
Contributions Pay Over	Pay over to JSS employer and employee contributions, including Added Years and Added Pension where applicable	By the 19 <sup>th</sup> day of the month following the pay run
	Submit supporting paperwork for contributions	By the 19 <sup>th</sup> day of the month following the pay run

# Research Councils' Pension Scheme

## Administration Standards

Activity	What needs to be done	When it needs to be done
Deaths	Notify JSS of death of a member	Immediately
Estimate Requests	Give clear instructions with estimate requests / or any exit with pensionable implications noting terms, authorisation numbers, last day of service, current salary/pay and Cabinet Office Approval code if applicable	Where possible provide 10 days' notice to JSS
New Starters	Notify JSS of new starters enrolled and eligible for the RCPS	Within 10 working days after employees start date
Normal Resignations / End of Contracts	Notify JSS of any normal resignations or end of contracts exiting from the scheme	As soon as possible on receipt of notification
Opt Outs	Notify JSS of employee opting out of the scheme, including forwarding of opt out form to JSS. If member is opting out in first 3 months of membership advise payroll to arrange refund of contributions	Within 5 working days of receiving request from employee
Partnership Pension	Advise JSS and payroll of changes to Partnership contributions upon receiving request from the member	Implement from next available pay run
	Payroll to amend any Partnership contributions as notified by JSS	Effective from notification date; implement in next pay run
Pre-Retirement Courses	Inform JSS of any scheduled pre-retirement course that JSS attendance is required at	Within 3 calendar months of the course being held
Redundancy	Inform JSS or any managed exits with pension implications (redundancy)	Where practicable 3 calendar months before last day of service
Reservists (Members called up for duty with the armed forces)	Advise JSS of any member on reservist duties and inform payroll	At least 1 calendar month before reservist duty commences
Secondments Out	Agree terms with the member, borrowing employer and JSS. Inform payroll if applicable	Notify before secondment commences, or as soon as possible afterwards

# Research Councils' Pension Scheme

## Administration Standards

---

It is recognised that from time to time notifications to JSS will happen outside of the timescales stated above. It is expected that any such occurrences will be exceptional and will therefore be monitored accordingly and managed by exception.

Notifications that are identified to be falling outside of the specified timescale on a regular basis will be reviewed and appropriate action will be taken, for example review of timescales and update of existing processes.

JSS will carry out Assurance checks as identified on individual activities to ensure compliance.

# Research Councils' Pension Scheme

## Administration Standards

---

### 2. JSS Obligations

#### General Principles

- Phone calls will aim to be answered within 3 rings.
- Voicemails left for JSS will be retrieved at least daily.
- Where JSS cannot resolve the query within the expected timescales JSS will provide an update to explain what is happening and what they are doing to resolve the query.

In addition to these general principles, JSS will:

- Write to members confirming any changes made to their personal details or death benefit nomination
- Commit to developing their employees to ensure that they are equipped to deliver a pension scheme administration service that provides value for public money
- Undertake all practices and actions in accordance with the most recent legislation
- Not provide any financial advice to members nor should any information provided by JSS be construed as a recommendation or financial advice

JSS will provide accurate data at the right intervals as set out in the **Table of Responsibilities** and when requested.

Any non-compliance to these obligations will be escalated to and dealt with by the **RCPS Management Board**.

The accuracy of information is critical to ensuring that:

- Member's records are correct and updated
- Information can be provided to members quickly
- Pension benefits can be paid correctly and on time.

# Research Councils' Pension Scheme

## Administration Standards

### Table of JSS Responsibilities

Activity	What needs to be done	When it needs to be done
Abatement	Advise member on level of abatement and Annual Earnings Margin for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-employment, or</li> <li>• Partial retirement</li> </ul>	Within 5 working days of receipt of all details
Added Pension	Notify payroll/employer of application to purchase added pension or notify payroll/employer of changes to any existing Added Pension Arrangements Deadlines for members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lump sum salary deductions in current tax year – Mid Feb</li> <li>• New or changes to monthly contributions – Mid Mar</li> <li>• Cheque payments to purchase Added Pension – Early March</li> </ul>	Within 10 working day of request and receipt of necessary forms
Added years contracts	Progress any changes to Added Years contracts due to changes in working hours or cancel contracts as applicable	Within 5 working days of receipt
Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVC)	Write to AVC provider when member leaves the scheme	Within 5 working days of notification of last day of service
	Send retirement illustration to member when received from AVC provider	Within 5 working days of notification
All Awards (except revision and death cases)	Process lump sum payment when all necessary documentation has been received	At least 3 working days before due date (due date is the first working day after Last Day of Service LDS)
	Process lump sum payment where all necessary documentation has been received less than 6 working days before LDS	Within 5 working days of receipt
	Process lump sum payment where all necessary documentation has been received no more than 15 working days after LDS	Within one calendar month of LDS
	Issue first instalment of pension when all necessary documentation has been received	Within 1 calendar month of LDS or date of receipt if received later than 15 working days after LDS

# Research Councils' Pension Scheme

## Administration Standards

Activity	What needs to be done	When it needs to be done
Annual Benefit Statements	Issue Annual Benefit Statements to all active scheme members	Annually in July, as per agreement with RCPS Management Board
Attendance	Update the database for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes to contracted hours</li> <li>• Any non-reckonable service</li> <li>• Paid or unpaid leave that affects members pay/earnings</li> </ul>	Within 5 working days of notification
Changes of Bank details	Notify payroll provider of change of bank details and inform pensioner if payment cannot be redirected before next pay run period	Within 5 working days of written notification or immediately if notification received by telephone
Death in Retirement	Send forms to widow(er) or eligible partner and request death certificate and marriage certificate if applicable	Within 2 working days of notification
	Process dependants' benefits, including lump sum where applicable	Within 5 working days of receipt of all necessary documentation
Death in Service	Acknowledge death and write to next of kin for copies of the death certificate	Immediately upon notification
	Calculate and notify dependants of death benefits on receipt of all relevant information	Within 5 working days of receipt of notification
	Process payments on receipt of death certificate and valid beneficiary nomination	Within 2 working days of receipt of notification
	Notify AVC provider of death of member	Within 2 working days of notification
Divorce Information	Provide Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) and statement of benefits for divorce proceedings	Within 10 working days of request (if Guaranteed Minimum Pension GMP is required this may take longer)

# Research Councils' Pension Scheme

## Administration Standards

Estimate Requests (Group and Individual)	Provide estimate for: Age, Early (ARR), Ill Health, Preserved Awards, and Redundancy Exits	Within 10 working days of receipt of all information. Major exercises will be managed on a case by case basis
Injury Benefits	Obtain all information from the employer and decide whether it is a qualifying injury or submit to scheme medical adviser and inform member	Within 10 working days of receipt of full information
	Where case has been referred to the Scheme Medical Adviser make decision about qualifying injury based on advice received from Scheme Medical Adviser and available evidence. Notify member and employer of decision	Within 5 working days of receipt of medical adviser's advice
	Calculate injury benefit award and notify beneficiary of injury benefit payable	Within 17 working days of decision
	If beneficiary is awarded a damages settlement, recalculate award	Within 10 working days of receipt of figure from scheme actuary following notification of settlement
National Fraud Initiative (NFI)	JSS will provide data to the NFI every 2 years or as requested for inclusion in the NFI exercise	By the agreed date
New Starters	Enter new starters to the JSS database and send out new starter paperwork following notification to JSS by the employer: <i>Pension choices and questionnaire including any other associated</i>	Within 10 working days of notification
Normal Leavers (before pension age)	Provide early leavers with less than two years' service with quotation of CETV and refund of contributions	Within 20 working days of receipt of leaving date notification
	Provide early leavers with two or more years' service with details of preserved benefits	Within 40 working days of receipt of leaving date notification
Opt Out	Write to members to confirm opt out and update database	Within 10 working days of notification

# Research Councils' Pension Scheme

## Administration Standards

Activity	What needs to be done	When it needs to be done
Partnership Pension Scheme	Advise HR/payroll of change of age related contributions Advise member of change of age related contributions	Within 10 working days of contracted change
Personal information and DBN	JSS will keep their records up to date and update personal information and DBN's on the database and files	10 Working days following receipt of all information to be updated
	Acknowledge a request to update personal details	10 working days following receipt of all information to be updated
Pre-Retirement Courses	JSS will attend pre-retirement courses and where required present on pension related topics	At least 3 calendar months' notice to be provided by the employer
Preserved Awards	Send Preserved in to Pay forms and information to member <i>Including Statement of Lifetime Allowance where applicable</i>	12 Weeks / 60 working days before pension due date
	Process Preserved in to Pay forms	Within 10 working days of receipt of all necessary information
	Issue first instalment of pension	By due date, or, in subsequent payroll payment period if information is returned late
Post-retirement actions	Revisions to awards to be made and processed	Within 10 working days of receipt of details from employer or payroll
	Revisions to preserved awards to be made and processed	Within 2 calendar months of receipt of details from employer or payroll
Queries	Acknowledge queries	Within 48 hours of receipt
	Respond to queries by phone, email or letter	Within 10 working days
Redundancy	JSS will assist employers as required on large scale redundancy / managed exit exercises	As required
Reservist (members called up for duty with the armed forces)	JSS will invoice Payroll/HR in respect of employer and employee (if applicable) contributions to the scheme	Twice yearly
	JSS will agree with the member how employee contributions to the scheme will be paid for	Prior to leaving

# Research Councils' Pension Scheme

## Administration Standards

Activity	What needs to be done	When it needs to be done
Risk Register	JSS will review the JSS risk register on a quarterly basis and refer any need to make changes to the RCPS Management Board for discussion and/or approval	Quarterly
Secondments Out	JSS will invoice the seconded employer in respect of employee and employer contributions to be paid	Invoiced twice yearly and in accordance with the scheme rules
Transfers in	Acknowledge request for a transfer in from a member and write to the previous scheme (where necessary send reminder letter to scheme if not reply in six weeks and inform member)	Within 10 working days of receipt of all information
	Provide member with RCPS service credit / transfer in quote <i>Following receipt of the transfer value from the previous scheme</i>	Within 10 working days of receipt of all information
	If member accepts service credit / quote 1. write to previous scheme to request payment 2. chase payment if not received	1. Within 10 working days of acceptance 2. Within 20 working days of payment request
	Confirm to member completion of transfer in and process payment	Within 10 working days of receipt of payment
Transfers Out	Acknowledge members request for transfer value on receipt of all information and provide transfer value quotation	Within 10 working days of request
	Notify member and/or scheme that transfer value has lapsed if transfer is not progressed	Within 3 calendar months of quote
	Process payment if transfer quote is accepted and write to member to notify them of transfer completed	Within 10 working days of necessary documents being received (Payment may take longer if it is more than £75,000 due to Government cash flow forecasting requirements)

# Research Councils' Pension Scheme

## Administration Standards

---

### Other Activities

The following are the other activities that JSS undertake as required, or those that happen at irregular intervals:

Activity	What needs to be done
Added Pension Estimates	Provide the estimated cost of buying Added Pension on request from member
Annual and Lifetime Allowances	Provide members with Annual Allowance calculations on request and in line with legislation. Provide members with Lifetime Allowance information upon benefit crystallisation
Employer Pension Notices (EPN)	On receipt of Civil Service employer Pension Notices JSS will decide if additional communication is needed to RCPS members or employers; if needed these will be prepared and shared with the RCPS Management Board to review and cascade within their organisations as appropriate
Providing information to the Government Actuary Department (GAD)	JSS will calculate and provide annual Pension Disclosure information to employer/organisations within agreed timescales for inclusion in their annual accounts
Website	JSS will keep the website up to date and add news items and updates as appropriate. The RCPS final accounts will be made available through the JSS website (these are stored on the BBSRC publications page)

# Research Councils' Pension Scheme

## Administration Standards

---

### Management Resource

JSS will provide a Management Resource for giving policy advice to RCPS member organisations for current and future legislation as well as providing advice on any scheme changes.

JSS will also assist employers in major redundancy exercises including calculating and supplying group pension liability information.

### Audit

JSS will proactively assist internal and external Auditors, ensuring that are proved with the data/information needed as far as is practically and reasonably possible so that a full and accurate audit of JSS and the RCPS accounts can be completed.

The RCPS Management Board and JSS Management Team will review any recommendations made by the Auditors.

### JSS Managed Projects

As and when required, JSS will provide project management resource to formally manage projects affecting the RCPS, its employers or its members.

These will typically be large scale projects that affect multiple employers or activities that have an assurance requirement to follow defined project methodology.

# Research Councils' Pension Scheme

## Administration Standards

---

### 3. Member Obligations

#### General Principles

All RCPS members are expected to commit to a number of obligations; these are detailed in the **Table of Responsibilities**. JSS are dependent on members providing accurate information and for keeping their personal information up to date

The accuracy of member information is critical to ensuring that:

- Member's individual records are updated and correct
- Information can be provided to members quickly
- Pension benefits can be paid correctly and on time

#### Table of Member Responsibilities

Activity	What needs to be done	When it needs to be done
Change of bank details	Notify JSS as well as your payroll provider	As soon as possible
Changes to personal details	If you have a preserved award you must tell JSS about any changes to personal details e.g. name,	As soon as possible
	Ensure that your personal details are kept up to date e.g. name	As soon as possible
Death Benefit Nomination Form	Ensure that the DBN is kept updated and sent to JSS It is important that this is kept up to date, forms can be downloaded from the JSS website	As soon as possible
New starter pension choices form and questionnaire	Complete and return to JSS	Within one calendar month of receipt of documents

# Research Councils' Pension Scheme

## Administration Standards

---

### 4. Glossary of Terms / Abbreviations Used

Auto Enrolment	Legislation that requires employers to automatically enter new employees in to a work place pension scheme
Abatement	What will happen if a partial retiree earns more than their AEM; their pension will be reduced – abated
AEM	Annual Earnings Margin (see Abatement)
CETV	Cash Equivalent Transfer Value: The value of pension benefits accrued in a scheme, this is calculated using factors provided by GAD
DBN	Death Benefit Nomination
Employer	The organisation which employs/employed the member and pays/has paid contributions to the RCPS for the member
GAD	Government Actuary Department
GMP	Guaranteed Minimum Pension
JSS	Joint Superannuation Services
Member	A person who is currently employed by an RCPS employer/organisation and is contributing towards an RCPS pension
NFI	National Fraud Initiative
PCSPS	Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme
Preserved award	A pension (and retirement lump sum) that is due to be paid at a later date; normally the scheme pension age
RCPS	Research Councils' Pension Scheme