

## Student exemption forms: Important compliance reminders for employer protection

### Who should read?

Finance directors, payroll, or human resources professionals at OPERS-reporting colleges and universities

### Situation overview

Students employed by the college or university where they are regularly attending classes have the option to exempt themselves from OPERS membership. Effective immediately, a new version of the *Request for Optional Exemption as a Student* (form F-3) has been issued. This means that:

- Effective Nov. 1, 2013 through Dec.31, 2013, all student exemptions received by OPERS must be one of the student exemption forms revised as of August or October 2013. (You can find the revision date in the lower-left corner of the form.)
- The form will be returned stamped, *Not Approved*, if OPERS receives a version of the student exemption form that does not have a revision date of August or October 2013 on or after Nov. 1, 2013.
- If you receive a form stamped *Not Approved*, you may submit a newly completed form if the date employment began is still within the established 30-day window (between start of student's employment and the day student signs the new form). However, the newly submitted form must comply with these deadlines:
  - Prior to Dec. 31, 2013, you may use student exemption form versions dated August or October 2013.
  - After Jan. 1, 2014, you may only submit the October 2013 version.

### Why this is necessary—future impact to employers

The student exemption option may limit future membership rights. Therefore, the exemption form must be completed accurately and free of alterations (see exact definitions of alterations below).

To protect the employer population from future, potentially significant, liabilities, OPERS must receive accurate, original and *unaltered* student exemption forms. Unaltered forms are critical so that future membership determinations can be addressed properly. If an altered form is produced, it may call into question the validity of the document—thereby increasing the possibility that the college or university will be liable for unreported contributions.

### Actions requested

Individuals who process the student exemption forms are asked to ensure all instructions included with the student exemption forms have been followed--forms not following instructions will be returned as *Not Approved*. Note these details...

### Note:

From Nov. 1—Dec. 31, 2013, employers may use the student exemption form with a revision date of either August or October 2013.

As of Jan. 1, 2014, ONLY the October 2013 version may be used.

All forms will be processed using the standards outlined in this Employer Notice.



- Although employers may use either the August or October version of the student exemption form until Dec. 31, 2013, employers are encouraged to be safe and only use the October 2013 version, now available.
- Effective Jan. 1, 2014, only the October 2013 version of the student exemption form will be accepted.

Here are the standards used to evaluate all student exemption forms (F-3):

- Student exemptions will be not approved and returned if...
  - The form is not signed by the student or the student signature has been altered (whited out, crossed out, or written over).
  - The form is not signed by an employer contact with signature authority.
  - The student signature date in Step 1 is altered (whited out, crossed out, or written over) or not within 30 days of the employment date.
  - The employment date in Step 2 is altered (whited out, crossed out, or written over) or not within 30 days of the student's signature date in Step 1.
  - Either the Social Security number or employee identification number is not present.
  - Student signature is electronic (student signatures must be handwritten).
  - The information on the form is inaccurate or information is submitted inaccurately.

#### **About returned forms**

Forms stamped *Not Approved* and returned to the college or university will not be accepted if changes are made on the form stamped *Not Approved*. You must complete a new form student exemption form and the form must be on the current version, defined above.

To assist with compliance:

- OPERS will stamp the bottom section of the form *Not Approved*, and
- The *Not Approved* stamp will be placed over the section of the form that is out of compliance.

When student exemptions are not approved, the student must establish membership and the college/university must begin remitting retirement contributions on pensionable earnings.

#### **Need more information?**

After you review this *Employer Notice*, contact Employer Outreach with questions or comments at 888-400-0965, or by e-mail at [employeroutreach@opers.org](mailto:employeroutreach@opers.org).

**For a current listing of OPERS Board members, please visit [www.opers.org](http://www.opers.org)**

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