



EMPLOYER NOTICE

Changes to the Student Exemption Process

WHO SHOULD READ THIS NOTICE

OPERS employer contacts from state colleges and universities

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Beginning Feb. 1, 2021, OPERS will discontinue processing student exemption requests through a dedicated mobile app. Instead, we will begin using a new, streamlined web-based process

BEGINNING FEB. 1, 2021, STUDENT EXEMPTION REQUESTS SHOULD BE PROCESSED AS FOLLOWS:

- Employers will notify OPERS of a new student employee by entering the employees' name, social security number, e-mail, phone number (now optional) and hire date into ECS.
- This information will trigger the sending of an email and text message (assuming OPERS is provided with the student's cell phone number) to the new student employee.
- This e-mail will contain a link customized to just that employee. Clicking the link will take the employee to a web page where they can choose to become an OPERS member or choose to exercise their student exemption and opt-out of OPERS membership within 30 days of their hire date.
- Once the employee has made their choice, ECS is automatically updated and the employer is notified.
- If the student chooses to exempt, the employer will receive an email containing a copy of the exemption form. If the student chooses to participate in OPERS, the employer will receive an email asking that they submit the Personal History Record, Form A, for the student employee.

THERE ARE MULTIPLE ADVANTAGES TO THIS NEW STUDENT EXEMPTION PROCESS, INCLUDING:

- Employers can log in to ECS and see any pending student exemptions.
- Employers can choose to re-send a student employee their exclusive link if they have not responded or deleted the e-mail within the 30-day window.
- OPERS Employer Outreach can also re-send the link if an employee cannot locate the email or text.
- Student employees can open this e-mail and access their exclusive link from a mobile phone, a tablet or a computer. They no longer need to download an app.
- ECS will create a permanent record of the employee's selection that can be accessed at any time in the future. Employers will no longer need to keep a paper copy of the student exemption form. The exemption form can be found in ECS under the Student Exemption section in PDF format with a link beside the student's name.

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TRANSITIONS FROM THE MOBILE APPLICATION

- The mobile application will no longer be available beginning the evening of Jan, 29, 2021.
- OPERS will send out a new email on Jan. 30, 2021 to those students who are within their 30-day window and have not made a selection. This email will include the new link to the web-based process.

EXCEPTION PROCESS FOR STUDENT EMPLOYEES WITHOUT ONLINE ACCESS

If a student employee does not have access to a computer, mobile phone or tablet either at home or through the college or university:

- Employers will enter the student's information into ECS as described above but will check a box labeled Paper Exception to add the student's demographic information.
- This process will trigger ECS to send the student employee a letter which will inform them of their option to exempt from OPERS membership.
- The letter will provide prompts for the student to sign, date and mail the letter back to OPERS if they wish to exercise their option to be exempted.
- If the student employee wishes to become an OPERS members, no action is required.

Once OPERS receives the signed and dated letter, we will key the exemption data into ECS. This will allow the student exemption to be recorded in ECS in the same manner regardless of how the student submits the information. The employer will receive a copy of the exemption form.

MANDATORY USE OF ECS PROCESS FOR STUDENT EXEMPTIONS

Beginning Jan. 1, 2022, employers from state colleges and universities will be required to use the new ECS based student exemption process. The exception process for students without access to an e-mail account or computer will remain in place. These students will receive letters as described above. The current paper Student Exemption form F-3 will no longer be accepted for approval beginning Jan. 1, 2022.

EMPLOYER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

OPERS will offer webinar training sessions to provide employers with a step-by-step tutorial for this new process. We will also be glad to schedule a one-on-one webinar with one of our employer training specialists and an ECS user(s) within your college or university.

FILE SPECIFICATIONS

If you would like to use file transfer method to submit student exemptions in ECS, you can access the updated file specifications within ECS Online Help or by using this link: [Employee Record Format](#)

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

After reviewing this Employer Notice, contact Employer Services with questions or comments at 888-400-0965, or by e-mail at employeroutreach@opers.org.

For a current listing of OPERS Board members, please visit opers.org

It is your responsibility to be certain that OPERS has your current physical and e-mail address on file. If OPERS is not made aware of address changes, we cannot guarantee that you will receive important information pertaining to OPERS public employers. This Employer Notice is written in plain language for use by public employers who are subject to coverage under the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System. It is not intended as a substitute for the federal or state law, namely the Ohio Revised Code, the Ohio Administrative Code, or the Internal Revenue Code, nor will its interpretation prevail should a conflict arise between it and the Ohio Revised Code, Ohio Administrative Code, or Internal Revenue Code. Rules governing the retirement system are subject to change periodically either by statute of the Ohio General Assembly, regulation of the Ohio Public Employees Retirement Board, or regulation of the Internal Revenue Code. If you have questions about this material, please contact our office or seek legal advice from your attorney.