

Handbook of Operating Procedures

EMPLOYEE SERVICE RECOGNITION

A. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to develop a spirit of loyalty and feeling of being part of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) through recognition of faithful service on the part of benefit-eligible employees and qualifying retirees.

B. Persons Affected

This policy applies to any UTRGV employee who is scheduled to work at least twenty (20) hours per week for a period of at least four and one-half (4 1/2) continuous months. Students employed in positions that require student status as a condition of employment are not covered by this policy.

C. Policy

The policy of UTRGV is to recognize and honor the service of employees who have completed at least five years of continuing employment with UTRGV, including prior service with predecessor institutions related to UTRGV (e.g., The University of Texas-Pan American or The University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College), and after every subsequent five-year period of service attained by August 31st of each fiscal year.

Service retirement recognition is for benefits-eligible employees who have completed at least five (5) years of continuous service to UTRGV (including prior service with predecessor institutions related to UTRGV) and have met a condition of retirement under the Teacher Retirement System (TRS). Condition of retirement under TRS will be applied to those employees who are under the Optional Retirement Program.

D. Procedures

Service awards will be presented to employees in recognition of length of service in five-year intervals as eligible service accrues. The Office of Human Resources is responsible for determining which employees are to be recognized during any given service award year, based on the eligible service criteria. A campus-wide program may be sponsored by UTRGV to recognize employees who receive length of service recognition managed by the Office of Human Resources. Staff members receiving annual service awards may be presented with a memento that shall not exceed the monetary value authorized by the Office of Procurement and state law. All UTRGV service recognition events must be coordinated by the Office of Human Resources.

E. Definitions

1. Optional Retirement Program (ORP) – Defined contribution plan governed by Internal Revenue Code Section 403(b) and Chapter 830 of the Texas Government Code. Retirement

benefits are based on the performance of the investments selected and controlled by the employee.

2. *Retiree* - Employees retiring who have completed at least five years of continuous service at UTRGV (including predecessor institutions) and that have met a condition of retirement under the Teacher Retirement System. Condition of retirement under TRS will be applied to those employees who are under the Optional Retirement System (ORP).
3. *Teachers Retirement System of Texas (TRS)* – Defined benefit retirement plan governed by Internal Revenue Code Section 401(a) and Chapters 821-825 of the Texas Government Code. Retirement benefits are based on legislatively determined formulas.

F. Related Statutes or Regulations, Rules, Policies, or Standards

[Texas Government Code Section 2113.201, Use of Appropriated Money, Employee Awards](#)

G. Dates Reviewed or Amended

July 13, 2022 - Reviewed and amended (non-substantive: updated responsible executive).