Date: March 13, 2017

To: Deans, Associate Deans, and School Chairs


From: Jennifer Herazy, Associate Provost for Operations

Subject: Benefits Eligibility for New Faculty

---

Our office has been notified by the USG that the benefits effective date for new employees will be the first of the month following the hire date (see below for a more detailed description of the change from the USG). This clearly affects our incoming faculty members on 9-month contracts with a typical start date of August 15th. This change will be effective as of July 1, 2017, the first day of FY18.

**From the USG: Benefits Effective Date Rule**

**The change:** Benefits effective date will be based on hire date. Benefits will become effective on the first of the month following hire date, unless an employee is hired on the first of the month; then, benefits are effective on the date of hire (i.e. first of the month), regardless of the enrollment date. Employees will continue to have 30 days from their hire date to enroll in benefits.

Currently, benefits effective date is based on enrollment date. Under the current policy, benefits become effective on the first day of the month following enrollment, unless enrollment is on the first day of the month, then benefits become effective upon enrollment. For employees covered under an academic contract, benefits begin on the first day of the contract if enrolled on or before that day, or on the first day of the month following enrollment if they enroll after the contract start.

This change will:
- Ensure consistency of benefits enrollment date across all employee populations
- Establish a clear, understandable benefits effective date reflecting best practices (based on hire date, not enrollment date)

The change will become effective beginning with Fiscal Year 2018 (July 1, 2017).

**Georgia Tech Implementation**

In consultation with Human Resources, Legal Affairs, Faculty Affairs, and USG staff, we have developed guidance to implement this change as seamlessly as possible while minimizing the impact and our ability to recruit new faculty. Please know that our first priority was to seek a solution that would provide benefits...
to faculty employees on their first date of employment. The guidance below is intended to address the change, underscore our commitment to appropriately onboarding new faculty, and fairly and consistently implement the new policy with standardized language.

- School Chairs, Deans, and other faculty hiring managers have the discretion to offer faculty employees on an academic contract an employment effective date of August 1 to accommodate benefits eligibility rules. Faculty who start on or before September 1 will still receive an Academic Year contract. These guidelines apply to all faculty employees who are offered an academic year (9-month) contract.
- If an August 1 start date is offered, the first two weeks of the month should be paid as summer pay. During this period, it is expected that the faculty member will be conducting work to prepare for the academic year. See suggested language for the first paragraph of academic year faculty offer letters below.
- The amount of pay for this two-week period prior to the start of the contract should be commensurate with the necessary preparation for the academic year, consistently applied across schools or colleges, and not be less than 25% of the monthly salary.
- Nine-month Academic Faculty contracts will remain August 16-May 15.
- If the new faculty member prefers an alternative start date, the implications should be clearly explained to the faculty member. A start date that is anything other than the first of the month will result in benefits becoming effective the following month.
- Under no circumstances should an individual be employed by two institutions at the same time.
- In the case of outstanding or accepted offers for Fall 2017, school chairs, deans, and other faculty hiring managers have the discretion to reach out to these individuals to explain this change in benefits effective date and offer a two-week summer pay per the guidance above. This offer should be extended in writing as an addendum to the original offer letter.
- All new hire processing, including a faculty member’s paperwork, should be submitted to OHR prior to July 24, 2017 in order to meet the August 1 hire date.

**Offer Letter Language for the Initial Paragraph (Template Letters)**

On behalf of the Georgia Institute of Technology (“Georgia Tech”), it is my pleasure to offer you a tenure-track appointment as [rank/title] in the [academic unit] at a salary of [salary] per academic year (nine months), effective **August 1, 2017**. The actual 9-month contract period is August 15, 2017-May 15, 2018 however, Georgia Tech recognizes that there is significant work that a new faculty member needs to do in preparation for the start of the academic year. This may include, but not be limited to, course preparation, new employee/faculty orientations, school/college events, laboratory set-up, grant writing, etc. For this two-week period, you will receive [XX.XX].

The effective date of benefits will now be the same for all Georgia Tech employees—faculty and staff. To ensure benefits coverage and allow for course preparation and participation in orientations and other faculty events, we recommend that all new full-time, regular faculty who have teaching responsibilities be offered the August 1. However, should a new faculty member be unable to do so, other options are available in accordance with the guidelines above.

If a unit is unable to fund the full cost of faculty hiring, a request for funding can be made through the normal budget process. Please direct any questions about this change to me [herazy@gatech.edu] or Leslie Sharp [leslie.sharp@gatech.edu].