Retirement model letter ML5(for academic-related staff at grades 6-10 and ALC6)

[Dear employee],

You may be at a point where you are beginning to consider whether and when you might like to retire. There is no fixed or normal age at which University academic-related staff in posts at grades 6 to 10 and ALC6 are expected to retire – the decision is yours. This letter is solely intended to inform you of the sources of information and support available to you from the University and to encourage you to consult them in considering your options.

## Retirement

You are free to decide when to retire, that is to take your pension and leave University employment at whatever age you choose, subject to the rules of the pension scheme to which you belong. These rules change from time to time, and you will need to ask for specific information as to how your scheme’s rules apply in a given situation. As an example, if you are a member of USS (the principal pension scheme for academic-related staff) the current possibilities are:

**Continue at work:** If you wish, you may simply choose to stay at work. No action is required on your part.

**Retirement:** the current normal pension age in USS is 66. From normal pension age all eligible USS members are entitled, if they choose, to take their pension benefits and retire from the University. But, if you do not wish to do so, you can continue to work beyond your normal pension age and take your pension later. Please be aware that the normal pension age will rise in the future, broadly in line with increases to the State Pension age.

**Early Retirement:** Members of staff may apply to retire before the normal pension age. This is commonly known as early retirement. Although some members of staff may be eligible to retire from their 50th birthday, the 55th birthday is generally the earliest age at which a member of USS may apply to take their pension and retire. Early retirement entails receiving a smaller pension – the benefits are actuarially reduced by an amount that depends on how long before the normal pension age the pension is taken.

**Flexible retirement**: The University offers academic-related staff enrolled in USS a flexible retirement option. This is where a member of staff continues to work, but takes a reduction in salary, for example by working reduced hours, in exchange for payment of a portion of their pension. This mix of work and pension can offer an attractive way of tapering towards eventual full retirement. Details of the full flexible retirement policy are available at <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/flexible-retirement>

**Ill-health retirement:** There is provision for retirement on grounds of ill-health. If you believe this may be relevant to your situation, please discuss with your departmental administrator in the first instance.

**[If appropriate] Expiry of fixed-term contract:** please note that as you are currently employed on a fixed-term contract your employment will end at its normal expiry date, unless you choose to retire before that date.

## Thinking of your future

**POD resource:** People and Organisational Development offer an online resource for staff planning for retirement. This downloadable guide includes links to various sources of information about retirement. You can find it under ‘Planning retirement’ on POD’s Course Listings webpage  <https://pod.admin.ox.ac.uk/course-listing>

## Calculating your pension

The amount of benefits you receive if you take your pension will be determined in accordance with the provisions of the pension scheme to which you belong. Whenever you retire, the size of any benefits will depend on a number of factors such as age, pensionable salary and pensionable service. The Pensions Office can provide you with a pensions estimate and with other information on your pension, but they cannot give you financial advice. For this you will have to talk to an independent financial adviser.

For further information:

* Pensions website: <https://finance.admin.ox.ac.uk/pensions>
* Contact Pensions Office: uss@admin.ox.ac.uk or oxnhsps@admin.ox.ac.uk and 01865 (6)16067

## Considering your work options

[Departmental administrator] or [workplace manager] will be available to discuss how you see your work evolving over the coming years and how you might be affected by changes they foresee. Such a discussion would also be an opportunity to explore the possibility of making any adjustments you would like to make to your current pattern of work. You might, for example, want to reduce your work commitments in a way that stops short of retirement by working different hours or by taking on a new role. Your department would welcome as much notice of your intentions as you can give them to help them with succession planning.

## Understanding the procedures

Guidance on retirement policy and procedures is available on the Oxford University website https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/retirement)

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank you for your ongoing contributions to [Department/Faculty] and to the University.

Yours sincerely,

[Departmental Administrator]

Cc:

[A signed and dated copy of this letter should be kept on file]