

General Information about Inquiries and Complaints for Pension Plan Beneficiaries

The term “plan beneficiaries” refers to individuals who have benefits or other entitlements under a registered pension plan. They include plan members who are currently employed (active members), former employees who have a deferred entitlement under their pension plan (former members), former employees who are receiving a pension from the pension plan (retired members) and any other person who has an entitlement under the plan.

The following pages provide plan beneficiaries with information on their rights to information about their pension plan, who to approach with an inquiry or complaint, and the best way to approach those who are responsible for responding to inquiries and complaints.

As you go through this material, you will read about “the administrator” and the Financial Services Regulatory Authority of Ontario (“FSRA”). Each has a specific role in the process of responding to plan members’ inquiries and complaints.

- The administrator is the person or entity that is ultimately responsible for the oversight, management, and administration of a pension plan and the investment of the pension fund. Often the administrator is the employer that establishes the pension plan, and this is the case for Carleton University.
- FSRA is an arm’s length agency of the Ontario Ministry of Finance that is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the *Ontario Pension Benefits Act* (PBA) and regulations.

Who to Contact for Inquiries and Complaints

The nature of an inquiry or complaint determines whether you should contact us or the Financial Services Regulatory Authority of Ontario (FSRA) for assistance.

Questions for the Administrator (Carleton University)

Your benefit entitlement

The Human Resources office maintains all data on a plan beneficiary’s entitlements under the pension plan. Therefore, questions or concerns about the plan beneficiary’s entitlements under the plan, or the provisions of the plan, should be directed to Pension Services in HR. Questions may include, but are not limited to, the following matters:

- the name and registration number of the pension plan;
- the Plan text, brochures or other information that describe the pension plan;

- contribution requirements;
- the pension formula and calculations;
- annual personal pension statements;
- termination options;
- the retirement age and options;
- plan beneficiary designations;
- survivor benefits; and
- spousal benefits.

How to contact Pension Services:

Call Human Resources, 613-520-3634, and ask to speak to a pension specialist, or E-mail brenlee.claman@carleton.ca or elena.maksimova@carleton.ca.

It is recommended that you contact the Administrator in writing and ask for a written response. Be sure to include the reason for the request and the action being sought, and any relevant facts or documentation that support the request.

Investment of the Pension Fund, Governance and Regulatory Filings

If you have an inquiry about the investment of the Pension Fund, the Pension Committee, or various documents that are filed with FSRA, such as periodic actuarial valuations, you should get in touch with the Office of Pension Fund Management. These documents may include, but are not limited to:

- the Plan Text,
- the Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures for the pension fund,
- audited financial statements,
- actuarial valuations, and
- annual information returns filed with the regulator.

More about inspecting plan records

Section 29 of the *Pension Benefits Act, Ontario* defines those parties who have a right to inspect Plan records. This includes Plan beneficiaries, a representative of a trade union that represents members of the Plan, and an agent of a beneficiary authorized in writing. Inspection of records is limited to those parties defined in Section 29 of the PBA.

A complete list of the documents that may be inspected can be found at Section 45 of the Regulations under the *Pension Benefits Act*. The Act notes that you have the right to view plan records once per calendar year. Requests should be made in writing.

A link to the Pension Benefits Act and Regulations is here:

<http://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p08>

The administrator should respond to the plan member within 30 days. If the administrator cannot respond within 30 days, the plan beneficiary should be notified of the reason for the delay and the anticipated date for providing the information.

How to contact Pension Fund Management

Phone: 613-520-3620

E-mail: angela.winder@carleton.ca or andrew.urquhart@carleton.ca

It is recommended that you contact the Administrator in writing and ask for a written response. Be sure to include the reason for the request and the action being sought, and any relevant facts or documentation that support the request.

Taking Inquiries and Complaints to FSRA

FSRA does not keep personal data about individual plan beneficiaries. Therefore, FSRA staff are unable to answer questions about a plan beneficiary's individual benefits and entitlements.

Generally, FSRA will expect the plan member to resolve any inquiries or complaints with the administrator first. However, a plan member may request the involvement of FSRA if the plan member:

- Has already attempted to resolve the issue with the administrator,
- Is unsatisfied with the administrator's response,
- Has concerns about contacting the administrator directly,
- Has questions about the *Pension Benefits Act* and regulations, or
- Wants to report breaches of the legislation.

When FSRA assists a plan beneficiary, its objective is to ensure that the pension plan is being administered in compliance with the *Pension Benefits Act* (PBA) and regulations.

If the plan beneficiary would like FSRA to contact the administrator on his/her behalf, he/she must provide FSRA with written authorization to do so (pension and privacy laws require FSRA to obtain the plan beneficiary's consent).

How to contact FSRA

For general inquiries, a plan beneficiary may reach FSRA at:

Pension Plans Branch Financial Services Regulatory Authority of Ontario
5160 Yonge Street
17th Floor
Toronto ON M2N 6L9

Telephone: (416) 250-7250

Toll-free: 1-800-668-0128

E-mail: contactcentre@fsrao.ca

For more information on how to send an inquiry or complaint to FSRA, follow this link:

<https://www.fsrao.ca/consumers/pensions/file-complaint-about-pension-plan>

Questions about Personal Financial Matters

There are some questions that neither FSRA nor the administrator can answer. The following are types of questions that require the plan beneficiary to make a personal choice. These questions may have an impact on or deal with personal matters. Some of these questions include:

- which termination options should be selected (e.g., whether to take a pension or transfer the commuted value to a locked-in retirement account); or
- which survivor options should the retiring member and his/her spouse choose (e.g., joint and survivor annuity or single life annuity).

For these types of questions, plan beneficiaries may wish to seek expert and independent advice from various professionals (e.g., financial planning consultants, lawyers who specialize in pension law, accountants, etc.).