

Retiring? Steps you need to take

Yes – you can retire and keep on teaching

Why would you retire if you love teaching and are old enough?

1. Relieve the stress of continued threats to cancel classes due to low enrollment.
2. Increase your monthly income since you can receive both your STRS pension and a paycheck from the district.
3. You only increase your earned years of credit up to a certain age. After that, you might as well apply for the pension
4. Your pension is based on highest years of earnings. Check with STRS to see if it is better to retire now.

I was in both STRS and PERS and it was very important that I retire on the exact same day. In my case, the day after my last class meeting.

Here are the steps that you will need to go through:

If you were employed by more than one district (I was employed over the years by both GCCCD and SDCCD) you have to decide which one are you retiring from? I am guessing that is the last one that employed you. Therefore you have to contact the other one and have them send over your Accumulated Sick Leave to the one you are retiring from. If I were you, I would contact both so you can coordinate it, and in case they want to do the requesting instead of you. Accumulated sick leave is used in the calculation of retirement.

Did you belong to any other retirement system besides STRS? You will need to contact both

What I am now going to tell you is for STRS but it applies to any other systems you may have belonged to, such as PERS in my case.

Go to the STRS website, log in to My STRS or whatever the name is, and look everything over. Make printouts of your history, accumulated retirement, year's credit, etc. Whatever you can find. I am not saying these things are there, or under those names, but it helps to get your curiosity going.

For SDCCD, go to People Soft and print out or save to your computer any and all information you can find about yourself. No telling which of that information you may need in the future so I found it helpful to have it with the other information I was accumulating.

Contact STRS and tell them you want to retire. They will want you to take a class, but tell them no - you need to retire now, unless you do want to take the class. What I didn't like about the class is that the speakers seemed to direct the entire information to Contract Faculty that will be able to retired with 30 years credit. They did not address the Adjunct situation in the classes that I attended.

Did I understand that you are not teaching at all? Tell them your classes were cut and you aren't sure if the retirement date should be after the last time you met with students or now.

See if there are any forms on the STRS website that you should fill out, or ask when you set up the appointment if you should fill out anything?

Next step is to go make the appointment to talk to a counselor, then go to their office off in Mission Valley. He gave me more things to fill out.

Next step after making sure STRS is happy, and any other retirement system, is to go to SDCCD Stadium Plaza and talk to HR's Retirement people to turn in paperwork to them.

On every piece of paper that you turn in to SDCCD or your campus, if you plan to continue teaching as I did, write that on the paper. "Will continue to teach after retirement" is what I wrote.

They will give you a paper to turn in to Mesa College and while the District says to turn it in to the Payroll office at Mesa, Mesa has their own rules and it is to be turned in to your Dean. Again, make sure that you tell them you want to continue teaching.

Everyone thinks there is a rule that you can't teach for 180 days but the actual rule is that if you do teach during that time, it will be offset against your pension. In my case, it has a net effect.

When should you retire? My retirement date was the day after my last class in the Fall semester. I felt it would be a slow time for STRS. The 180 day rule meant money paid in the first month or two while they figured out I was still working, was deducted from my pension, then they stopped paying my pension until the 180 day rule was satisfied. My fellow Adjuncts who retired after their last class in the Spring semester had much of their 180 days satisfied over the summer since they did not teach summer school.

We are limited, after retirement, to teaching a 60% load but that is our limit as Adjuncts. Actually now the limit is earning \$42,000 approximately. That is not a problem for me or my friends who don't make that much as Adjuncts teaching at one district.

Your net pay will increase since STRS will no longer be deducted from your pay. For me, it meant over \$200 more each paycheck.

Last but not least - do you have Social Security earnings that entitle you to collect retirement from them? There are separate rules about that, but basically it doesn't hurt to apply.