

DID YOU KNOW?

AN UPDATE FOR FS LEADERSHIP ON PRACTICAL INFORMATION
FROM FACILITIES EMPLOYEE SERVICES



Change Impacting New Employees

Beginning Jan. 1, 2017, the University of Washington will require all new Seattle campus and medical center employees in WFSE and SEIU covered positions to attend Benefits Orientation during their first 31 days of employment. This change comes in accordance with a memorandum of understanding signed with Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE) and Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 925. The agreement assumes employees will be given paid release time to attend this half-day orientation, plus travel time to and from the UW Tower.

The purpose of this agreement is to address concerns by employees who report being discouraged from attending orientation and end up making benefits choices they do not fully understand. Employees have also reported being defaulted into benefits options as required by the state because they did not make their personal enrollment decisions within the 31-day window required by the Washington State Health Care Authority.

Timely entry of new employees into OPUS is critical because the 31-day window begins on the employee's initial eligibility date. If there is a lag in OPUS entry, the new employee does not get the full 31-day window.

Benefits Orientation is held every Monday and we ask that you encourage employees to attend as close to their start date as possible. This advice applies to

all new employees, but is now required for those in WFSE and SEIU 925 covered positions.

Because of limited Benefits staffing, we are only able to offer Benefits Orientation at the UW Tower on the Seattle campus. We realize this is inconvenient for those who work on other campuses, but hope you will communicate to supervisors the importance of allowing new employees the time they need to understand our robust and complex benefits package. This Benefits Orientation is in addition to the Campus Wide UW Orientation that your new employees should also attend.

Please share this information with hiring managers and supervisors and integrate Benefits Orientation into your department's onboarding activities. Information and registration information for Benefits Orientation is available online at:

[new employee onboarding resources](#).

Please contact your FS HR Specialist if you have questions about onboarding or this new requirement.