



Fact Sheet

Occupational Pension Fund of the Canton Zurich (BVK)

This English translation is provided for convenience purposes only. The original German text fully prevails.

Insured Employees

The staff of the University of Zurich are insured with the BVK, the occupational pension fund of the Canton of Zurich, with the exception of staff in junior academic positions, student assistants, and resident and attending physicians, who are insured with the VSAO.

Terms of Admission

All staff (cf. Insured Employees) are insured with the BVK provided they are subject to the mandatory occupational benefits provision defined in the Swiss Occupational Pensions Act (OPA). The Act sets the minimum annual insured salary (incl. the 13th-month salary) at CHF 22'680 (from 1 January 2025). The annual gross salary of part-time employees must be at least equal to this amount.

Start of Insurance Coverage

Risk insurance: Risk insurance coverage begins on 1 January of the year in which the insured person reaches the age of 18.

Full insurance: Full insurance coverage begins on 1 January of the year in which the insured person reaches the age of 21.

Insured Salary

The insured salary forms the basis for the amount of contributions paid into the fund as well as for the calculation of risk benefits. The insured salary corresponds to the qualifying salary minus the coordination deduction. The coordination deduction is currently CHF 26'460 (from 1 January 2025), which is 7/8 of the maximum Swiss old-age and survivors' pension.

For part-time employees, the insured salary is adjusted in accordance with the employment level (for instance, if the employment level is 50%, the coordination deduction is CHF 13'230).

Qualifying Salary

The qualifying salary is the fixed annual salary (incl. 13th-month salary) or the monthly or hourly wage calculated as an annual salary, in accordance with the Swiss Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Act. Regular allowances are deemed part of the qualifying salary.

Attendance fees and honoraria, particularly those arising from the treatment of privately or semi-privately insured patients, are not insured unless otherwise agreed between the employer and the BVK (art. 19 para. 2 BVK Pension Fund Regulations). Similarly, occasional one-off salary components are not insured (art. 19 para. 3 BVK Pension Fund Regulations).

Permanent and regular allowances include the following activities:

- Supplementary allowance
- Regular allowance
- Remuneration for night shift
- Stand-by duty onsite

- Lump sums for on-call duty
- Night-shift hours, incl. vacation
- Stand-by availability
- Sat/Sun duty
- Dental: Emergency duty/assistant
- Dental: Plaster models
- Dental: Payment for instruction
- Sat/Sun daytime work
- On-call duty, night-shift forensic medicine
- On-call duty, day-shift forensic medicine
- Remuneration for dean's office position insured in pension fund

Unpaid Leave

As a rule, the minimum duration of unpaid leave is one month, however, in individual cases, unpaid leave may also be taken for a period of a few weeks and up to two years. Unpaid leave of more than two years will result in withdrawal from the BVK and payment of vested benefits.

Detailed information can be found under "Unpaid Leave" or in the Pension Fund Regulations art. 25 and 26.

Investments to Increase Savings Balance in Pension Fund

Insured persons are entitled to invest in order to increase their savings balance. Insured employees must contact the BVK directly to learn whether they are eligible to invest and, if so, in what amount. Cf. the table in Appendix V of the BVK Pension Fund Regulations valid from 1 January 2021. Data privacy rules dictate that the Human Resources Office has no access to data on the complete insurance coverage of employees. General information about investments can be obtained directly from www.bvk.ch.

Cohabiting Partners

Cohabiting partnerships, including same-sex couples, are deemed equal to marriage if all the following conditions are met:

- Neither partner is married, the partners do not have a registered partnership, nor are they closely related so as to prohibit a marriage or a registered partnership;
- The partners have demonstrably cohabited in a joint household for at least five years without interruption at the time of death of the insured person or, in the case of a shorter period of cohabitation, the surviving partner is also responsible for supporting one or more children from the relationship;
- The reciprocal duty to support one another was agreed in writing and the agreement was submitted to the BVK at least three months before the death of the insured person. Further information can be found in the BVK Pension Fund Regulations article 56, paragraph 2.

The surviving partner may claim benefits in accordance with articles 50 to 53 of the BVK Pension Fund Regulations, with the exception of cases in which the surviving partner currently receives survivors' benefits from an occupational pension fund or received a lump-sum payment from an occupational pension fund in the amount of the conversion rate of the pension.

Home Ownership Support

Every five years an insured person can withdraw an amount for residential property for their own use for:

- a. the acquisition and construction of residential property,
- b. a share of a residential property, or
- c. repayment of a mortgage.

More information can be found in the Pension Fund Regulations article 69, para. 1-8.

Termination of Insurance

The insurance ends: When the insured person claims the pension benefits; the pension relationship is terminated as a result of termination of the employment relationship; or the salary is expected to fall below the level of the minimum salary stipulated by the OPA (CHF 22'680, as of 1 January 2025) for an extended period of time. For partially disabled persons, the insurance for the active part continues.

Insured persons may request early retirement from the age of 60. See early retirement, art. 7 para. 2 of the Pension Fund Regulations.

After retirement in accordance with art. 7 or after age-related early release in accordance with art. 8 of the Pension Fund Regulations, the insured person is entitled to a lifelong retirement pension.

Instead of the retirement pension, the insured person may claim a vested benefit according to the terms of art. 64-66 of the Pension Fund Regulations, including the savings credits pursuant to art. 34 para. 2 of the Pension Fund Regulations, if he/she leaves the BVK before reaching the age of 65 and continues to work or is registered as unemployed.

Cash Payment of Vested Benefits

At the request of the insured person, the vested benefits may be paid out in cash. The cash payment is subject to special conditions. The conditions can be found in art. 66 para. 1-4 of the Pension Fund Regulations.