In April 2016 the University of Regina announced that it will be moving to a bi-weekly payroll cycle starting January 1, 2018. If you missed that announcement, you can view it on the Human Resources website.

Why are we converting?

Like a significant number of employers in Saskatchewan, the University of Regina has operated under an exemption in the old Labour Standards Act that allowed us to pay all of our employees on a monthly basis with a pay period end to pay day lag that exceeds 6 days. With the passing of the new Saskatchewan Employment Act (section 2-33), all employees who are not paid a monthly salary will have to be paid bi-weekly or semi-monthly with a maximum lag of 6 days. Employers under the old exemption have been given until July 1, 2018 to make the necessary changes to bring their payroll into compliance.

Who will be affected?

The University does not have adequate human or system resources to operate two payroll cycles. Therefore, we have come to the same conclusion as many Saskatchewan employers and will be moving to a single bi-weekly payroll cycle for all employees. It is our plan to move to this new bi-weekly pay cycle January 1, 2018 which will align with the new tax year.

What is bi-weekly?

Bi-weekly payroll consists of 2 week (14 day) pay periods with pay day every second week resulting in 26 pay days per year. (Bi-weekly is often confused with semi-monthly which consists of 2 pay days per month and 24 pay days per year).

Why bi-weekly?

Section 2-33 of the Saskatchewan Employment Act requires that non-salaried employees be paid at least semi-monthly or every 14 days with a maximum lag of 6 days between the end of a pay period and pay day. Human Resources has assessed both semi-monthly and bi-weekly pay cycles and determined that bi-weekly is the best fit for the University for the following reasons:

-Consistent deadlines for timecards, hiring paperwork and payroll processing
-Consistent pay days that fall on a week day ensuring that payments will reach the employee in a timely manner (smaller banking institutions don’t release direct deposits over the weekend)
-Consistent days per pay period ensures that pay cheques are consistent amounts allowing for easier employee budgeting
-Due to the restrictive nature of the maximum 6 calendar day lag a semi-monthly payroll cycle often resulted in time cards being due the same day as the direct deposit information is required to be sent to the bank, leaving no time to process payroll
-It’s the most common pay frequency in Canada! According to the Canadian Payroll
What does the new pay cycle look like?

In order to bring everyone onto the same pay cycle we are introducing a 6 day lag from the end of the pay period to pay day that did not exist for salaried/stipend employees in the monthly pay cycle (and shortening the 13-16 day lag that the hourly staff are currently on). The new pay cycle consists of two week (14 day) pay periods that begin on a Sunday and end on a Saturday. Pay day for each pay period follows 6 days later on a Friday.

The final monthly pay day will be December 29, 2017 (covering the period of December 1-31 for salaried employees and November 16th-December 15th for hourly employees). Hourly employees who work from December 16-31, 2017 will receive payment for that time early in January 2018 (date to be determined).

The first bi-weekly pay day will be January 12, 2018 covering the period of January 1-6 (short pay period to accommodate the introduction of the lag) and the second bi-weekly pay will be January 26, 2017 covering the period of January 7-19. The full bi-weekly payroll calendar is available on the Human Resources website.

Hourly sessionals will be paid for hours worked during the pay period. For stipend based sessionals the total stipend will be divided by the number of working days in their appointment and their pay cheques will be based on the number of days appointed in the pay period. This will often result in the first and last cheques being pro-rated.

Please click the link to see an examples of how sessional salaries are calculated and how the introduction of the lag will impact your pay in 2018. https://www.uregina.ca/hr/assets/docs/pdf/payroll/Sessional_biweekly_example.pdf

What do I need to do prepare my personal finances for the conversion?

You may want to review your monthly expenses and due dates and see how they will fit into the new pay cycle. Many payments such as car loans, mortgage payments and other loans can be converted to bi-weekly payments (which can save you money on interest over the life of the loan!). We suggest contacting your financial institution early if you are interested in converting your payment frequency. The bi-weekly payroll calendar is available on the Human Resources website to assist you with your planning. There are also many good budgeting tools and templates available for free on-line.

What resources are available to me?

Financial Counselling is available through the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP). This program is available to all employees with benefit coverage and their eligible dependents. To access the EFAP, please sign-in to UR Self-Service, click on ‘Faculty & Staff Services’ and then...
on ‘Employee Family Assistance Program’. When calling or searching the EFAP provider website, please refer to the information on Financial Counselling through Life Smart Coaching.

Have more questions or concerns?
Please contact Heather Anderson in payroll and she will be happy to help you out.

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