RV THOMPSON New-Hire Orientation:
Things You Need to Know
(for temporary/hourly crew)

PAYROLL

• When do I get paid?
Campus is oriented on two paydays a month: 1-15 is paid on the 25th, 16-31 is paid on the 10th of the following month. (If either payday falls on a weekend or holiday, it is shifted to the nearest, either earlier OR later, non-holiday weekday.)

• What happens to my pay check if the ship is at sea?
Direct deposit is mandatory for all UW employees. You will be given the instructions and temporary access code to sign up for direct deposit once your hire is approved and you are put on the UW payroll. If you are hired at very short notice and must report to the ship before you’ve had a chance to sign up, make sure you take one of your checks (or your routing and account numbers off of one) with you so you can do this after you get to the ship.

It is very important that when you set up direct deposit you also check what mailing address is in ESS for you, because your benefits sign-up information will be sent to that address. If no one is at your home when you’re at sea, you may wish to temporarily set your mailing address in ESS to somewhere that a responsible friend or relative can be looking out for your benefits package, because you have a very limited time to respond with medical and retirement sign-ups if you don’t want to be stuck with the defaults.

• How much will I make?
Please check with the Port Captain to find out your base hourly rate. This is the rate you will be paid for the first 8 hours of every kind of work day. The following add-ons apply as noted:

- Marine Premium: The rate is based on the number of hours in each pay period, so it will vary. The calculation is: hourly base rate x 173.333 = monthly rate; divide by 2 pay periods. Take 1 pay period amount and divide it by the number of weekday (including holidays) hours in that period (say, 2 weeks would be 80 hours). Multiply the result by .15. This is your hourly MP rate for that specific period. It is applied to the first 8 hours of every non-holiday weekday when you are at sea (defined as “away from the UW pier”). (Holidays are included in the calculation but MP is not applied to them.)

- Shore OT: paid at 1.5 times your base hourly rate. Applied to weekday hours >8 and all weekend hours worked, when at the UW pier.

- Sea OT: paid at 1.725 times your base hourly rate. Applied to weekday hours >8 and all weekend hours worked, when at sea.

- Shore Leave: you are paid at one 8-hour day for every 7 consecutive days at sea, or 1.143 hours for each sea day. Paid at your base hourly rate and includes weekdays, weekends, and holidays.

- Travel days: You may be paid for one 8-hr travel day en route to the ship or returning home; refer to the Travel Policy for details. The pay will be treated as base/shore pay if you are meeting or departing from the ship at the UW pier, and as sea pay if the ship is at any other location. On rare occasions when the ship is overseas, travel may be increased to two days when necessitated by lengthy flights or connections or other travel details. You will be notified if this is the case.
Crossing the date line: when you lose a day crossing the date line, you write 8 hours on your time sheet as if the day had occurred. When you gain a day—i.e., the same calendar day occurs twice as you cross the date line—you write all of your time on the first iteration of that day. So say it is Valentine’s Day and you cross the date line in the “gain” direction and repeat Valentine’s Day; log all hours that were worked that day on 14 February—the first 8 will show as base, the second set of 8 plus any OT worked on either iteration of the date will show as sea OT.

**How much overtime can I work?**
All of your weekends and UW holidays will be OT. Apart from that, in view of today’s cautious funding climate a conscious attempt is made to keep crew OT to a reasonable level while still maintaining safe operating conditions aboard the ship. Some types of science ops require more crew OT than others, and occasionally emergencies may arise that necessitate extra crew OT. Galley personnel are paid 2 hours of extra OT every day to cover the longer hours they must consistently work. All OT except for this must be approved by your supervisor in advance.

**Can I get an advance on my pay?**
No. However, any member of the ship’s complement may write a check payable to University of Washington and cash it on the ship’s petty cash account—up to $300 per person, per cruise. In order to be able to take advantage of this opportunity, you must have a checkbook with you when you report to the ship. **PLEASE NOTE:** If you write an NSF check, you will be notified and given the opportunity to reimburse the UW for the amount of your check plus any NSF fees charged to us. If payment is not received, the UW will follow standard collection procedures to recover the costs. Also, anyone writing an NSF check will lose their shipboard check-cashing privileges.

**UW HOLIDAYS**

- **There are 10 paid UW holidays:**
  - New Year’s Day: January 1 (if a weekend, the closest weekday is taken as the holiday)
  - Martin Luther King Jr’s b’day: Closest Monday to (after) January 15
  - Presidents Day: Third Monday in February
  - Memorial Day: Last Monday in May
  - Independence Day: July 4 (if a weekend, closest weekday is taken as the holiday)
  - Labor Day: First Monday in September
  - Veterans Day: November 10 (regardless of day of the week, although if a weekend, the closest weekday is taken as the holiday)
  - Thanksgiving (2 days): Fourth Thursday + Friday in November
  - Christmas Day: December 25 (if a weekend, the closest weekday is taken as the holiday)

**BENEFITS**

- **Do I get any benefits?**
  Because we don’t know when we first hire you if your situation working aboard the ship will be mutually satisfactory (although we are always optimistic!), we state on your hiring requisition that you will not satisfy the eligibility requirements for medical and retirement deductions to be withheld from your pay. The University states the eligibility requirements this way:
  As temporary staff you are eligible for employer-paid Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) insurances if you work an average of half time or more (480 hours: 80 hours x 6 months) in a consecutive six-month period, with at least eight hours or more in each of the six months. Eligibility is established as of the first of the month following the completion of the sixth consecutive month in which the eligibility criteria were met and a minimum of eight hours of work must continue into the seventh month to activate the eligibility.

  It is very important that when you set up direct deposit you also check what mailing address is in ESS for you, because your benefits sign-up information will be sent to your address of record as shown in ESS. If no one is at your home when you’re at sea, you may wish to temporarily set your mailing address in ESS to that of a responsible friend or relative who can be looking out for your benefits information, because you have a very limited time to respond with medical and retirement sign-ups if you don’t want to be stuck with the default medical/dental insurance until the next annual open-enrollment period (each November), which is the only time you can change it.
- Medical:
It should be noted that as a Merchant Mariner on the ship, if you become in need of medical care due to working on the ship, in most cases treatment costs are covered by the University and you are not personally liable for them. That being the fact, if we were to say you were eligible for medical benefits, you would be having the deduction taken out of your check the entire time you were working—but you would not be able to use the benefits while you were aboard the ship, and they would only extend through the end of the last month you worked in. As a temporary employee, as of the first day of the calendar month following your departure from the ship, you have no coverage. Also, when you complete your work tour and are off the ship for at least one full calendar month with no hours worked, the next time you came back you would have to start all over again to re-establish your eligibility by working sufficient hours as explained above.

If you do become eligible for medical benefits, you will be mailed a booklet of insurance information from the WA HealthCare Authority and you have 31 days from the point of eligibility to choose a medical plan and get your form back to the Benefits Office. If you do not meet the deadline, the default insurance will be assigned to you (Uniform Medical and Uniform Dental); you will be stuck with those until the next open-enrollment period (this is in November of each year), at which time you can submit a form to change insurance plans.

- Retirement:
Most hourly crew members object to having retirement contributions deducted from their pay because they don’t plan to retire from the University. We can keep retirement contributions from being deducted, but only for a limited time; if you satisfy the eligibility criteria listed above, on the first day of the seventh month of employment you will start having retirement contributions deducted. If you manage to work it so you work just UNDER 480 hours within the first six months, you will be deemed ineligible and they will not be deducted. However, once you reach the eligibility threshold and retirement starts being deducted, it will continue to be deducted for as long as you work at the University; unlike medical benefits, you do not have to re-establish eligibility every time you are gone for more than a month with no hours worked.

The only way to recoup the retirement contributions you have made, should you not wish to leave them in the Dept of Retirement Systems until you reach retirement age, is to be separated from the payroll system upon completion of a work period, after which you may file a form with DRS petitioning for the return of your contributions. You should note that since PERS is a pension plan/fund, if you remove your funds from it you will be charged a 10% penalty as you would for early withdrawal from any retirement fund.

MAIL

- Can I have my mail forwarded to UW?
No—or, only on a temporary basis. You may have friends or relatives periodically forward batches of your mail to UW, but do not under any circumstances put in a formal U.S. Postal Service change of address to have your mail forwarded to UW. While we are happy to forward back to your home address mail that may miss you after the end of your tour, (a) we only forward first class mail, and (b) we do not assume responsibility for mail that continues to accumulate after your tour ends. Please keep family and friends advised of the end date of your tour so they will know when to stop sending your mail here.

When the ship is away from Seattle for extended periods, especially on foreign cruises, and you know people will be sending you packages, please check with the Port Captain to see whether they can be accommodated within a shipment we are already sending. If they are sent here we prefer not to be put to the expense of re-mailing them, and even if they get mailed directly to our agent in a foreign port, many of our agents charge a per-package handling fee and those can be as much or more than the postage.