

SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL HARDSHIP GUIDE

Please take time to read this guide carefully and refer to it when completing your Significant financial hardship form (3C).

WHO CAN APPLY?

You can apply for a significant financial hardship withdrawal if you meet one or more of the criteria below.

You must be able to satisfy the Trustee that you are unable to meet:

- minimum living expenses; or
- mortgage repayments on your principal family residence, resulting in the mortgagee seeking to enforce the mortgage; or
- the cost of modifying a residence to meet special needs arising from your disability or a dependant's disability; or
- the cost of medical treatment for illness or injury to you or one of your dependants; or
- the cost of palliative care for you or one of your dependants; or
- the cost of a funeral for one of your dependants.

For your application to be considered, you must:

- have no other means to alleviate your financial difficulties (i.e. no ability to borrow money or sell assets to meet your current financial difficulties);
- have fully completed the application form by answering all questions;
- have provided all of the supporting documents;
- have your application form and information in the supporting documents matching each other.

A copy of the form 'Significant financial hardship benefit payment request' is available on the Documents & forms page of trss.superfacts.co.nz.
www.teachersretire.org.nz.

Alternatively call 0508 4 TEACH (0508 4 83224) and they will email or post you a copy.

Please note, the Trustee must be satisfied that you have explored and exhausted reasonable alternative sources of funding to relieve your financial hardship before considering your application and may require further financial information.

THE PROCESS

STAGE ONE: COMPLETE AN INITIAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

Quickly check whether you meet the requirements set out earlier in this fact sheet. This will help you to decide whether or not to submit an application.

STAGE TWO: SUBMIT AN APPLICATION

Complete and send us an application form. When you complete the form please indicate under which criteria you are submitting your significant financial hardship application.

To consider your application the Trustee also requires information about your income and expenses.

You will also need to complete the statutory declaration explaining why you believe you are experiencing significant financial hardship and confirming that you have no other means to alleviate your financial difficulties.

If you have not previously done so, you also need to include a confirmation of identity and residential address form.

When your form is completed, post it together with the correct supporting documents to:

The Teachers' scheme Administrator, Mercer (N.Z.) Limited, P.O. Box 1849, Wellington 6140 or by email to nztrsserp@mercero.com.

Supporting documents

Documentation required to enable the Trustee to validate the information you have provided in your significant financial hardship application form should include the following items:

- ☐ Copies of the two most recent monthly bank statements for all your bank accounts and all your credit cards. These will be used to verify information you provided in the form.
- ☐ For any outstanding loans, hire purchase and other debts, you must provide documents such as statements or letters showing the total outstanding amounts, any arrears, details of regular repayments and the term of the loan.
- ☐ Additional documents, such as outstanding bills or demands for payment, will also be required as supporting evidence if these have been mentioned in your application.

Until all these documents are received we will not be able to forward your application to the Trustee for its consideration. Information in support of your application can either be originals or copies.

STAGE THREE: WE CHECK YOUR APPLICATION

When we receive your application, we will check it to ensure that all relevant details have been completed and all supporting documents have been enclosed.

STAGE FOUR: WE SEND YOUR APPLICATION TO THE TRUSTEE

All significant financial hardship applications are submitted to the Trustee on an as received basis.

After checking the information you have provided, the Trustee will proceed with a careful assessment of your application.

Checking will involve assessing whether your application satisfies the significant financial hardship criteria you have indicated.

If any information is found to be incorrect or incomplete the Trustee may choose not to consider your application.

If, during the application process, your circumstances change, you must notify the Trustee immediately in writing.

STAGE FIVE: DECISION-MAKING

The Trustee has discretion as to whether or not to approve your application and, if approved, the amount that may be withdrawn.

The Trustee will assess your application for a withdrawal and particularly focus on whether you are able to demonstrate you meet significant financial hardship criteria.

The Trustee may require additional information if it considers the information supplied is insufficient to enable them to make a decision.

Please allow time for the receipt, checking and assessing of your application form. We recommend you wait at **least 15 working days**, after which if you have not heard from us, call 0508 4 83224.

STAGE SIX: OUTCOME

If your application is approved, you will receive a letter advising you of this and your payment will be transferred into your personal New Zealand bank account.

The Trustee may limit the amount of your withdrawal if in the Trustee's opinion a lesser amount will be enough to alleviate your financial hardship.

If your application is declined, you will receive written confirmation of the Trustee's decision.

COMPLETING THE FORM

This section provides information on how to complete the steps included in the significant financial hardship application form.

IMPORTANT: You need to answer all relevant questions and include all supporting evidence. The information required is summarised in the checklist on the final page of the significant financial hardship application form. If you do not complete all relevant fields in the form or include all supporting evidence, your application will be returned.

WITHDRAWAL AMOUNT

Complete all of the information in the form. Please provide a day time phone number if possible, so that you can be contacted if necessary.

You can apply to withdraw all or a part of your Total Credit, that is the total balances in your:

- Basic Account;
- Voluntary Account; and
- Employer Account

(less any fees due for payment from any of those accounts).

COMPLETING THE FINANCIAL INFORMATION SECTION

This is where you need to provide all the information about what you own (assets) and what you owe (liabilities). Please include as much detail as possible and ensure that the figures are added for your assets and liabilities, as well as the totals at the end.

Enter all income that you receive from all sources and include income received by your partner or spouse.

Provide details of all of your expenses. Your expenses must match the supporting documents such as bank statements. If some of your expenses fall outside of the categories listed in this step, please include them as other and specify what they are.

Annual expenses will need to be divided by 26, to provide a fortnightly amount.

All calculations including the total must be done by you. If for example, total amounts are not completed, the form may be returned to you. The figures you provide will be checked against the supporting information and if these do not match, the application form will be returned to you.

The Trustee may request other supporting information when considering your application.

All relevant information which supports your case for a significant financial hardship benefit must be provided in the form or as supporting evidence. Please explain in as much detail as possible why in your opinion you are experiencing (or are likely to experience) significant financial hardship and what you have done so far to resolve it.

The Trustees must be reasonably satisfied that reasonable alternative sources of funding have been explored and exhausted.

COMPLETING THE STATUTORY DECLARATION

The declaration must be signed by you, in front of a person who is authorised to do so by law, such as a Justice of the Peace, notary public or lawyer.

If you have questions about any of the information in this fact sheet, call the Helpline on 0508 4 83224

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