

from such trade or business and dividing that product by the individual's total net profits from all such trades or businesses.

(iv) For purposes of this subparagraph, the determination of whether an individual renders personal services on a full-time, or substantially full-time, basis is to be made with regard to the aggregate of the trades and businesses with respect to which the employee renders substantial personal services as a common-law employee or as a self-employed individual. However, for all other purposes in applying the rules of this subparagraph, a trade or business with respect to which an individual is a common-law employee shall be disregarded.

(d) *Definition of owner-employee.* For purposes of section 401 and the regulations thereunder, the term "owner-employee" means a proprietor of a proprietorship, or, in the case of a partnership, a partner who owns either more than 10 percent of the capital interest, or more than 10 percent of the profits interest, of the partnership. Thus, an individual who owns only 2 percent of the profits interest but 11 percent of the capital interest of a partnership is an owner-employee. A partner's interest in the profits and the capital of the partnership shall be determined by the partnership agreement. In the absence of any provision regarding the sharing of profits, the interest in profits of the partners will be determined in the same manner as their distributive shares of partnership taxable income. However, a guaranteed payment (as described in section 707(c)) is not considered a distributive share of partnership income for such purpose. See section 704(b), relating to the determination of the distributive share by the income or loss ratio, and the regulations thereunder. In the absence of a provision in the partnership agreement, a partner's capital interest in a partnership shall be determined on the basis of his interest in the assets of the partnership which would be distributable to such partner upon his withdrawal from the partnership, or upon liquidation of the partnership, whichever is the greater.

(e) *Definition of employer.* (1) For purposes of section 401, a sole proprietor is considered to be his own employer, and

the partnership is considered to be the employer of each of the partners. Thus, an individual partner is not an employer who may establish a qualified plan with respect to his services to the partnership.

(2) Regardless of the provision of local law, a partnership is deemed, for purposes of section 401, to be continuing until such time as it is terminated within the meaning of section 708, relating to the continuation of a partnership.

[T.D. 6675, 28 FR 10123, Sept. 17, 1963]

**§ 1.401-11 General rules relating to plans covering self-employed individuals.**

(a) *Introduction.* This section provides certain rules which supplement, and modify, the rules of §§ 1.401-1 through 1.401-9 in the case of a qualified pension, annuity, or profit-sharing plan which covers a self-employed individual who is an employee within the meaning of section 401(c)(1). The provisions of this section apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 1962. Except as otherwise provided, paragraphs (b) through (m) of this section apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 1962. Paragraph (n) of this section applies to plan years determined in accordance with paragraph (n)(1) of this section.

(b) *General rules.* (1) If the amount of employer contributions for common-law employees covered under a qualified plan is related to the earned income (as defined in section 401(c)(2)) of a self-employed individual, or group of self-employed individuals, such a plan is a profit-sharing plan (as described in paragraph (b)(1)(ii) of § 1.401-1) since earned income is dependent upon the profits of the trade or business with respect to which the plan is established. Thus, for example, a plan, which provides that the employer will contribute 10 percent of the earned income of a self-employed individual but no more than \$2,500, and that the employer contribution on behalf of common-law employees shall be the same percentage of their salaries as the contribution on behalf of the self-employed individual bears to his earned income, is a profit-sharing plan, since the amount of the employer's contribution for common-

law employees covered under the plan is related to the earned income of a self-employed individual and thereby to the profits of the trade or business. On the other hand, for example, a plan which defines the compensation of any self-employed individual as his earned income and which provides that the employer will contribute 10 percent of the compensation of each employee covered under the plan is a pension plan since the contribution on behalf of common-law employees is fixed without regard to whether the self-employed individual has earned income or the amount thereof.

(2) The Self-Employed Individuals Tax Retirement Act of 1962 (76 Stat. 809) permits self-employed individuals to be treated as employees and therefore included in qualified plans, but it is clear that such law requires such self-employed individuals to provide benefits for their employees on a non-discriminatory basis. Self-employed individuals will not be considered as providing contributions or benefits for an employee to the extent that the wages or salary of the employee covered under the plan are reduced at or about the time the plan is adopted.

(3) In addition to permitting self-employed individuals to participate in qualified plans, the Self-Employed Individuals Tax Retirement Act of 1962 extends to such individuals some of the tax benefits allowed common-law employee-participants in such plans. However, the tax benefits allowed a self-employed individual are restricted by the limits which are placed on the deductions allowed for contributions on such an individual's behalf. In view of these restrictions on the tax benefits extended to any self-employed individual, a self-employed individual participating in a qualified plan may not participate in any forfeitures. Therefore, in the case of a qualified plan which covers any self-employed individual, a separate account must be established for each self-employed individual to which no forfeitures can be allocated.

(c) *Requirements as to coverage.* (1) In general, section 401(a)(3) and the regulations thereunder prescribe the coverage requirements which a qualified plan must satisfy. However, if such a

plan covers self-employed individuals who are not owner-employees, it must, in addition to satisfying such requirements, satisfy the requirements of this paragraph. If any owner-employee is covered under a qualified plan, the provisions of this paragraph do not apply, but the provisions of section 401(d), including section 401(d)(3), do apply (see § 1.401-12).

(2)(i) Section 401(a)(3)(B) provides that a plan may satisfy the coverage requirements for qualification if it covers such employees as qualify under a classification which is found not to discriminate in favor of employees who are officers, shareholders, persons whose principal duties consist in supervising the work of other employees, or highly compensated employees. Section 401(a)(5) sets forth certain classifications that will not in themselves be considered discriminatory. Under such section, a classification which excludes all employees whose entire remuneration constitutes "wages" under section 3121(a)(1), will not be considered discriminatory merely because of such exclusion. Similarly, a plan which includes all employees will not be considered discriminatory solely because the contributions or benefits based on that part of their remuneration which is excluded from "wages" under section 3121(a)(1) differ from the contributions or benefits based on that part of their remuneration which is not so excluded. However, in determining if a classification is discriminatory under section 401(a)(3)(B), consideration will be given to whether the total benefits resulting to each employee under the plan and under the Social Security Act, or under the Social Security Act only, establish an integrated and correlated retirement system satisfying the tests of section 401(a). A plan which covers self-employed individuals, none of whom is an owner-employee, may also be integrated with the contributions or benefits under the Social Security Act. In such a case, the portion of the earned income (as defined in section 401(c)(2)) of such an individual which does not exceed the maximum amount which may be treated as self-employment income under section 1402(b)(1), and which is derived from the trade or business with respect to which the plan is

established, shall be treated as “wages” under section 3121(a)(1) subject to the tax imposed by section 3111 (relating to the tax on employers) for purposes of applying the rules of paragraph (e)(2) of § 1.401-3, relating to the determination of whether a plan is properly integrated. However, if the plan covers an owner-employee, the rules relating to the integration of the plan with the contributions or benefits under the Social Security Act contained in paragraph (b) of § 1.401-12 apply.

(ii) Certain of the classifications enumerated in section 401(a)(5) do not apply to plans which provide contributions or benefits for any self-employed individual. Since self-employed individuals are not salaried or clerical employees, the provision in section 401(a)(5) permitting a plan, in certain cases to cover only this type of employee is inapplicable to plans which cover any self-employed individual.

(iii) The classifications enumerated in section 401(a)(5) are not exclusive, and it is not necessary that a qualified plan cover all employees or all full-time employees. Plans may qualify even though coverage is limited in accordance with a particular classification incorporated in the plan, provided the effect of covering only such employees as satisfy such eligibility requirement does not result in the prohibited discrimination.

(d) *Discrimination as to contributions or benefits*—(1) *In general.* In order for a plan to be qualified, there must be no discrimination in contributions or benefits in favor of employees who are officers, shareholders, supervisors, or highly compensated, as against other employees whether within or without the plan. A self-employed individual, by reason of the contingent nature of his compensation, is considered to be a highly-compensated employee, and thus is a member of the group in whose favor discrimination is prohibited. In determining whether the prohibited discrimination exists, the total employer contribution on behalf of a self-employed individual shall be taken into account regardless of the fact that only a portion of such contribution is allowed as a deduction. For additional rules relating to discrimination as to

contributions or benefits with regard to plans covering any owner-employee, see § 1.401-12.

(2) *Base for computing contributions or benefits.* (i) A plan which is otherwise qualified is not considered discriminatory merely because the contributions or benefits provided under the plan bear a uniform relationship to the total compensation, basic compensation, or regular rate of compensation of the employees, including self-employed individuals, covered under the plan.

(ii) In the case of a self-employed individual who is covered under a qualified plan, the total compensation of such individual is the earned income (as defined in section 401(c)(2)) which such individual derives from the employer's trade or business, or trades or businesses, with respect to which the qualified plan is established. Thus, for example, in the case of a partner, his total compensation includes both his distributive share of partnership income, whether or not distributed, and guaranteed payments described in section 707(c) made to him by the partnership establishing the plan, to the extent that such income constitutes earned income as defined in section 401(c)(2).

(iii)(A) The basic or regular rate of compensation of any self-employed individual is that portion of his earned income which bears the same ratio to his total earned income derived from the trade or business, or trades or businesses, with respect to which the qualified plan is established as the aggregate basic or regular compensation of all common-law employees covered under the plan bears to the aggregate total compensation of such employees derived from such trade or business, or trades or businesses.

(B) If an employer establishes two or more plans which satisfy the requirements of section 401(a) separately, and only one such plan covers a self-employed individual, the determination of the basic or regular rate of compensation of such self-employed individual is made with regard to the compensation of common-law employees covered under the plan which provides contributions or benefits for such self-employed individual. On the other hand, if two or more plans must be considered

together in order to satisfy the requirements of section 401(a), the computation of the basic or regular rate of compensation of a self-employed individual must be made with regard to the compensation of the common-law employees covered by so many of such plans as are required to be taken together in order to satisfy the qualification requirements of section 401(a).

(3) *Discriminatory contributions.* If a discriminatory contribution is made by, or for, a self-employed individual who is an employee within the meaning of section 401(c)(1) because of an erroneous assumption as to the earned income of such individual, the plan will not be considered discriminatory if adequate adjustment is made to remove such discrimination. In the case of any self-employed individual who is an owner-employee, the amount of any excess contribution to be returned and the manner in which it is to be repaid are determined by the provisions of section 401(d)(8) and (e). However, if any self-employed individual, including any owner-employee, has not made the full contribution permitted to be made on his behalf as an employee, then, if the plan expressly provides, so much of any excess contribution by such self-employed individual's employer as may, under the provisions of the plan, be treated as a contribution made by such individual as an employee can be so treated.

(e) *Distribution of entire interest.* (1) If a trust forms part of a plan which covers a self-employed individual, such trust shall constitute a qualified trust under section 401 only if the plan of which such trust is a part expressly provides that the entire interest of each employee, including any common-law employee, will be distributed in accordance with the provisions of subparagraph (2) or (3) of this paragraph.

(2) Unless the provisions of subparagraph (3) of this paragraph apply, the entire interest of each employee (including contributions he has made on his own behalf, contributions made on his behalf by his employer, and interest thereon) must be actually distributed to such employee—

(i) In the case of an employee, other than an individual who is, or has been, an owner-employee under the plan, not

later than the last day of the taxable year of such employee in which he attains the age of 70½, or not later than the last day of the taxable year in which such employee retires, whichever is later, and

(ii) In the case of an employee who is, or has been, an owner-employee under the plan, not later than the last day of the taxable year in which he attains the age of 70½.

(3) In lieu of distributing an employee's entire interest in a qualified plan as provided in subparagraph (2) of this paragraph, such interest may be distributed commencing no later than the last taxable year described in such subparagraph (2). In such case, the plan must expressly provide that the entire interest of such an employee shall be distributed to him and his beneficiaries, in a manner which satisfies the requirements of subparagraph (5) of this paragraph, over any of the following periods (or any combination thereof)—

- (i) The life of the employee, or
- (ii) The lives of the employee and his spouse, or
- (iii) A period certain not longer than the life expectancy of the employee, or
- (iv) A period certain not longer than the joint life and last survivor expectancy of the employee and his spouse.

(4) For purposes of subparagraphs (3) and (5) of this paragraph, the determination of the life expectancy of the employee or the joint life and last survivor expectancy of the employee and his spouse is to be made either (i) only once, at the time the employee receives the first distribution of his entire interest under the plan, or (ii) periodically, in a consistent manner. Such life expectancy or joint life and last survivor expectancy cannot exceed the period computed by the use of the expected return multiples in § 1.72-9, or, in the case of payments under a contract issued by an insurance company, the period computed by use of the life expectancy tables of such company.

(5) If an employee's entire interest is to be distributed over a period described in subparagraph (3) of this paragraph, then the amount to be distributed each year must be at least an amount equal to the quotient obtained by dividing the entire interest of the

employee under the plan at the time the distribution is made (expressed in either dollars or units) by the life expectancy of the employee, or joint life and last survivor expectancy of the employee and his spouse (whichever is applicable), determined in accordance with the provisions of subparagraph (4) of this paragraph. However, no distribution need be made in any year, or a lesser amount may be distributed, if the aggregate amounts distributed by the end of that year are at least equal to the aggregate of the minimum amounts required by this subparagraph to have been distributed by the end of such year.

(6) If an employee's entire interest is distributed in the form of an annuity contract, then the requirements of section 401(a)(9) are satisfied if the distribution of such contract takes place before the end of the latest taxable year described in subparagraph (2) of this paragraph, and if the employee's interest will be paid over a period described in subparagraph (3) of this paragraph and at a rate which satisfies the requirements of subparagraph (5) of this paragraph.

(7) The requirements of section 401(a)(9) do not preclude contributions from being made on behalf of an owner-employee under a qualified plan subsequent to the taxable year in which the distribution of his entire interest is required to commence. Thus, if all other requirements for qualification are satisfied, a qualified plan may provide contributions for an owner-employee who has already attained age 70½. However, a distribution of benefits attributable to contributions made on behalf of an owner-employee in a taxable year beginning after the taxable year in which he attains the age of 70½ must satisfy the requirements of subparagraph (3) of this paragraph. Thus, if an owner-employee has already attained the age of 70½ at the time the first contribution is made on his behalf, the distribution of his entire interest must commence in the year in which such contribution is first made on his behalf.

(8) This paragraph shall not apply and an otherwise qualified trust will not be disqualified if the method of distribution under the plan is one which

was designated by a common-law employee prior to October 10, 1962, and such method of distribution is not in accordance with the provisions of section 401(a)(9). Such exception applies regardless of whether the actual distribution of the entire interest of an employee making such a designation, or any portion of such interest, has commenced prior to October 10, 1962.

[T.D. 6675, 28 FR 10124, Sept. 17, 1963, as amended by T.D. 6982, 33 FR 16500, Nov. 13, 1968]

**§ 1.401-12 Requirements for qualification of trusts and plans benefiting owner-employees.**

(a) *Introduction.* This section prescribes the additional requirements which must be met for qualification of a trust forming part of a pension or profit-sharing plan, or of an annuity plan, which covers any self-employed individual who is an owner-employee as defined in section 401(c)(3). However, to the extent that the provisions of § 1.401-11 are not modified by the provisions of this section, such provisions are also applicable to a plan which covers an owner-employee. The provisions of this section apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 1962. Except as otherwise provided, paragraphs (b) through (m) of this section apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 1962. Paragraph (n) of this section applies to plan years determined in accordance with paragraph (n)(1) of the section.

(b) *General rules.* (1) The qualified plan and trust of an unincorporated trade or business does not have to satisfy the additional requirements for qualification merely because an owner-employee derives earned income (as defined in section 401(c)(2)) from the trade or business with respect to which the plan is established. Such additional requirements need be satisfied only if an owner-employee is actually covered under the plan of the employer. An owner-employee may only be covered under a plan of an employer if such owner-employee has so consented. However, the consent of the owner-employee may be either expressed or implied. Thus, for example, if contributions are, in fact, made on behalf of an owner-employee, such owner-employee