

Probationary/Trainee/Permanent Appointment and Career Status

Policy Individuals receiving original appointments to permanent or time-limited permanent positions must serve a probationary or a trainee period. This period is an essential extension of the selection process and provides the time for effective adjustment of the new employee or elimination of those whose performance will not meet acceptable standards.

Length of Probationary Period The duration of a probationary appointment shall be not less than three nor more than nine months of either full-time or part-time employment from the actual date of employment. (Credit toward a probationary period stops when the employee goes on leave without pay.) The determination of the appropriate length will generally depend on the complexity of the position and the rate of progress of the employee. (This probationary period is not the same as the probationary period prescribed for criminal justice officers.)

Responsibility of Supervisor During Probationary Period The conditions of the probationary appointment shall be clearly conveyed to the applicant prior to appointment. During the probationary period, the supervisor shall work closely with the employee in counseling and assisting the employee to achieve a satisfactory performance level. Progress of the employee shall be reviewed during discussions between the employee and the supervisor. Following the probationary period when the supervisor, in consultation with other appropriate administrators, determines that the employee's performance indicates capability to become a satisfactory performer and merits retention in the position, the employee shall be given a permanent appointment (or time-limited permanent appointment, whichever is applicable) to the class. If instead, the determination is that the employee's performance indicates that the employee is not suited for the position and cannot be expected to meet acceptable standards, or for other causes related to performance of duties or personal conduct detrimental to the agency, it is expected that the employee will be separated from that position.

Appointments Providing Probationary Period Credit Satisfactory service during a probationary, temporary, trainee, or pre-vocational student appointment may constitute part or all of the probationary period. Employment in an intermittent appointment may not be credited toward the probationary period.

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Personnel Changes Not Subject to Probationary Period

A probationary period shall not be required when an employee with a permanent or time-limited permanent appointment has any of the following changes:

- Promotion,
 - Transfer,
 - Demotion,
 - Reinstatement after leave of absence, or
 - Return of a policy-making/confidential exempt employee to a nonpolicy-making position.
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Probationary Period May Be Required

An employee with reduction-in-force priority consideration may be required to serve a new probationary period if the conditions exist that are outlined in the Priority Reemployment Consideration for Reduction-in-Force Employees Policy.

Trainee Appointment Provisions

Classifications often require knowledge or skills not available from the labor market or which cannot be learned in a short period. Basic skills and related knowledge are defined and applicants with potential to meet the full job requirements are employed and qualify through structured training over an extended period of time.

To complement this employment and training process, trainee appointments against classified positions and an accelerated salary progression are provided. The duration of the trainee appointment approximates the normal time for training. The salary progression rates are spread over the training period and provide competitive salary rates for trainees and for experienced, qualified employees. The recruitment standards and salary progression together provide a uniform guide for equitable employment and compensation of trainees.

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Trainee Appointment Provisions (continued)

The duration of a trainee appointment is outlined in the Trainee Salary Schedule (Appendix A of the Salary Plan) or in the class specification for the regular classification. When the classification does not list a trainee level, the Office of State Personnel may approve a progression based on training and/or experience needed. A trainee appointment duration is established at that time.

(Credit toward a trainee appointment period stops when the employee goes on leave without pay.)

Responsibility of Supervisor During Trainee Period

During the trainee period, the supervisor has a responsibility to work in assisting the employee to make satisfactory progress. Progress should be reviewed in discussions between the supervisor and employee at regular intervals. When the employee has fulfilled all the trainee requirements, the appointment shall be made permanent. If instead, the determination is that the employee's performance indicates that the employee is not suited for the position and cannot be expected to meet acceptable standards, it is expected that the employee will be separated.

Permanent or Time-limited Permanent Appointment

An employee must be given a permanent appointment when (1) the requirements of the probationary period have been satisfied or (2) when the employee with a trainee appointment has satisfactorily completed all training and experience required for elimination of trainee status.

Career State Employee Defined

Career State employee means a State employee who:

- is in a permanent position appointment; and
- has been continuously employed by the State of North Carolina in a position subject to the State Personnel Act for the immediate 24 preceding months.

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Dismissal Prior to achieving Career Status

Prior to achieving career status, an employee may be separated from service for causes relating to performance of duties or for personal conduct detrimental to the agency without right of appeal or hearing.

Except in cases of discrimination, a dismissal prior to achieving career status is not subject to the right of appeal to the State Personnel Commission.

Once the employee has achieved career status, the regular dismissal procedures shall apply.

Advisory Note: Although not required by policy for an employee who is terminated prior to achieving career status, it is advisable to document the justification for the dismissal. When dismissal is for unsatisfactory job performance and when management determines that there are justifiable reasons, an employee may be given pay in lieu of notice up to 14 calendar days.
