



## Employee Pay Policy

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### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for making consistent and appropriate employee pay decisions using the Buncombe County Position Classification Plan to ensure internal equity, fairness in pay, and compliance with applicable laws.

### 2. Applicability

This policy applies to all Buncombe County departments and employees unless there is a conflict with GS 153A-103 related to hiring, discharging, and supervising employees. Such exclusion is noted at the end of this policy. Otherwise, departments may adopt and enforce policies that are more restrictive than County Policy.

This policy does not apply to elected officials; however, they may elect to follow this policy.

### 3. Policy

#### 3.1. Pay upon New Hire appointment

Establishing a starting pay rate for new employees is determined by calculating their qualifications such as education and previous experience above the minimum qualifications for the job. Human Resources will ensure a newly appointed employee's pay reflects the appropriate placement within the salary grade. This process ensures equity amongst staff in similarly situated classifications.

#### 3.2. Pay upon Rehire

If a previous employee reapplies and is selected for the same position as their last-held position, they may be re-hired at the same base pay rate as their rate upon separation. This will only apply to individuals who reapply and are hired for the same position classification within one year of their separation date. If the employee's calculated pay rate is higher than their pay rate upon separation, the higher rate will be used.

#### 3.3. Determining Equivalent experience for candidates

The term equivalent experience refers to job-related experience that provides a candidate with the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to proficiently perform the functions of the position. To consider candidates with equivalent experience to meet the position qualifications, the equivalency statement must be included in the job posting. The equivalency for a fully qualified candidate, must equal the number of the years required in the minimum qualifications. (See table below of experience equivalency)

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- 3.3.1. No credit will be given for a degree above a master's degree unless the degree is a requirement of the position.

Qualification requirements	Experience equivalency
Associate's degree	2 years of experience
Bachelor's degree	4 years of experience
Master's degree	6 years of experience
Part time experience (20hr/wk)	½ Full Time experience – <i>for example, 1 year PT experience will be counted as 6 months FT experience</i>
<i>*Only the highest relevant degree will be credited</i>	

#### 3.4. Trainee Pay

Candidates or employees who do not meet the minimum qualifications for the established position classification may be appointed to the position with the approval of the Human Resources Director in a “trainee” status. The trainee pay rate is the minimum rate of the salary grade below the salary grade assigned to the position (or a similarly lower rate if no lower salary grade exists). The employee will remain in “trainee” status and will continue to receive trainee pay until the hiring manager certifies that the employee is qualified to assume the full responsibilities of the position. At that time, they will receive a salary adjustment to the minimum pay determined by the position classification and assigned salary grade.

#### 3.5. Pay upon Promotion

When establishing pay for a promotion, the employee's salary must increase by no less than 1%. The employee's qualifications consisting of their knowledge, skills, and abilities to proficiently perform the functions of the position, in comparison with the minimum position requirements, will be considered by Human Resources.

#### 3.6. Pay upon Demotion

Upon demotion an employee's salary must align with a rate of pay within the proposed position's salary grade range.

- 3.6.1 Upon voluntary demotion or reassignment, the employee's new pay rate will be determined based on the employee's relevant qualifications in comparison with the minimum requirements of the new position. The new pay rate cannot result in a salary increase.
- 3.6.2 Upon involuntary demotion, the employee's pay will decrease by a minimum of 5%. The employee's new pay will be based on the employee's relevant qualifications in comparison with the minimum requirements of the new position.

#### 3.7. Pay upon Lateral Transfer

There is no increase or decrease in pay for an employee moving laterally from one position to another with comparable skills and responsibilities and in the same salary grade.

#### 3.8. Pay upon Administrative Reorganization

This does not apply to demotions for disciplinary reasons. Administrative reorganization is the restructuring of a department that results in an increase or decrease in the level of responsibilities and scope of work for positions within the department. Reorganization does not include the redistribution of work at the same level and scope. Administrative reorganizations result in the

movement of an individual from one job to another as a direct and necessary result of a reorganization or the former job being restructured or eliminated. Upon reorganization, employee pay will be reviewed by Human Resources and compared to internal salaries to ensure equity within the organization. When establishing employee compensation for a reorganization, knowledge, skills, and experience will be considered and may result in a salary increase. When the employee's current pay is above the maximum of the salary grade for the new classification their pay will be reduced to align with the grade range.

### 3.9. Pay upon Interim Assignment

When a position is vacated or needs to be covered due to an employee being granted an extended absence, and the department needs to ensure the duties assigned to the position are still covered, the department may make an interim assignment of an existing regular Buncombe County employee. Such assignments will occur as recommended by the Department Director and approved by the Human Resources Director. The duration of the acting assignment must be no less than thirty (30) days and will not exceed six (6) months, unless approved by the County Manager and Human Resources Director.

An interim assignment requires an employee to perform additional duties outside of their regular classification. If an employee is assigned to take on the responsibilities of a classification that is at least two (2) salary grades higher than their current classification with an increased scope of responsibilities, they may be granted a five percent (5%) pay increase above their current base pay or paid the equivalent of the minimum of the salary grade for the interim assignment, whichever is greater. Compensation related to an interim assignment will be paid in the form of a stipend and is effective on the first day the employee formally begins to assume the interim duties and ends when the employee ceases to operate in that capacity. When the interim assignment ends, the employee will return to their original classification and rate of pay plus any pay increase granted, or which would have been granted, during the period of the interim assignment.

## 4. Policy Non-Compliance

Employees willfully violating the terms and conditions of this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

## 5. Audit

All policies for Buncombe County may be subject to audit or review as outlined in the [Internal Auditor's Statement](#).

## 6. Definitions

- 6.1. **Candidate:** A person who has submitted a job application for a vacant position.
- 6.2. **Demotion:** The voluntary or involuntary movement of an employee to a job with a lower salary and grade with a decrease in the level of skill and responsibility.
- 6.3. **Department:** A principal branch of the Buncombe County government dealing with a particular area of business.
- 6.4. **Interim Assignment:** The assignment of an employee to perform the duties of another position on a continuous basis for a period of time generally not to exceed six months.
- 6.5. **Job:** A collection of tasks, duties and responsibilities used to identify the work performed by positions throughout the organization.
- 6.6. **Lateral Transfer:** The movement of an individual from one position to another of the same classification or to one with comparable skills and in the same salary grade.

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- 6.7. **Position:** A position is a specific job usually established by a budget action setting aside funds for salary and other costs. A position may be full-time or part-time.
- 6.8. **Position Classification:** A job or group of jobs having similar duties and responsibilities requiring similar qualifications, which can be properly designated by one title indicative of the nature of work performed, and which carry the same salary grade.
- 6.9. **Position Classification Plan:** A systematic method used to categorize jobs into predefined classes or grades based on their duties, responsibilities, and required qualifications. This plan helps ensure consistency, fairness, and transparency in job classification and compensation.
- 6.10. **Position Reclassification:** Reclassification is a change in class title and/or salary grade of an existing or previously classified position. When there has been substantive, measurable change in job content and degree of responsibility or a restructuring of roles within a department, positions should be reviewed to ensure they reflect the appropriate grade.
- 6.11. **Promotion:** The movement of an employee to a job through a competitive internal and/or external recruitment process, with a higher salary grade and an increase in the level of skill and responsibility.
- 6.12. **Reorganization:** When a department's mission and resource priorities change, they may need to consider strategic workforce reshaping options to align the workforce effectively and efficiently with current or anticipated requirements.
- 6.13. **Trainee:** A candidate or employee that does not meet the minimum qualifications for the established position classification.

## 7. Approval and Revision History

Policy Origination Date:	May 10, 2022
Requires Board Approval:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Board Approval Dates:	n/a
Policy Exclusions:	Sheriff's Office
Revision History:	<p>August 29, 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added language to clarify position classification plan and equity amongst staff in similarly situated classifications</li> <li>Clarified equivalent experience, including reference to the job posting, fully qualified candidates and that only the highest relevant degree will be credited</li> <li>For demotions, added reassignment and relevancy for qualifications; changed 'cannot exceed the top of the new salary grade range' to 'cannot result in a pay increase'</li> <li>For promotions, added language regarding disciplinary action, performance evaluations and references to the minimum salary grade range and trainee status. Also added, consisting of their knowledge, skills, and abilities to proficiently perform the functions of the position'</li> <li>Edited definitions to mirror position classification policy</li> </ul>

## 8. Background

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