



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 and pay 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. Where there is conflict with any department-specific policy, this document will supersede. This policy does not apply to elected officials; however, they may elect to follow this policy by providing a written statement.

3. Policy

3.1. Pay upon New Hire appointment

Establishing a starting pay rate for new employees is dependent upon a variety of factors including their qualifications such as knowledge, skills and previous experience. Human Resources in consultation with hiring managers will ensure a newly appointed employee’s pay reflect appropriate placement within the salary grade based on all factors. Starting pay for new hires will not fall below or exceed the assigned salary grade range.

3.1.1. Establishing appropriate placement within salary grade quartiles

| Description of minimum requirements | 1 st Quartile | 2 nd Quartile | 3 rd Quartile | 4 th Quartile |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate meets minimum qualifications • Has limited experience • Requires additional training to build skills • Entry level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate has previous related experience • Demonstrates ability to perform duties proficiently • May need role specific training to independently perform duties | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate meets preferred qualifications • Demonstrates ability to perform all duties independently • Seasoned professional/mid-career | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate is subject matter expert • Exhibits broad/deep knowledge of job and related areas • Senior-level job expertise |

3.1.2. Determining equivalent experience for candidates

The term equivalent experience refers to job-related experience that provides a candidate the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to proficiently perform the functions of the position that would be equal to the educational requirements outlined in the job description and appearing on the job posting. To consider candidates with equivalent experience to

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meet the position qualifications, the equivalency statement must be included in the job posting. When a candidate applies with an equivalency, the equivalency must equal the number of the years required in the minimum qualifications. (See table below of experience equivalency)

| Qualification requirements | Experience equivalency |
|--|---|
| Associate 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>*No credit will be given to degrees above a master's degree unless required for the position.</i> | |

3.2. 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 appropriate rate of pay determined by the position classification and assigned salary grade.

3.3. Pay upon Promotion

To be eligible for promotion candidates must be a current Buncombe County employee, must meet the minimum qualifications for the job and have no corrective action/performance improvement plans or written warnings issued within the last six (6) months.

When establishing pay for a promotion; the employee's salary must increase by no less than 1% and must not fall below the minimum salary grade range of the newly appointed position unless the employee will be in a trainee status (see 3.2). The employee's qualifications in comparison with the minimum position requirements will be considered by Human Resources in consultation with hiring manager. (see 3.1.1)

3.4. Pay upon Demotion

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

3.4.1. Upon voluntary demotion, the employee's new pay rate will be determined based on the employee qualifications in comparison with the minimum requirements of the new position. The new pay rate cannot result in a salary increase and cannot exceed the top of the new salary grade range.

3.4.2. Upon involuntary demotion, the employees new pay rate will result in a decrease for the new position. The employee's new pay rate will be reduced by a minimum 5% or more based on the employee qualifications in comparison with the minimum position requirements and cannot exceed the top of the new salary grade range.

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3.5. **Pay upon Transfer**

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

3.6. **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. (see 3.1.1)

3.7. **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) month unless approved by the County Manager to extend.

An interim assignment requires an employee to perform duties outside of their regular classification. Employees assigned to a classification with a higher salary grade will be granted a five percent (5%) pay increase or moved their pay to the bottom of the assigned salary grade, 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 previous position 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.

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- 6.2. Classification - A class or group of job classes 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.
- 6.3. 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.
- 6.4. Department - A principal branch of a Buncombe County government dealing with a particular area of business.
- 6.5. 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 during.
- 6.6. Job - A collection of tasks, duties and responsibilities used to identify the work performed by employees throughout the organization.
- 6.7. Promotion - The movement of an individual to a job through a competitive internal and/or external recruitment process, with a higher salary and/or grade and an increase in the level of skill and responsibility.
- 6.8. Reclassification – The change in the classification of a position.
- 6.9. 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.
- 6.10. Trainee – A candidate or employee that does not meet the minimum qualifications for the established position classification.
- 6.11. 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.

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 Date: | Click for Date |
| Revision History Dates: | Enter Dates |
| Revision History Changes: | |

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