



Probationary Policy

Policy Number: PP 4-2

Effective Date: 01/16/2026

Approved By: Ted Voorhees, Town Manager

- [POLICY](#)
- [PURPOSE](#)
- [RESPECT VALUES](#)
- [PROCEDURE](#)
- [FORMS/INSTRUCTIONS](#)
- [ADDITIONAL CONTACTS](#)
- [APPENDICES](#)
- [DEFINITIONS](#)
- [RESPONSIBILITIES](#)
- [RELATED INFORMATION](#)
- [SCOPE](#)
- [POLICY HISTORY](#)

POLICY

New employees and existing employees who move into new roles in the Town serve a probationary period. During an employee's probationary period, they receive job training and feedback to help them achieve expected workplace performance. If the employee does not achieve the necessary level of workplace performance, they can be disciplined or terminated with the mutual agreement of the Department Head, the Town's Legal Counsel and the Director of Human Resource Development.

PURPOSE

The purpose of a probationary employment period is to provide time for job adjustment and training to determine if the employee is qualified and capable of performing the job. It is an opportunity for both the new employee and the Town to demonstrate Professionalism and Responsibility. The Director of the Human Resource Development Department is authorized to issue procedures consistent with this policy.

R.E.S.P.E.C.T. VALUES



Professionalism: We are committed to the excellence and accountability of our own performance as well as the performance of the organization. We carry out our jobs efficiently and effectively, are open to feedback about our performance and show a willingness to learn.

APPROVAL

Ted Voorhees, Town Manager



Probationary Procedure

Policy Number: PP 4-2

Effective Date: 01/16/2026

Approved By: Anita Badrock, Human Resources Development Director

PROCEDURES

These procedures are issued by the Director of Human Resource Development to implement the Probationary Period Policy, PP 4-2, issued by the Chapel Hill Town Manager. These procedures may be periodically updated.

1. Probationary Period: All new, reinstated, and rehired employees shall serve a probationary period of six (6) months, except for department heads, firefighters and law enforcement officers, who shall serve a probationary period of one (1) year.
2. Transfer to new role during Probationary Period: Employees must remain in their current job within the Town until they complete their probationary period; however, they can apply for a promotional process within their own department/workgroup. For example, a solid waste collector who is still in a probationary period could apply for a position to become a solid waste equipment operator.
3. Use of Leave during Probationary Period: During a new employee's probationary period or any extension thereof, departments may grant an employee's request to use accrued annual leave based on the operational needs of the department.
4. Prior to the End of a Probationary Period: Before the end of the probationary period, but no less than thirty (30) days prior to the end of the probationary period, the supervisor shall recommend to the department head whether the employee shall be retained, have the probationary period extended, or be terminated.
5. Flexible Work Arrangements during Probationary Period: To accommodate training, on-boarding and operational needs, the department is allowed to require a different work schedule for an employee during the probationary period than non-probationary employees working in similar roles or positions.
6. Role of the Supervisor:
 - a. Manages the timeline: The supervisor is responsible for keeping track of the employee's probationary period.
 - b. Manages the training and feedback: Supervisors should meet with the employee during the probationary period to provide training and feedback on the employee's performance. The supervisor should document these interactions with the employee. Documentation can take different forms but should be in writing and shared with the employee.

Some examples of appropriate documentation include, but are not limited to:

- An orientation or training checklist
 - Work Plan
 - Emails that summarize discussions
 - Training Certificates
 - Departmental Sign off logs
 - Text Messages, Camera footage, or Teams meeting transcripts
- c. Recommends Next Steps to the Department Head: The supervisor must make a recommendation to the Department Head no later than 30 days before the end of the probationary period regarding whether the employee should be retained, have their probationary period extended, or be terminated.
- d. HRD involvement: HRD must receive a copy of the written recommendation for the employee's personnel file no later than 15 days before the end of the probationary period.
- e. Employee to be notified: Employees should be informed in writing at the end of their probationary period as to their employment status.
7. Extension for Up to Ninety (90) Days: An employee's probationary period can be extended for up to 90 days under certain circumstances. In such cases, the employee must be notified in writing of the purpose of the extension, the conditions, and the length of time of the extension. This notice must be provided to the employee before the expiration date of the original probationary period. Here are some examples of factors that might influence a decision to extend the probationary period:
- The employee has an approved absence from work at a critical point or for a substantial period, which has delayed proper evaluation.
 - An employee has had initial performance issues which are improving but not yet resolved.
 - Required training has not been available or completed.
8. Discipline during Probationary Period:
- A probationary employee who demonstrates any of the following: unsatisfactory job performance, detrimental personal conduct, negligence in the performance of duties, or an inability to obtain and/or maintain required credentials during the probationary period, may be disciplined up to and including termination with the approval of the Director of Human Resource Development, the Town Attorney or similar legal advisor, and the Department Head.
9. Termination from Employment:
- a. Before a probationary employee whose work is judged unsatisfactory can be terminated from employment, they should receive feedback on how to correct the unsatisfactory performance. Supervisors should provide written feedback to the employee outlining steps the employee needs to take in order to perform the responsibilities of the position at a satisfactory level. This feedback should include specific methods of correction and a timetable for making the corrections.
- b. If a probationary employee is unable to perform their duties at a satisfactory level within the probationary, they can be terminated from employment with the mutual agreement of the Department Head, the Town's Legal Advisor, and the Director of Human Resource Development. Terminated employees will be paid out all unused accrued annual leave in accordance with the Town's [personnel policies and procedures](#).

PROCEDURES
CONT.

10. Grievance Process:

Persons who have completed their probationary period and who are subsequently involuntarily separated for inability to perform essential functions of their positions or as the result of a disciplinary termination shall have the right to access the Town's grievance procedure. These are the only bases for grievances regarding separation from town employment.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All Employees are expected to:

- a) Be aware of the Town's Probationary Period Policy and Procedure
- b) Ask questions about anything they do not understand

All Supervisors/Managers are expected to:

- a) Know when a new employee's probationary period ends and monitor accordingly
- b) Provide training and other resources to help probationary employees achieve satisfactory work performance during their probationary period, and provide ongoing feedback to probationary employees about their work performance
- c) Maintain documentation showing feedback and other interactions intended to assist the employee in meeting job performance expectations.
- c) Make recommendations about continuing a probationary employee's tenure with the Town to the Department Head **no later than 30 days before the end of the probationary period.**

All Department Heads are expected to:

- a) Monitor the work performance of probationary employees and work with supervisors to assure that probationary employees have access to training and resources to help them achieve satisfactory work performance.
- b) Make determinations about converting an employee to non-probationary status
- c) Determine when an extension of probationary status is warranted and follow procedures to inform the employee prior to the end of the initial probationary period

All Human Resource Development staff members are expected to:

- a) Assist employees, supervisors, managers, and Department Heads in understanding and implementing the Probationary Period Policy and Procedures.
- b) Provide guidance throughout the probationary period as requested.

FORMS AND
INSTRUCTIONS

None

<p>ADDITIONAL CONTACTS</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>DEFINITIONS</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>APPENDICES</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>FAQ</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>SCOPE</p>	<p>This policy replaces and supersedes any previous Town policies, departmental policies, handbooks, or unwritten policies or practices covering the same subject. Departmental policies in compliance with this policy are referenced in Section XI below, Related Information.</p>
<p>RELATED INFORMATION</p>	<p>Town of Chapel Hill Code of Ordinance 14-42 Town of Chapel Hill Code of Ordinance 14-127</p>
<p>POLICY HISTORY</p>	<p>Adopted May 2001, Revised and Reissued July 1, 2017 and January 15, 2026. This policy replaces and supersedes any previous Town policies, departmental policies, handbooks, or unwritten policies or practices covering the same subject. Departmental policies in compliance with this policy are referenced in Section XI Related Information. In the event of any disparity between this policy and the Town’s Code of Ordinances and/or applicable local, state, or federal laws, the Town’s Ordinance and/or applicable laws shall prevail.</p>