

Reclassification (competency level changes) of SPA positions

Background Discussion

During most of fiscal year 2008/09, and at the beginning of 2009/10, there was a temporary freeze on the requests for SPA competency level changes. This freeze has been lifted, but there are currently limited criteria for which the State Personal Office will allow state agencies to approve competency level changes

The ability to submit competency level change requests has not eliminated our ongoing problem in funding such requests, and we expect this problem to continue for the foreseeable future. As you may recall when the University switched to the new SPA career-banding model, this switch was basically an unfunded mandate. The State did provide the funding needed to get an employee to the minimum of an employee's band, but not to the minimum of an employee's competency level within a band.

On her arrival at UNC, Sarah created a long-term strategy for improving SPA salaries and was able to secure special SPA salary funding four years in a row. You may remember that this special funding allowed us to raise all SPA employee salaries to the minimum competency level. Achieving this level of funding is of great benefit to our SPA employees (and is not something that has been accomplished by all departments on campus), but also creates new problems. Previously, when a long-term employee retired or resigned, we were periodically able to fill the vacant position at a lower salary. The difference in salary needs was then used to fund competency level change requests (or 'reclassifications' under the old system). However, SPA employees being funded at the competency level minimum means that retirements or resignations seldom result in excess funds. Consequently, we don't have available funding to address all requests for competency level changes.

Our inability to fund all requests requires the development of a strategic and equitable approach for approving and funding any requests. The following criteria and procedures have been developed, and will be used as a basis for reviewing and prioritizing all requests.

Criteria for approving requests for competency level changes:

- The required job duties are clearly at a higher competency level, resulting in a position that is grossly misclassified
- Funding availability
- The reclassification will better serve the Library's goals and business needs

Procedures for submitting requests for competency level changes: NOTE: The staff member is NOT consulted until Step 4.

1. A supervisor considering the submission of a request for a competency level change will read the Competency Profile and the Position Competency Review to ensure that the required, long-term job duties for the position are at the desired new competency level. (see <http://www.osp.state.nc.us/CareerBanding/profiles.htm>) The supervisor discusses this with the Department Head.
2. If the Department Head agrees that a competency level change is justified, the Department Head will discuss the proposed change with the Director and AUL to develop a shared understanding of the justification. Approval from the AUL will be required to continue with the submission of a request.

3. Up to twice each fiscal year (decision on dates will be made by Admin. Council), requests for competency level changes will be considered for approval by a panel consisting of the three AULs, the Director of Planning and Administrative Services, and the Director of Library Personnel. A written justification for each request must be submitted by the Dept. Head to the AUL by a specified date. The AUL will share these justifications with the other panel members in advance of the meeting. Approval will be based on the criteria documented above.

- a. In advance of each semi-annual meeting, LPO will provide the estimated funding needed to achieve all of the requests.
- b. Requests not approved solely because of unavailable funds will be automatically reconsidered during the next review process.

4. Decisions on requests will be communicated by the AUL to the requesting Department Head. At this point, the Department Head and/or supervisor may discuss the approved request with the SPA employee and complete the necessary paperwork for submission to LPO. LPO will submit all paperwork to UNC Human Resources for review.

5. UNC Human Resources will communicate the decision for each request to LPO. LPO will communicate each decision to the panel, department head and supervisor, and will provide information regarding effective date(s). Note: Submissions not approved by UNC Human Resources will not be reconsidered for approval by the Library panel without significant documented changes.

All SPA competency level change requests will be subject to this review for approval, regardless of the source of funding.

The first panel review date will be announced to all department heads. Any requests already approved for submission to LPO will be held for the initial convening of the panel.