



SHRA-to-EHRA Classification Conversion Frequently Asked Questions

-- Revised 11/20/2024 --

1. Why are only some SHRA positions given the option to become EHRA employees?

The North Carolina General Assembly expanded the exemptions under the North Carolina Human Resources Act to include all FLSA-exempt positions – positions exempt from the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). These positions, “EHRA” positions, are governed by [NC A&T State University Personnel Policies](#) and the [UNC Policy Manual](#) Chapter 300.2 – Employees Exempt from the State Human Resources Act rather than the North Carolina State Human Resources Act. The University sought this flexibility to be more competitive in a highly competitive labor market.

2. Who is affected by this change?

SHRA employees in FLSA-exempt positions (those who are salaried and not subject to overtime) have the option to convert from SHRA to EHRA Non-Faculty status. FLSA-nonexempt employees (those paid hourly and subject to overtime) are not affected by this change and will not have the opportunity to change to EHRA.

3. Will affected employees be required to convert to EHRA status?

No employee is compelled or required to change their status. Affected employees have the option to convert to EHRA status for as long as they remain in their current position.

4. When and how will this change take effect?

Eligible employees who attained SHRA career status or SHRA probationary status as of September 1, 2023, were notified at that time that they had the option to convert to EHRA Non-Faculty. There was an initial election period during which eligible employees could convert.

5. Will employees have other opportunities to choose to convert?

Yes. They may elect to convert to EHRA at any time by completing the [SHRA-to-EHRA Conversion Election Form](#) found on the Classification and Compensation website. Any SHRA employee who chooses not to convert to EHRA status will remain SHRA for as long as they are in their current SHRA position.

6. What is the difference between being SHRA and EHRA?

Some human resources policies, such as sick leave and holidays, are the same for SHRA and EHRA employees. Others are different, such as policies for salary ranges, salary adjustments, leave accruals, terms of appointment, separation, and grievance rights. SHRA policies are set by the State Human Resources Commission through the Office of State Human Resources, whereas EHRA policies are set by the UNC Board of Governors through the UNC System Office.



A side-by-side [Comparison of Employment Policies](#) can be found on the Classification and Compensation website. Employees considering converting are strongly encouraged to read this document so that they can make a well-informed decision about whether to convert.

7. If I choose to change to EHRA status, can I reverse my decision later?

No, once you elect to convert to EHRA status, you remain EHRA for as long as you stay in that position.

8. Will I be told my EHRA salary before I decide to convert?

Yes, you will be notified of your expected EHRA position classification title, salary, and the salary range for the proposed classification. It is possible that your management, in consultation with Human Resources, may adjust your compensation to reflect the new EHRA classification's labor market or internal pay equity as part of your reclassification to EHRA status. Your prior total compensation, including longevity pay, could be taken into consideration, among other market factors, in determining your EHRA salary. Note that **there is no guarantee that a conversion will result in a change in salary**. If you are interested in converting, please notify your supervisor, who will work with Human Resources to determine the EHRA classification and what salary change, if any, will accompany the conversion.

9. Are institutions required to adjust the salaries of employees who may fall below the proposed minimum of the salary range for their classification?

No, institutions are not required to adjust salaries to reach any new minimum. It is expected that this issue will be addressed over time using regular salary adjustment processes.

10. If I move to EHRA status, will I lose my longevity pay?

Yes, employees who become EHRA are no longer eligible to receive longevity pay. Eligible employees will receive a final, pro-rated longevity payment at the time they convert to EHRA status to cover the time period since their most recent longevity check.

11. If I move to EHRA status, what will happen to my current leave balances and leave accruals?

All of your current sick leave, annual leave, and bonus leave balances will transfer with you to EHRA status. (All annual leave will transfer. There is no cap to the transfer amount, but the year-end carryover amount remains capped at 240 hours.) Because EHRA employees do not receive other types of paid time off (holiday equal time off, adverse weather ETO, etc.), any accrued paid time off that you have will be paid out or forfeited as required by SHRA policies at the time of changing to EHRA status. Sick leave accruals remain 8 hours per month (pro-rated for part-time). With respect to annual (vacation) leave, all EHRA non-faculty employees receive 24 days per calendar year (two days per month) regardless of their length of state service.



12. What if I already earn 26 vacation days per year as a long-term SHRA employee?

SHRA employees who currently earn 26 days of vacation leave per calendar year will be “grandfathered in” and will retain their annual accrual of 26 days of vacation leave per year as an EHRA employee. This applies only to those who are earning 26 days of vacation leave at the time they convert to EHRA status.

13. If I choose to remain SHRA and my position is reclassified, will it be reclassified as EHRA?

No, for SHRA employees who choose not to convert to EHRA status, their position will remain in the SHRA career banding classification system, even if it is reclassified. However, once the employee leaves the position, the position will convert to EHRA status.

14. If I choose to remain SHRA and apply for an EHRA position, can I remain SHRA if I am selected for the position?

No, if an SHRA employee is hired into an EHRA position, then the SHRA employee must become an EHRA employee.

15. If I move to EHRA status, will my benefits change?

Other than vacation leave and longevity, EHRA employees have the same benefits programs as SHRA employees. Employees converting to EHRA status will be given the option to move from the Teachers’ and State Employees’ Retirement program (TSERS) to the Optional Retirement Program (ORP) if they have not already had the option to make that choice. A side-by-side [Comparison of Employment Policies](#), including benefits, can be found on the Classification and Compensation website. Employees considering converting are strongly encouraged to read this document so that they can make a well-informed decision about whether to convert.

16. Do employees who choose to convert to EHRA status need to sign a new terms and conditions of employment document? Will a template of that document be provided?

Yes, each converting employee will be asked to complete the [SHRA-to-EHRA Conversion Election Form](#) to indicate that they elect to convert to EHRA status. Just prior to conversion, they will be asked to sign [EHRA Non-Faculty Certifications and Conditions of Employment](#) found on the Classification and Compensation website.

17. Do employees need to have a college or advanced degree to convert to EHRA status or to be considered for any new EHRA positions?

Most professional EHRA positions require a Bachelor’s degree. The UNC System Office has provided guidance on its website on expected education and experience standards for the EHRA classifications. For current SHRA employees electing to convert to EHRA status, an employee without a Bachelor’s degree may be grandfathered into the converted position, since they otherwise qualified for the position as SHRA. That grandfathered provision is expected to be removed at some point in the future.



18. Will the UNC System Office fund increases to move employees into the appropriate ranges?

No, funds for salary increases related to this initiative are the responsibility of each institution.

19. How will equity be addressed if two employees are doing similar work, but one converts to EHRA status and the other remains SHRA?

Pay equity will be determined based on the salary rules relevant to each employee group, so it is possible that the types of salary increases and salary ranges available to EHRA employees as compared to SHRA employees may result in greater differences in employee salaries, even when performing similar work. Over time, there will be increasingly fewer SHRA exempt positions in these classifications due to conversion of vacant positions or employees choosing to convert to EHRA status, which will minimize equity differences.

20. What happens if an employee converts to EHRA and their supervisor remains SHRA? Is there an issue with an SHRA employee supervising an EHRA employee?

No, there is no rule that prevents an SHRA employee from supervising an EHRA employee.

21. What happens if the salary of an SHRA supervisor is lower than the EHRA employee?

Management may pursue a market or equity adjustment, under existing rules, if warranted, based on the totality of the circumstances and the scope of duties of the affected employees. The issue can be considered during the salary review process for the conversion implementation. There is no rule that prevents an SHRA supervisor from having a salary lower than a subordinate EHRA employee; the salary levels are determined within their respective classification salary ranges and related salary administration rules.

22. What about employees who are currently on extended leave?

Because this status change is driven by employee choice, no action would occur until the employee has returned to work, following the same procedures given to other employees. If the employee does not return to work, then the position would be converted to EHRA prior to the job posting.

23. What happens when an EHRA employee is discontinued (termination of employment)?

EHRA employees must receive written notice of discontinuation. For employees hired at NC A&T prior to July 1, 2024, the minimum notice period for discontinuation is based on the employee's years of service: employees in their first year of service receive at least a 30-day notice; employees in their second or third year of service receive at least a 60-day notice; and employees in their fourth and subsequent years of service receive at least a 90-day notice. Management may provide an employee with an equivalent payout in lieu of a working notice, or some combination of the two. At separation from state employment, vacation and bonus leave are paid out and any sick leave is retained for five years as it is with SHRA employees.



24. Is SHRA service included in determining whether a discontinuation notice is for 30, 60, or 90 days?

Yes, for the purposes of this implementation, the University will consider SHRA service for notice/ payment amount.

25. What happens when a layoff (reduction-in-force) action occurs for an EHRA employee? Do the same rules apply as they do for SHRA employees?

No, the RIF and RIF Reemployment Priority policies apply only to SHRA career status employees. For an EHRA layoff, the employee must receive the regular advance written notice of discontinuation.

26. If I have an active disciplinary action, will it remain active if I move to EHRA status?

No, most EHRA employees are not subject to the same disciplinary policy and procedures as an SHRA employee, so there is no mechanism to enforce an SHRA disciplinary action for an EHRA employee. This means that at the time of transition from SHRA to EHRA status, any active SHRA disciplinary actions would become inactive. Even so, management may determine, based on current employee performance and conduct, if any similar documented expectations, such as an EHRA performance improvement plan or similar documentation, may be appropriate to issue to the employee, who is now in an at-will position.

27. What other incentives are being provided to employees to convert to EHRA status?

This implementation is not designed to be an incentive program to make all current SHRA employees convert to EHRA status. Current SHRA employees are free to remain in SHRA status as long as they are in their current positions. Employees will need to determine for themselves if converting to EHRA status is appropriate for them based on their own personal circumstances.

28. Other than possibly getting more vacation leave or a slightly higher salary, how does making this change benefit an employee?

This will vary with each employee's personal situation. We encourage employees to carefully review the differences between converting to EHRA status and remaining in SHRA status. For some employees, particularly those who are further along in their careers with the state, it may be advantageous to remain in SHRA status. For those newer to service with the state, the greater annual leave rates and possible salary growth considerations, such as the annual raise process for EHRA employees, may be a more significant factor in making a decision to convert. Conversion may also provide some current SHRA employees the opportunity to move from TSERS to the ORP. Because the UNC System retains authority for EHRA classifications and salary administration, the UNC System has greater flexibility with EHRA positions than it does with SHRA positions to update salary ranges and classifications. The Office of State Human Resources has the authority over any changes to SHRA classifications and salary ranges.



29. What happens if an employee converts to EHRA status, and the position subsequently changes to non-exempt due to a change in federal law? Does the position/employee revert to SHRA status?

Generally, the requirements for a position to be EHRA status also make it exempt from the overtime provisions of the FLSA. Should a position change to non-exempt status due to a change in duties or in FLSA regulations, the position would remain EHRA but with a non-exempt FLSA status. Once the position is vacated, it would revert to SHRA status for hiring if applicable.

30. Are there plans for other policy changes coming up that may affect us if we stay SHRA or convert to EHRA status?

The UNC System is pursuing additional revisions to all EHRA salary ranges and classification groups separate from the conversion of current SHRA FLSA-exempt positions. These will be communicated once they are available to show any impact on possible EHRA elections by existing employees. As with any policy, there is always a possibility for future changes based on legislative action or changes made by the Office of State Human Resources for SHRA employees and by the UNC Board of Governors for EHRA employees. Any changes would affect either all SHRA or all EHRA employees, not just converted EHRA positions.

31. I am not sure I want to convert to EHRA right now. Will I have any opportunities in the future to convert?

Yes, the option to convert is always available to eligible employees.

32. Will SHRA non-exempt employees have an opportunity to convert to EHRA status?

No, the new statutory language only applies to positions that are exempt from FMLA overtime provisions. Adding any other employee groups would require additional legislative action by the NC General Assembly.