



**Dental Medicine Support Services (DMSS)  
Policy Manual  
(Updated February 2023)**

## Dental Medicine Support Services (DMSS)

1. [Introduction](#)
  2. [Delegation of Authority](#)
  3. [Dental Support Services \(DMSS\) Postings](#)
  4. [Dental Support Services \(DMSS\) Incentive Pay Policy](#)
  5. [Dental Support Services \(DMSS\) Probationary Appointment Policy](#)
  6. [Dental Support Services \(DMSS\) Time-limited Permanent Appointment Policy](#)
  7. [Dental Support Services \(DMSS\) Performance Management Policy](#)
  8. [Dental Support Services \(DMSS\) Separation Policy](#)
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### 1. Introduction (Approved 02/23)

Effective July 1, 2022, the North Carolina General Statute 116-40.6 excepted employees of the ECU Dental School Clinical Operations at East Carolina University (ECU), formerly designated as employees subject to the human resources act (SHRA), from Chapter 126 of the General Statutes; except Article 5-Political Activity, Article 6-EEO, Article 7-Privacy Act, and Article 14-“Whistleblower” Protection. NCGS 116-40.6 authorizes the ECU Board of Trustees (Board) to adopt policies and procedures governing the terms and conditions of employment for these employees. The Board is directed to establish procedures that effectively promote the hiring and retention of capable, diligent, and effective career state employees. In broad terms, the Board is authorized to establish a human resources system (to be named “Dental Medicine Support Services” – DMSS) that meets the needs of DMSS, so that it may remain competitive and responsive in the health care marketplace and to support the School’s mission to lead the nation in community-based oral health education, research patient care and service. Support staff for Dental School Operations are usually designated as Dental Medicine Support Services (DMSS) staff in contrast to staff subject to the State Human Resources Act (SHRA). The application for and acceptance of a DMSS position, which is acknowledged in writing by every employee, confirms understanding of certain differences in policy between the two groups. DMSS employees, and the clinics they support, may be considered more similar to private dental practice clinics than to traditional state agency positions.

Various policy changes have been, and will continue to be, developed to enhance the recruitment and retention efforts of the Dental Medicine Support Services system as detailed in this document. All other SHRA policies, except for the Mediation and Grievance Procedure for SHRA Employees, will remain in effect until such time as a new DMSS policy is developed to address the specific issue.

### 2. Delegation of Authority (Approved 02/23)

To expedite the development of the Dental Medicine Support Services (DMSS) Human Resource system, the East Carolina University (ECU) Board of Trustees grants delegation of authority to the ECU Department of Human Resources for approval of policies and procedures. The ECU Department of Human Resources will work closely with the Dean of the School of Dental Medicine and the Provost in the development of all DMSS proposals. “Final draft” policy and procedure proposals must be approved by the Dean of the School of Dental Medicine, the Provost, and the Department of Human Resources prior to implementation.

**3. Dental Medicine Support Services (DMSS) Postings (Approved 02/23)**

I. Recruitment and Selection

- A. All vacant DMSS positions shall be publicized to permit open and fair competition for all interested employees and applicants.
- B. Each vacancy will be described in an announcement that includes at the minimum; the position number, title, salary range, essential functions, knowledge and skill requirements, minimum training and experience standard, and the application period (closing date).
- C. Each vacancy listing must include a closing date unless the classification has been determined as difficult to recruit.
- D. Each permanent DMSS position to be filled must be posted. There are two types of searches and minimum posting time.
  - 1. Internal to ECU; 3 workdays minimum posting
  - 2. Internal and External to State Government; 5 workdays minimum posting.

II. Continuous Postings

For DMSS Human Resources system purposes, those positions/classifications designated as difficult to recruit, may be advertised as **"Ongoing"**. (Factors used in determining difficult to recruit include; turnover, number of positions in class, geographic location, scarcity of qualified applicants, safety, quality of patient care, and educational requirements for students. Applications will be accepted on a continuous basis, allowing the hiring department to interview applicants as soon as a vacancy occurs. This will eliminate the usual recruitment period and allow for the filling of positions in a timely manner.

**4. Dental Medicine Support Services (DMSS) Incentive Pay Policy (Approved 02/23)**

<b>DMSS Incentive Pay Policy</b>	
Cash bonuses may be awarded to eligible employees in addition to regular compensation for exemplary contributions by an individual or results achieved by the overall department. The administration of all compensation including bonus awards shall be made on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race/ethnicity, color, genetic information, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, political affiliation, or veteran status.	
<b>Bonus Payments -Definition</b>	As defined in this policy, a cash bonus is a one-time, lump sum monetary payment which does not increase the base salary of the employee. The lump sum bonus payment may be awarded as a flat dollar amount or may be a percentage of the employee's base pay. Cash bonus amounts will be reduced by both tax withholding and benefits deductions.

<p align="center"><b>Types of Bonuses Payments</b></p>	<p>Eligible DMSS employees may receive two types of cash bonus payments: 1) individual contributor bonus commonly referred to as a “spot bonus”; 2) department/unit incentive bonus based on pre-set goals and measurable criteria.</p>
<p><b>Type 1 Individual Contributor (“Spot”) Bonus</b></p>	<p>An individual contributor bonus may be awarded to an employee for “above and beyond” contributions. These bonuses are after-the-fact payments for which there has been no promise or prior agreement. Individual contributor bonuses may be awarded at any time. The amount of the bonus is based on the significance of the results. The bonus should be a minimum of \$250, not to exceed \$2,500 per award and a maximum of \$5,000 during a 12-month period, subject to division and HR approval.</p> <p>Individual contributor bonuses must be based on current activities rather than performance evaluations. Additionally, bonuses must be based on definable, measurable criteria. Criteria may come from any of the categories of activities listed below. Please note that categories provided are not all-inclusive, nor do achievements in these categories automatically entitle an employee to a bonus payment:</p> <p><b>#1 – Quality Improvement/Reengineering Efforts</b>  <b>#2 – Teamwork &amp; Collaboration</b>  <b>#3 – Professional Development Activities</b>  <b>#4 – Customer Service</b></p>
<p><b>Individual Contributor Bonuses – Employee Eligibility</b></p>	<p>Employees with probationary, permanent, time-limited, or temporary appointments are eligible to receive individual contributor bonus awards. Employees <u>not eligible</u> for individual contributor bonuses include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees with “below expectations” rating on most recent performance evaluation</li> <li>• Employees with any type of “active” disciplinary action</li> <li>• Non-employees performing services as independent contractors</li> </ul>
<p><b>Approval of Individual Contributor Bonuses</b></p>	<p>The School of Dental Medicine Dean or his/her designee will review all requests for bonuses. If approved, requests will be submitted to the division office for approval. After obtaining these approvals, the request will be submitted to Human Resources for final review and approval. Bonuses may also be contingent upon other approvals required by applicable policy and/or law.</p>

<p><b>Type 2 Unit-Based Incentive or Productivity Bonus</b></p>	<p>A Unit-Based Incentive or Productivity Bonus is a payment based on the achievement of a predetermined goal(s) or criteria as a group of eligible employees operating as a business unit or department. This type of bonus is contingent upon the successful completion of the predetermined goal(s), and contingent upon the availability of non-state funding.</p> <p>Unit-based incentive bonus plans should be based on achievement for a six-month or 12-month period, allowing for one annual award or a maximum of two awards per fiscal year.</p> <p>All Unit-based incentive bonus payments will be awarded to the individual employees in the applicable unit or department based upon the employee’s eligibility as outlined in this policy. Productivity bonus payments should be awarded based upon predetermined criteria and the employee’s eligibility as outlined in this policy.</p>
<p><b>Unit-Based Incentive Bonus Plan – Employee Eligibility</b></p>	<p>DMSS employees may be granted the right to participate in the unit-based incentive bonus plan. DMSS employees with a probationary, temporary, permanent appointment, including time-limited appointment status are eligible to participate in unit-based bonus plans. DMSS employees <u>not eligible</u> for unit-based bonuses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees with “below expectations” rating on most recent performance evaluation</li> <li>• Employees with any type of “active” disciplinary action</li> <li>• Non-employees performing services as independent contractors. See “Other Policy Provisions” below</li> </ul>
<p><b>Unit-Based Incentive Bonus Plan – Required Approval</b></p>	<p>Unit-based and productivity bonus plans must require completion of predetermined measures of achievement and are subject to this policy. Unit-based performance or productivity bonus plans must be approved by the Dean or his/her designee, the division office, Office of University Counsel, and Human Resources prior to implementation.</p>
<p><b>Other Policy Provisions And Considerations – All Types of Bonuses</b></p>	<p>Employees are not eligible for partial payment of any bonus paid after termination of their employment and/or reassignment to another position that is not classified as DMSS. All bonus payments are subject to funding availability.</p>

**5. Dental Medicine Support Services (DMSS) Probationary Appointment Policy (Approved 02/23)**

The purpose of this policy is to extend the selection process and provide the time for effective training and adjustment of the new employee and determine if the employee’s performance

meets acceptable standards for their position. All new Dental Medicine Support Services (DMSS) employees, including rehires and transfers from SHRA\CSS positions (both internal ECU SHRA\CSS hires, as well as those from other State agencies), will serve a twelve (12) month probationary period.

A DMSS probationary employee who has more than three (3) months of extended leave of absence with or without pay, during the probationary period, will have their probationary period extended to a duration of fifteen (15) months from the DMSS appointment date. Months of extended leave of absence is defined as leave in excess of one-half of the regularly scheduled workdays and holidays within a given month.

During the probationary period, DMSS probationary employees will receive a DMSS Performance Evaluation upon completion of their first six (6) months of employment and after the completion of the probationary period.

The University retains the right to discharge new DMSS employees during the probationary period, without notice or without cause. Probationary dismissals are not subject to appeal.

Probationary employees are eligible to earn vacation and sick leave and holiday time as they accrue. Any vacation and sick leave time may only be used in accordance with applicable leave policies.

Employees who resign or are terminated during the probationary period are not eligible to be paid out vacation leave or bonus leave accrued during their probationary period, excluding leave transferred from state service prior to date of DMSS position appointment. Eligible unused vacation leave, not to exceed 240 hours, plus unused eligible bonus leave is paid in a lump sum. Payment shall not be made for unused sick leave, and it shall be reinstated if the employee returns within five years. Sick leave may be applied toward retirement if eligible to retire within five years dependent upon the retirement program the employee is enrolled in.

#### **6. Dental Medicine Support Services (DMSS) Time-Limited Permanent Appointment Policy (Approved 02/23)**

A time-limited permanent appointment is an appointment that has a limited duration to:

1. a permanent position that is vacant due to the incumbent's leave of absence and when the replacement employee's services will be needed for a period of one year or less.
2. a time limited permanent position. If an employee is retained in a time-limited permanent position beyond five years, the employee shall be designated as having a permanent appointment.

This type of appointment is distinguished from a temporary appointment by the longer length of time, and from a regular permanent appointment by its limited duration.

Individuals receiving initial appointments in Dental Medicine Support Services (DMSS) positions will be subject to the DMSS probationary period as outlined in the DMSS Probationary Policy.

Employees with a time-limited permanent appointment receive leave, total state service credit, retirement and health benefits. They are not eligible for severance pay and priority reemployment.

#### **7. Dental Medicine Support Services (DMSS) Performance Management Policy (Approved 02/23)**

Performance management includes the overall management of the employee, including the completion of performance evaluations. Performance management includes coaching, counseling, mentoring, as well as encouraging employee development. In the event that performance and/or conduct are not meeting expectations, the supervisor should review the appropriate Disciplinary Policy and contact the appropriate Employee Relations Consultant in Human Resources.

In order to ensure that employees are aware of job expectations for both performance and conduct, it is essential that a performance management policy is in place. DMSS employees will be evaluated on a Performance Plan that will include the East Carolina University Core Work Values, the employee's job duties from the position description, and an overall performance rating utilizing the 3-point rating scale of Exceeds Expectations, Meets Expectations, and Below Expectations.

### **Performance Evaluations**

It is expected that the following evaluations will be completed on DMSS employees. Supervisors will be responsible for, and held accountable for, the fair and accurate completion of these evaluations.

- a) Probationary Evaluation – DMSS employees serving in their initial probationary period will receive probationary evaluations in accordance with the DMSS Probationary Appointment Policy.
- b) Annual Evaluation – DMSS employees who have completed their initial DMSS probationary period will be evaluated on an annual basis utilizing the approved evaluation form as denoted by the Employee Relations website. The evaluations will be conducted by the end of May of each year. The evaluation period shall run from April 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year.
- c) Interim Evaluation – DMSS employees who are no longer on probation may receive an interim evaluation in between annual evaluations if the supervisor deems it necessary, the employee has active disciplinary actions, or the employee requests it. Interim evaluations will normally be completed halfway through the annual performance review period.
- d) Evaluations must be maintained for a period of three (3) years, at which time they can be destroyed unless those records are subject to an active litigation hold or other longer record retention requirement.

## **8. Dental Medicine Support Services (DMSS) Separation Policy (Approved 02/23)**

Separation from State service occurs when an employee is indefinitely removed from payroll due to one of the reasons listed below.

### **Resignation**

Any DMSS employee expecting to terminate employment with the School of Dental Medicine is expected to give written “working” notice. (“Working” notice is defined as actual days worked after submitting a notice of resignation). Preapproved leave is not considered part of the working notice. The working notice period does not need to be continuous, but the total actual days worked must meet the minimum working notice period defined below. As is normally the case, any request for vacation or sick leave during this notice will be subject to management’s discretion but leave days will not count towards the working notice period, unless explicitly stated that they will count towards the working notice period by management.

All DMSS employees should give at least 4 weeks written “working” notice prior to their last expected workday.

Failure to provide adequate notice of resignation will be documented in the employee’s personnel file in the ECU Department of Human Resources and will place the employee on an ineligible for rehire list with the University, at management’s discretion. DMSS employees placed on an ineligible for rehire list for the failure to complete a proper working notice period, will remain on the list for at least 2 years from their date of separation. After 2 years from the date of separation, the former DMSS employee may request to be removed from the list. Requests for removal from the ineligible for rehire list must be submitted in writing to the Department of Human Resources Employee Relations Unit. Requests will be reviewed by the Department of Human Resources and the School of Dental Medicine, and a response will be provided in writing to the former DMSS employee within 30 calendar days. If the request for removal is denied, the former DMSS employee may re-request removal from the ineligible for rehire list after 365 days.

The requirement of completing the working notice period may be waived at department management and Department of Human Resources’ discretion, upon the employee’s request. Request for waiving the working notice period must be submitted in writing.

In the event a DMSS employee resigns to avoid serious disciplinary action, including suspension, demotion, or dismissal, the University has the discretion to make the employee’s resignation effective immediately.

Unused vacation leave, not to exceed 240 hours, plus unused eligible bonus leave is paid in a lump sum. If resignation is received from a probationary employee, payout of leave will follow the DMSS Probationary Appointment Policy. Payment shall not be made for unused sick leave. It shall be reinstated if the employee returns within five years, or it may be applied toward retirement if eligible to retire within five years.

### **Voluntary Resignation without Notice**

An employee who is absent from work and does not contact the employer for three consecutive scheduled workdays may be separated from employment as a voluntary resignation. The employer should make a reasonable effort to contact the employee before separation. A factor to be considered when determining whether the employee should be deemed to have voluntarily resigned is the employee’s culpability in failing to contact his or her employer.

Such separations as described above are voluntary separations from State employment and create no right of grievance or appeal. Unused vacation leave, not to exceed 240 hours, plus unused eligible bonus leave is paid in a lump sum. If separation is from a probationary employee, payout of leave will follow the DMSS Probationary Appointment Policy. Payment shall not be made for unused sick leave. It shall be reinstated if the employee returns within five years, or it may be applied toward retirement if eligible to retire within five years.

### **Separation Due to Unavailability**

An employee may be separated on the basis of unavailability when the employee becomes or remains unavailable for work after all applicable leave benefits (as defined below) have been exhausted. Such a separation is an involuntary separation and not a disciplinary dismissal, therefore may not be grieved or appealed.



Definitions:

- a) Unavailability – (1) the employee’s inability to return to all of the position’s essential duties and work schedule due to a medical condition or the vagueness of a medical prognosis; or (2) the employee and the department cannot reach agreement on a return to work arrangement that meets both the operating needs of the agency and the employee’s medical/health needs; (3) notwithstanding any unexhausted applicable leave credits and leave benefits, the employee is unable to return to all of the position’s essential duties as set forth in the employee’s job description or designated work schedule due to a court order, or due to other extenuating circumstances that renders the employee unable to perform the position’s essential duties as set forth in the employee’s job description or designated work schedule;
- b) Applicable leave credits – leave the employee chose to exhaust prior to going on leave without pay, including vacation, sick, bonus leave, and available compensatory leave.
- c) Applicable leave benefits – benefits approving employee to be on a leave status (whether paid or unpaid), including Family Medical Leave Act, accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act, Short-term Disability, and Extended Short-term Disability.

Notification Required - To issue a Separation Due to Unavailability letter for a DMSS employee, management must contact the Department of Human Resources to initiate and complete this process.

1. “Pre-Separation Letter”

Prior to separation, the University shall notify the employee in writing of the proposed separation date, the efforts undertaken to avoid separation, and why the efforts were unsuccessful. This notice will be sent to the employee at least 7 calendar days prior to the department’s planned date of separation. The employee must respond in writing prior the proposed separation date to contest the separation. It is advisable for the University to send the employee the “Pre-Separation Letter” via certified mail or some other method of delivery that provides delivery confirmation.

2. “Letter of Separation”

The department must also give the employee a letter of separation if the University and employee are unable to agree on terms of the employee’s return to work or the employee does not respond to the Pre-Separation Letter prior to the separation date defined in the Pre-Separation Letter. The University should send the employee a Letter of Separation no later than 7 calendar days after the Pre-Separation letter is sent to the employee. The Separation Letter must include a. Actual date of separation, and b. Specific reasons for separation.

**Retirement**

An employee may retire when the employee is eligible, applies, and is approved for retirement benefits as outlined by the employee’s respective retirement program. Unused vacation, or any portion, may be exhausted and the remainder paid in a lump sum (up to 240 hours) along with eligible bonus leave. Unused sick leave may be applied toward retirement dependent upon the retirement program the employee is enrolled in.

**Reduction in Force**

An employee may be reduced in force in accordance with provisions of the appropriate Reduction in Force Policy. Employees may elect, subject to approval by management, to exhaust vacation leave after their last day of work and be paid in a lump sum for the balance not to exceed 240 hours (plus eligible bonus leave). If an employee had over 240 hours of vacation leave at the time of reduction in force, the excess leave shall be reinstated if reemployed within one year. Employees separated due to reduction-in-force shall be informed that their sick leave shall be reinstated if employed in any agency within five years.

### **Dismissal**

Dismissal is involuntary separation for cause in accordance with the provisions of the appropriate Disciplinary Policy. Unused vacation leave, not to exceed 240 hours, plus unused eligible bonus leave is paid in a lump sum. Payment shall not be made for unused sick leave, and it shall be reinstated if the employee returns within five years. Sick leave may be applied toward retirement if eligible to retire within five years dependent upon the retirement program the employee is enrolled in. If dismissal is for a probationary employee, payout of leave will follow DMSS Probationary Appointment Policy.

### **Time-Limited Appointment Ended**

A "Time-limited Appointment Ended" separation occurs when a time-limited employee is terminated without just cause prior to being designated as having a permanent appointment in accordance with the DMSS Time-limited Permanent Appointment Policy. DMSS time-limited employees are considered at-will and thus, there are no required disciplinary or dismissal procedures to end the employment of these employees. Employees will receive written notification of a separation from employment to the DMSS time-limited appointment. Unused vacation leave, not to exceed 240 hours, plus unused eligible bonus leave is paid in a lump sum. Payment shall not be made for unused sick leave, and it shall be reinstated if the employee returns within five years. Sick leave may be applied toward retirement if eligible to retire within five years dependent upon the retirement program the employee is enrolled in. If separation is for a probationary employee, payout of leave will follow the DMSS Probationary Appointment Policy.

### **Death**

In the event of the death of an active University DMSS employee, payment for unpaid salary, unused vacation leave, not to exceed 240 hours, unused eligible bonus leave, and approved reimbursements, must be made upon establishment of a valid claim, to the deceased employee's administrator or executor. In the absence of an administrator or executor, payment must be made to the Clerk of Superior Court of the county of the deceased employee's residence. Payment shall not be made for unused sick leave. If separation is for a probationary employee, payout of leave will follow DMSS Probationary Appointment Policy.

### **Separation Date:**

The last day of work or the day of death, shall be the date separated, except in the following cases, subject to the approval of Human Resources:

- (1) If an employee is exhausting vacation leave prior to retirement or reduction in force, the date separated shall be the ending date of leave.

(2) If an employee is exhausting approved sick/vacation leave for medical reasons and resigns or dies before returning to work, the date separated shall be the date the employee resigns or dies.

(3) If an employee gives notice of a resignation and becomes ill, the employee may exhaust sick/vacation leave up until the date of the resignation. The date separated will be the date of resignation.