1. **Purpose**

Agencies and institutions with an educational mission have a need for on-going, full-time, staff positions with employment periods of less than twelve months; therefore the following guidelines have been developed to address the need for these positions.

The purposes of the special term/academic year staff appointments for less than twelve months are as follows:

1. To create a management tool to better utilize limited financial and human resources and to assign staff to meet the workload needs of the unit.

2. To attract a pool of strong applicants who would be interested in employment because of the desired work schedule, and the availability of benefits.

2. **Guidelines**

Positions may be nine, ten, or eleven-month full-time appointments within the traditional academic year schedule or alternate special term schedules of 9, 10, or 11 months established by the university.

2.1 **Conversion Criteria**

1. Appointing authorities (department heads, deans, directors and vice presidents), in consultation with Human Resources, are solely responsible for the identification of positions to be converted to special term/academic year staff positions, and for determining the specific work schedule within the options specified by the university.

2. When considering a conversion of a position to a special term/academic year appointment, a work unit (department) with multiple positions in the same role title and pay band, performing the same or similar duties, may give interested employees the opportunity to volunteer. Management will offer the appointment on a university seniority basis within the work unit. If there is no acceptance of offer, the least senior employee’s position will be converted.

3. Filled positions to be converted must have the voluntary agreement of the current incumbent of the position or the incumbent shall be given six months advance notice. If no satisfactory alternative is identified within the six-month notice period, the incumbent will become a special term/academic year employee. *In the event that a full-time position is converted to a special term/academic year appointment, the Attorney General has determined that the incumbent will not be considered to be in a layoff situation.*

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4. The probationary period of a special term/academic year appointment will be extended if the interval of time when they do not work falls within the probationary period.

**Example:** The employee is hired in March; the interval of time not worked for this employee is May 9 to August 10. At this point the employee will not have completed the twelve-month probationary period; therefore, the probationary term is halted during the time off. When the employee returns to work, the probationary period will commence again and be extended by the amount of time off in order to meet the minimum twelve-month probationary requirement. Human Resources will notify the supervisor and employee of the revised probationary end date.

5. A special term/academic year appointment requires 1.0 full time equivalent (FTE) position allocation and is counted as 1 FTE appointment.

6. Senior Managers may identify alternatives for employees who wish to remain on a 12-month appointment (such as, transfer to another position at the same pay band and role title).

7. Vacant positions or positions becoming vacant during the year which meet the conversion criteria may be changed to less than twelve-month appointments prior to the beginning of the recruitment process.

8. Once converted, the position will remain a special term/academic year appointment unless workforce needs dictate that management restore the position to twelve months. Employees should be given as much notice as possible, with a minimum of 90 days advance notice, before the position is restored to a twelve-month position.

### 2.2 Conditions for Special Term/Academic Year Staff Employment

1. Salaried employees are designated as “full-time” if they are scheduled to work a minimum of 40 hours per week for at least nine months of each calendar year.

2. The annual salary for the employee will reflect compensation only for months worked. For example, a twelve-month position converted to nine months would be seventy-five percent of the twelve-month equivalent; the employee would receive no pay during the months not worked. However, staff employees are offered the option of deferring their pay by spreading payment over twelve months, or the option of being paid only during the months worked.

3. Employer contributions for health and life insurance coverage will continue year round for eligible employees.

4. Employee contributions for insurance (Health, Long Term Disability and Accidental Death and Dismemberment) may be held on a prorated basis during months worked to cover the months not worked or the employee may elect to make personal payments directly during the period of non-employment for the insurance coverage. Employees electing to have their pay spread over 12 months will have their contributions for insurance made over that period of time.

5. **Special term/academic year** classified employees will continue to earn 12 months of retirement service credit.

6. Under the [Standard Sick Leave Plan](http://www.dpt.state.va.us/hrpolicy/policy/sicklv.htm) annual, sick and holiday leave shall be earned/accrued only during the academic year or the prescribed employment period. Under the Virginia [Sickness and Disability Plan](http://www.dpt.state.va.us/hrpolicy/policy/pol4_57.pdf), sick
and personal leave is granted at the beginning of the calendar year; unused balances will be reserved until the employee returns to work.

7. All other staff personnel policies will apply.

8. Employees may work on an hourly wage basis during the time they are off.

3. **Procedures**

### 3.1 Establishment of the Position or Change of Existing Position

To establish or change an existing position to a *special term/academic year appointment*, the department head must submit to Human Resources a completed *P3A (Appointment and Change of Status)*. *If duties have changed, a revised position description in PeopleAdmin must be submitted to Human Resources.*

Current and new employees will be informed of their options by their departmental administrative office.

Deferring pay will result in lower pay each pay period. In order to avoid receiving exceptionally low pay, employees who are hired mid-point or later in the academic year (or alternate special term) may choose to wait to defer their pay until the beginning of the next academic year (or alternate special term).

4. **Definitions**

**Academic Year Schedule:**
- Nine Month Schedule of Work: August 10 through May 9
- Ten Month Schedule of Work: August 10 through June 9

**Alternate Special Term Schedule:** Other full-time 9, 10, or 11 month schedule of work defined by the university; non-work months may be consecutive or spread out during the year. Human Resources will publish the alternate schedules.

**Deferred Pay:** Persons on special term/academic year staff appointments may have their salary spread over 12 months.

**Staff:** Defined as salaried non-faculty employees, and includes Classified Staff and University Staff. Effective July 1, 2006, the university will have two groups of salaried non-faculty employees: those covered by the Virginia Personnel Act and State Human Resource policies (Classified Staff) and those covered under University Human Resource policies (University Staff). All new salaried non-faculty staff, including transfers from other state agencies, hired on or after July 1, 2006, are hired as University Staff and will be covered under University Human Resource policies.

5. **References**

Signature Authorization Guide for Personnel Actions. Contact [Human Resources](#).

6. **Approval and Revisions**

- Revision 0
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Policy 4040
Revision: 8
January 18, 2010

Approved August 24, 1995, by Associate Vice President for Personnel and Administrative Services, Ann Spencer.

- Revision 1
  Changes to some dates.
  Approved August 28, 1996, by Associate Vice President for Personnel and Administrative Services, Ann Spencer.

- Revision 2
  Deletion of availability of the special appointment for schedules other than for the academic year.

  - Revision 3
    2.0. Positions may be nine or ten month appointments within the academic year schedule.
    2.1. Additional information that a special term/academic year appointment requires 1.0 full time equivalent (FTE) position allocation and is counted as 1 FTE appointment.
    2.2. Additional information on the Sickness and Disability Plan effective January 1, 1999, and the retention of sick and personal leave balances during time not worked.
    Approved February 3, 1999, by Assistant Vice President for Personnel Services, Linda S. Woodard.

- Revision 4
  2.1. Under Conversion Criteria, the reference to the Signature Authorization Guide was deleted; this guide is now an internal working paper.
  2.1 Number 4. Change references of a six-month probationary period to twelve-month probationary period to reflect change as a result of the 2001 Pay Plan Reform.
  3.1. The name of the form to establish an academic year position has been changed from Position and Performance Activity Form to Position Activity Form P112.
  Approved June 25, 2001, by Assistant Vice President for Personnel Services, Linda S. Woodard.


- Revision 5
  Section 2, Guidelines Clarification of the academic year schedule is given as two options, a nine-month or ten-month schedule.
  Section 3.1, Establishment of the Position or Change of Existing Position, the Position Activity Form has been renamed Employee Work Profile P112 as a result of the Pay Plan Reform implemented in year 2000.
  Approved March 11, 2002 by Vice President for Budget and Financial Management, M. Dwight Shelton, Jr.

- Revision 6
Section 2, Guidelines: Provides for alternate special term schedules to be established by the administration, including 11 month appointments; clarifies Senior Management option to consider transfer opportunities for employees who prefer to retain a 12 month appointment.

Approved December 16, 2002 by Vice President for Budget and Financial Management, M. Dwight Shelton, Jr.

• Revision 7

October 20, 2006 – Technical revisions include University Staff in accordance with resolution approved by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors June 12, 2006 to cover University Staff under policies identical to the current human resources policies until the new human resources system is developed.

Policy title changed from “Special Term Classified/Academic Year Appointment Guidelines” to “Special Term Staff/Academic Year Appointment Guidelines.”

• Revision 8

Technical revision to Section 3.1 to indicate that the position description is submitted to Human Resources through PeopleAdmin.

Approved January 18, 2010 by Vice President for Administrative Services, Sherwood G. Wilson.