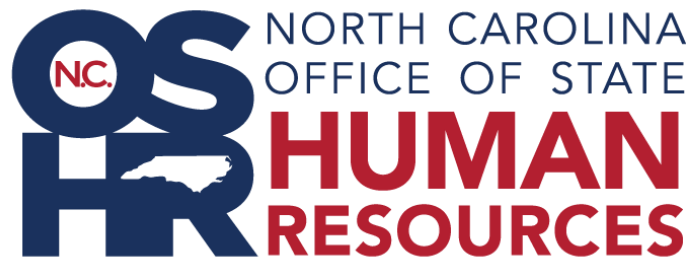


OCTOBER 1, 2025



Reduce Barriers to State Employment Report

To the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on General Government,
Pursuant to G.S. 126-8.7 (b)

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OVERVIEW

On July 1 Governor Stein signed S.L. 2025-34, State Hiring Accessibility and Modernization, into law. [Section 1 of S.L. 2025-34](#) codifies parts of [Executive Order \(EO\) 278](#), Recognizing the Value of Experience in State Government Hiring.

The statute added by Section 1 of new law, [N.C.G.S. § 126-8.7](#), requires that OSHR do the following:

- Regularly assess the educational, experiential, and training requirements necessary for each position within each State agency, department, and institution.
- Determine when practical experience and training, such as military service, an apprenticeship, or a trade school education, rather than a four-year college degree, is the appropriate qualification for a position.
- Identify jobs for which the educational, experiential, and training requirements could be reduced from their present level.
- Remove language for a four-year college degree in position descriptions, to the extent practicable, when they are not necessary for the position

Ongoing efforts to implement E.O. 278 and N.C.G.S. § 126-8.7 are described below.

EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE EQUIVALENCY STATEMENT

Since June 1, 2023, Cabinet agencies are required to include the following statement at the top of the education and experience section of a vacancy announcement:

“Some state job postings say you can qualify by a ‘equivalent combination of education and experience’ If that language appears below, then you may qualify through EITHER years of education OR years of directly related experience, OR a combination of both.”

In practice, this means that one year of directly related experience is equivalent to one year of education, unless specified otherwise. When a job posting says an applicant can qualify by an “equivalent combination of education and experience,” the applicant may qualify through years of education, OR years of directly related experience, OR a combination of both.

Example:

If a vacancy posting indicates “or equivalent combination of education and experience” and requires a minimum education of a **bachelor's degree**, it would be equal to:

- An associates degree and two years of related experience

OR

- A high school diploma or GED and four years of related experience

OSHR plans to recommend to the State Human Resources Commission, in its December 2025 meeting, that the equivalency statement listed above be required in all agency job postings, not only Cabinet agency job postings, if the classification specification says that an applicant can qualify by an equivalent combination of education and experience. As discussed in the next section of this report, more than 88% of all state jobs allow applicants to qualify through a combination of education and experience in this way.

REVIEW OF CLASSIFICATIONS

Since March 2023, the OSHR Classification and Compensation team has reviewed **1,439** existing classification specifications (equivalent to jobs¹), the vast majority of all the class specifications in the state's system. In the review, OSHR determined whether directly related experience could be substituted for education, and whether degrees should be required for classifications that do not indicate that an equivalent combination of education and experience is allowed.

Of the **1,439** classifications:

- **1,269 (88.2%)** include an equivalency statement that allows experience to be substituted for education.
- **33 (2.3%)** classifications do not include the equivalency statement because they require only a high school degree or GED.
- **137 (9.5%)** classification specifications contain mandatory educational requirements because of a requirement for an associated license, certification, registration, or another necessary credential. These requirements are outside the control of OSHR – they are set by statute, an occupational licensing board, or by the third-party organization that sets the requirements for the credential.

CONCLUSION

While the state has made considerable progress on education and experience equivalency, OSHR will continue to monitor job specifications and update equivalencies as appropriate. Through these actions, OSHR aims to reduce barriers to state employment for all North Carolinians.

¹ In the state's classification system, each position subject to the North Carolina Human Resources Act is assigned a classification by the employing agency. The classifications, like "Accountant II" or "Meat & Poultry Inspector I," are equivalent to types of jobs. The employee must meet the minimum education and experience specified in the class specification. The state's class specifications are available at <https://oshr.nc.gov/state-employee-resources/classification-compensation/classification/classification-specs>.