



Running for political office? Outlined below are the procedures to be followed by University Employees<sup>1</sup> who intend to run for or be appointed to a political office. These procedures are required under UNC Policies [300.5.1](#) and [300.5.2](#) and vary depending on the political office being sought. While some campuses may give you further direction, it is important to note that all petitions subject to these instructions should be emailed to the institution's chancellor's office as an initial matter.

## Major vs. Minor Public Offices

- **The key practical difference between a major and a minor public office is pursuing major public office almost certainly requires the employee to take a full leave of absence.**
- **An Employee seeking to be a candidate for any minor public office should:**<sup>2</sup>
  - Email his or her supervisor a written statement of the amount of any payments to which the employee would be entitled as a candidate/officeholder and, *if requested* by the chancellor's office, email a completed petition to the respective chancellor's office demonstrating that holding the public office will not create a conflict of commitment.
- **An Employee seeking to be a candidate for any major public office should:**
  - Email a completed petition to the chancellor's office either demonstrating that becoming a candidate for public office will not create a conflict of commitment or, if a conflict of commitment does or would exist, seek a full or partial leave of absence. This petition is then transmitted by the chancellor's office to the institutional board of trustees for action.
  - Note: if the political petition is for a full-time public office, the employee should submit a petition for a full leave of absence (for up to two years) for the time during which the employee will hold public office.

## Senior Academic and Administrative Officers (SAAO) and General Assembly Candidacy

- Two categories of petitions require approval from the UNC System Office General Counsel<sup>3</sup>: (1) any petitions filed by **Senior Academic and Administrative Officers (SAAOs)** regardless of the office being sought, and (2) any petition filed by any employee for candidacy and office-holding in the **North Carolina General Assembly**.
  - These petitions should first be emailed to the institution's chancellor's office. The chancellor's office will then email the petition to Secretary of the University Meredith McCullen at [mmcullen@northcarolina.edu](mailto:mmcullen@northcarolina.edu), who will acknowledge receipt and transmit

---

<sup>1</sup> For employees subject to the State Personnel Act (SPA), activities related to public officeholding are governed by Article 5, [Chapter 126](#) of the North Carolina General Statutes, policies adopted by the Office of State Human Resources (OSHR) and campus policies adopted in accordance with those policies.

<sup>2</sup> "Major public office" means (a) any public office requiring full-time service, regardless of the amount of compensation; (b) any public office requiring service on a part-time basis for which the compensation is more than nominal; and (c) membership in the North Carolina General Assembly. "Minor public office" means any public office that is not a major public office.

<sup>3</sup> Please refer to the accompanying memo for delegation of authority from the UNC president pursuant to *The Code* and UNC Policy Manual.



the petition to the UNC General Counsel for resolution. The email from the chancellor’s office to Ms. McCullen transmitting the petition to the UNC System should also include a recommendation from the petitioner’s chancellor.

- If the petition is submitted by a chancellor who intends to seek office, the petition must be accompanied by a recommendation of the board of trustees.
- Employees running for a major public office **OTHER than SAAOs**, but **not running for the General Assembly** (as noted above under “major public office”)– require *only* institutional Board of Trustees approval. System Office approval is not required for this category of petitions.
  - The petition is emailed to the chancellor’s office and then transmitted to the board of trustees for action.
  - After action from the board of trustees, the chancellor emails Secretary of the University Meredith McCullen at [mmcullen@northcarolina.edu](mailto:mmcullen@northcarolina.edu) a report of the action of the board of trustees. That report to the Secretary’s Office is then emailed by the Secretary as a matter of information to the Chair of the Committee on University Governance and no further action by the Board of Governors and/or the Committee on University Governance is required.

**Any political activities petitions should be submitted as early as possible, but no later than the following<sup>4</sup>:**

<b>For affected academic periods beginning:</b>	<b>Completed petition to be received by the chancellor:</b>	<b>Completed petition to be received by either the institutional BOT or UNC System General Counsel, as explained above:</b>
January (e.g., for a May primary contest)	October 15 of preceding year	November 1 of preceding year
May/June (e.g., for fall elections affecting summer employment)	March 15	April 1
August/September (e.g., for fall general election)	June 15	July 1
Other periods	90 days prior to beginning of period	60 days prior to beginning of period

<sup>4</sup> Given the delayed and condensed filing period for 2022 elections, employees seeking to file for office when candidate filing period reopens in 2022 are encouraged to submit their petitions as quickly as possible during this campaign cycle.