



County of Santa Clara

Policy Name: Administrative Approval of 4th and 5th Step Ingrade
Appointments
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Policy Type: Administrative

Category: Personnel **Sub-Category:** Hiring Practices

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Appointments

Policy Owner: Employee Services Agency

Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to assist the County in being able to hire uniquely qualified personnel and to provide departments with the proper procedures for obtaining administrative approval of eligible 4th and 5th step ingrade appointments.

Policy Summary

Effective July 6, 2000, the Board of Supervisors amended [Section A25-660 of the County of Santa Clara Ordinance Code](#) delegating authority to the County Executive to approve 4th and 5th ingrade appointments in cases where it is difficult to secure qualified personnel, or a person of unusual qualifications is engaged. The procedures for administratively approved 4th and 5th step ingrade appointments was revised in 2002.

In certain instances, the County's ability to hire uniquely qualified personnel necessitates the ability to act faster than the normal Board Transmittal process would allow. This administrative process accomplishes this goal without diminishing oversight standards, and brings this process in line with the requirements of the Administrative Add/Delete program. Both the Employee Services Agency (ESA) and the Office of Budget and Analysis (OBA) have responsibility for the administration of this program. The



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paperwork submitted in order to obtain a 4th or 5th step ingrade appointment is routed initially to OBA and then to ESA for approval.

In order to have a 4th or 5th step ingrade appointment approved by the County Executive, departments must follow the procedures outlined in this policy, as well as all County ordinances, the County Merit System Rules, and all ESA policies and procedures.

Requirements for a 4th or 5th Step Ingrade Appointment

If a proposed appointment meets all of the following criteria, the County Executive can approve it administratively:

- The request for appointment must be made after selection interviews are completed, but before an offer of employment.
- Either the position is designated "difficult to recruit" or the applicant has "unusual qualifications."
 - "Unusual Qualifications" is defined as work experience, education, or training that the department believes merits an appointment at salary step 4 or 5.
 - A "Difficult to Recruit" position is a classification in which the department has a pre-existing agreement with ESA that the department has historically been unable to maintain acceptable staffing levels due to an insufficient applicant pool. These instances are rare, and must be approved in advance by ESA.
- The appointment does not require an additional appropriation in the current fiscal year.



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- The appointment does not generate an ongoing increase in salary in the next fiscal year in excess of 10 percent (aggregate by index code/cost center). This is calculated as the difference in salary between hiring at step 3 and step 4 or 5, for a full fiscal year.

Procedures

Obtaining Approval for a 4th or 5th Step Ingrade Appointment

- 1) When a proposed appointment meets the criteria above, the **department** submits a packet containing the following to the department's Office of Budget and Analysis (OBA) analyst:
 - 1a) Transmittal to County Executive including Recommendation, Fiscal Impact, and Background.
 - 1b) 4th and 5th Step Ingrade Appointment Request Form.
 - 1c) A copy of the candidate's employment application and any other related documentation.
- 2) **OBA** reviews the request with a focus on the fiscal implications, tracks the ongoing expense, and, if approved, forwards the entire packet to the Employee Services Agency (ESA). **OBA** will attempt to complete this transaction in one business day, unless additional information is required from the department.
- 3) Upon receipt of the packet, **ESA** reviews the request to confirm the "unusual qualifications" of the specific applicant or affirms the "difficult to recruit" status of the classification, and keeps the entire packet on file. **ESA**



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will attempt to complete its review in two business days, unless additional information is required from the department.

- 4) **ESA** forwards a copy of the approved or denied Ingrade Appointment Request Form to the requesting department and OBA.
- 5) Upon receiving approval of the Ingrade Appointment Request Form, the **department** may make an offer of employment at the designated salary step. The **department** attaches a copy of the approved 4th and 5th Step Ingrade Appointment Request Form to the Personnel Action Request (PAR) from for the applicant.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- 1) **"Difficult to Recruit"** means a classification in which a department has a pre-existing agreement with the Employee Services Agency (ESA) that the department has historically been unable to maintain acceptable staffing levels due to an insufficient applicant pool. These instances are rare and must be approved in advance by ESA.
- 2) **"Ingrade Appointment"** means an appointment at a salary step higher than the lowest step listed in the basic salary plan.
- 3) **"Unusual Qualifications"** means work experience, education, or training that a department believes merits an appointment at salary step 4 or 5.

Frequently Asked Questions

None.



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Related Policies

None.

Related Forms and Information

- 4th and 5th Step Ingrade Appointment Request -
[url]
</sites/forms/esa/HRCountywideForms/4th%20or%205th%20Step%20Ingrade%20Appointment.pdf>

History

Date	Changes Made
4/23/2014	Policy uploaded. (John Myers)