



Phased Retirement Supervisor Guide – Version 2

April 5, 2017

Phased retirement is a tool designed to assist Federal agencies with succession planning, maintaining essential skills and competencies, and facilitating mentoring and knowledge transfer. This guide provides information for National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) supervisors.

Contents

Document History Log.....	1
Section 1: Exploring Phased Retirement with Interested Employees	3
Overall Considerations	3
Things to Discuss with an Employee who Approaches You about Phased Retirement.....	4
Section 2: Handling Phased Retirement Applications	5
Section 3: Supervising Phased Retirees	6
Key References	8
APPENDIX A – ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	9

Document History Log

Status (Basic/Revision/ Cancelled)	Revision Date	Description of Change
Basic (Version 1)	June 30, 2015	Basic Release
Revision (Version 2)	April 5, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Added introductory paragraph, table of contents, and document history log. ○ Updated numbering, format, and document styles for consistency with the other NASA phased retirement documents. ○ Clarified timeframes to be calendar days. ○ Removed references to NASA Interim Directive (NID) 3831.101, Phased Retirement. Replaced with NASA Procedural Requirements (NPR) 3831.1, Phased Retirement.

Status (Basic/Revision/ Cancelled)	Revision Date	Description of Change
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Included minor verbiage changes for clarification, consistency, tense, acronyms, and grammar. • Section 1, Exploring Phased Retirement with Interested Employees, Section: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Things to Discuss with an Employee who Approaches You about Phased Retirement heading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clarified #1d regarding the timeframe for the begin date of phased retirement. ▪ Updated #7 to include advising the employee to reference the OGC Web site. • Section 2, Handling Phased Retirement Applications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Moved approval decision information from #2 to #1 and removed the remainder of #2 describing additional documents that are not the supervisor's responsibility. • Section 3, Supervising Phased Retirees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clarified #4 to identify the supervisor's action needed and clarify the carryover limits. ○ Clarified #5 to identify the supervisor's action. • Key References Section: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Added this section and included references identified in the document. ○ Added reference locations, as applicable. • Acronyms and Abbreviations Section: Added this section.

Phased retirement is a time-limited arrangement in which participants work half-time and engage in mentoring/knowledge transfer activity at least 20 percent of that time, while also receiving about half of their retirement annuity. This means a phased retiree will work 40 hours per pay period, performing mentoring for 8 of these hours. NASA limits phased retirement to a period of no more than 2 years; the time may be extended, with management approval, up to a total of no more than 3 years.

Phased retirement is a workforce management and succession planning tool, not an employee entitlement. At the same time, it is an employee-driven option, and an employee who wants to participate is responsible for proposing work to be performed and a mentoring plan for management's approval.

RELEASED - Printed documents may be obsolete; validate prior to use.

Updated April 5, 2017

RELEASED - Printed documents may be obsolete; validate prior to use.

Only employees who are fully eligible to retire are eligible for phased retirement. The program is intended for individuals who are prepared to retire and are interested in a transition involving a part-time schedule, rather than for those who only want to cut back on working hours. Upon entering phased retirement, the employee commits to fully retire at the end of the agreed-upon period.

Although a phased retiree may request to return to regular (full time) employment, management approval is required. Such returns are expected to be rare unless the employee is selected for a job via regular recruitment and hiring procedures (e.g., a vacancy announcement).

This document provides an overview of supervisory responsibilities, which fall into three areas:

- Exploring phased retirement with interested employees
- Handling phased retirement applications
- Supervising phased retirees

Additional information and resources are contained in NASA Procedural Requirements (NPR) 3831.1, Phased Retirement, on the [NASA Shared Services Center \(NSSC\) Phased Retirement Web page](#), and in the Key References section of this document. Centers may also have local policies, such as restrictions on positions that may participate, additional requirements to apply, etc. **Your most important resource is the Phased Retirement Point of Contact (POC), in your Center Human Resources (HR) Office.**

Section 1: Exploring Phased Retirement with Interested Employees

Overall Considerations:

1. Know the NASA-wide criteria for approval of phased retirement applications, which is:
 - a. There is a need for and an opportunity for meaningful transfer of the employee's knowledge as proposed in the mentoring plan; the employee is a fit for the needed or proposed type(s) of mentoring; **and**
 - b. The proposed work is needed, available, suitable for a half-time schedule, and consistent with management determinations about deployment of positions and workload. Employee meets the qualifications requirements for any reassignment or detail; **and**
 - c. Any impact on the organization's or Center's authorized funding levels has been considered and determined acceptable.
2. Understand your organization's current posture and status with respect to positions and budget.
3. Be aware of any limitations on participation established by your Center.

4. Consider the opportunity phased retirement may provide to retain an employee part time for a while, to complete particular work and/or to transfer the individual's knowledge to others, compared to losing the employee entirely to retirement in the near term.
5. You may suggest phased retirement to individuals who are discussing their near-term retirement plans with you, if appropriate.

Things to Discuss with an Employee who Approaches You about Phased Retirement:

1. Ask what the employee envisions for phased retirement with respect to:
 - a. Work to be performed – what goals or products are expected.
 - b. Mentoring plan – to whom knowledge will be transferred and how.
 - c. Length of time and biweekly work schedule.
 - d. Begin date of phased retirement. The employee should allow about 90 calendar days for the application process from the time of submitting a complete package to entry into phased retirement if it is approved
2. If you know your organization's budget, manpower, or work plans are likely to be inconsistent with the employee's plan, be open about the possibility of a successful application for phased retirement. You may suggest/discuss alternatives that might fit, if available.
3. Assess the feasibility of the proposed work being performed on less than a half-time basis. If the employee's own job is not suitable for a part-time schedule, you and the employee may consider other appropriate alternatives, such as assignment to other work within your organization or reassignment or detail to another organization, for which the other organization must approve.
4. Assess the organizational needs for mentoring and/or transfer of the employee's knowledge and skill sets along with the duration of time needed to meet those needs. If there is limited or no need for such knowledge transfer (e.g., there are other employees who can provide this knowledge) or the employee is not a fit for the proposed type of mentoring, be open about these factors.
5. Discuss the limits of phased retirement with the employee, particularly:
 - a. The strict 40-hour per pay period schedule.
 - b. The requirement to conduct mentoring activities for 20 percent of that time.
 - c. The NASA time limits for phased retirement (i.e., initially 2 years, with the possibility for an extension up to a maximum of 3 years).
 - d. The requirement to fully retire at the end of the agreed-upon period.
6. Encourage the employee to review the NASA Phased Retirement Employee Guide to ensure the employee understands the impact of phased retirement on pay and benefits.

7. Advise the employee to visit the [Office of General Counsel \(OGC\) Outside Activities Web page](#) and seek the guidance of a NASA ethics attorney regarding outside employment or other outside activities in which the employee may wish to engage while in a phased retirement status. Phased retirees remain subject to the same restrictions on outside activities as any other employee.
8. Supervisors are eligible to participate in phased retirement. Appropriate arrangements must be included in the application to ensure the supervisory duties are effectively performed.
 - a. The supervisor applicant must either propose that someone else take on the supervisory duties, or explain how the supervisor applicant will perform these duties during phased retirement (to include a work schedule covering most days of the pay period).
 - b. Consider the particular situation and discuss this frankly with the supervisor applicant. If the individual supervises a small number of high-level, senior employees who do not require significant day-to-day direction, it may be feasible to continue supervising. If the individual supervises a large number of employees or the subordinates need every day direction and guidance, the supervisory duties should likely be assigned to someone else.
9. If the employee is a member of the Senior Executive Service (SES), the employee will be expected to voluntarily accept a downgrade to a General Schedule (GS) position/duties upon entering phased retirement. See NPR 3831.1, Phased Retirement, or consult your Center Phased Retirement POC.

Inform your management of the employee's interest, and discuss the possibilities and concerns. Notify and consult with your Center Phased Retirement POC.

Note: Even if an employee's request to participate in phased retirement does not seem supportable, the employee may proceed with the NASA application process to obtain a final, written decision from the designated Approving Official.

Section 2: Handling Phased Retirement Applications

1. Act promptly on an employee's application for phased retirement. Applications are submitted to the immediate supervisor, who is then responsible for promptly transmitting the request to the Center Phased Retirement POC. Approval decisions must be made within 30 calendar days once the application is final and submitted to the HR Office.
2. Verify with the employee that the employee has obtained counseling and estimates from the NSSC on the impact of phased retirement.

RELEASED - Printed documents may be obsolete; validate prior to use.

Updated April 5, 2017

RELEASED - Printed documents may be obsolete; validate prior to use.

3. Ensure the employee has discussed the application with you and you have worked together to refine its contents. If not, use the points in Section 1, Exploring Phased Retirement with Interested Employees, to discuss the application with the employee.
4. Ensure the NASA application is accurate and complete, sign it to document you have received and reviewed it, then forward the application to the Center Phased Retirement POC for formal transmission to the Approving Official.
5. Ensure you are aware of the outcome of an application. Upon notification that an application was approved, coordinate with your HR Office to verify the effective date, establish the new position description, and ensure the associated personnel action(s) are initiated and processed within the Federal Personnel Payroll System (FPPS).

Section 3: Supervising Phased Retirees

Continue to supervise the phased retiree as you would any other employee. A phased retiree is now a part-time civil service employee and retains all rights and benefits of that status.

1. Complete the following upon an employee's initial entry into phased retirement:
 - a. Establish the employee's work schedule in the NASA Web-based Time and Attendance Distribution System (WebTADS).
 - b. Update the employee's performance plan to address mentoring and knowledge transfer expectations within 30 calendar days of the effective date.
2. Monitor the phased retiree's performance of mentoring activities to assure it meets the 20 percent minimum requirement each pay period or quarterly, if so approved. Ensure mentoring time is recorded in WebTADS using the type hour code **PRM**. A report is available in WebTADS to assist you in monitoring mentoring time.
3. Ensure paid work hours never exceed the half-time work schedule of 40 hours per pay period.
 - a. Should a *rare* emergency require additional hours, document that **all** of the following conditions are met and obtain approval from your Center's Approving Official:
 - 1) The work is necessary to respond to an emergency posing a significant, immediate, and direct threat to life or property.
 - 2) There are no other qualified employees available to perform the required work.
 - 3) The phased retiree is relieved from performing excess work as soon as reasonably possible.
 - 4) When an emergency situation can be anticipated in advance, management made advance plans to minimize any necessary excess work by the phased retiree.

- b. Provide a copy of the approved documentation to the Center Phased Retirement POC. Ensure that the phased retiree returns to the half-time schedule as soon as possible.
4. Monitor the phased retiree's credit hour balance. A phased retiree may earn credit hours or compensatory time off (for religious or travel purposes) in excess of the 40-hour schedule without requiring approval of an emergency. Phased retirees may not carry over more than 10 credit hours to the next pay period.
5. Monitor the work assignments and mentoring to ensure they remain current. The work assignments or mentoring plan approved in the phased retirement application may be changed, or the employee may be reassigned or detailed, at management discretion to meet the organization's priorities or needs. The work schedule of 40 hours per pay period with a minimum 20 percent mentoring requirement must be maintained.
6. Address misconduct, poor performance, or similar issues just as they are addressed for any employee. Phased retirees have the same rights as other employees in connection with disciplinary and adverse actions. Contact the Employee Relations team in your Center HR Office for assistance.
7. Discuss the conclusion of phased retirement with the employee *at least 90 calendar days* before the originally established period ends.
 - a. The employee should submit a request for full retirement **at least 60 calendar days** before the end of the phased retirement period or the date the employee wants to fully retire, if earlier. The employee will be contacted by the NSSC Retirement Services Team with further instructions and to schedule a final retirement counseling session.
 - b. A request to extend phased retirement beyond the original period is treated like a new request and is subject to the same procedural steps and considerations. Management's assessment of the original period of phased retirement is an important consideration in approving such a request. An extension must be approved and a new or amended Agreement must be executed **before** the end of the original phased retirement period. Therefore, you should strongly encourage an employee who wants to request an extension to do so **at least 60-90 calendar days** in advance.
 - c. A phased retiree may request to return to regular, non-phased employment, but such returns are expected to be rare unless the employee is selected for another job through normal hiring procedures. If approved, the return must be processed and

effective **on or before** the end of the original phased retirement period. Because Government-wide procedures require a lengthy period between approval of return to regular employment and the effective date of the action, you should encourage an employee who wants to do this to initiate the requests **at least 90-120 calendar days** before the end of the phased retirement period.

- d. A phased retiree cannot grieve or appeal if a request to extend the phased retirement period or to return to regular employment is denied.

Contact your HR Office POC regarding any other Phased Retirement questions.

Key References

- a. NPR 3831.1, Phased Retirement.
- b. NSSC Phased Retirement Web page at: <https://www.nssc.nasa.gov/phasedretirement>.
- c. [OGC Outside Activities Web page](#).
 - Location:
 - Visit the NSSC Phased Retirement Web page at:
<https://www.nssc.nasa.gov/phasedretirement>.
 - Under the **Quick Links** heading, click the **Limitations on Outside Activities** link.
 - This site includes information and instructions related to outside activities.
- d. Phased Retirement Employee Guide.

APPENDIX A – ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronyms that are used in this guide are identified upon first use in this document. Thereafter, the acronym is used. In cases where the first or only instance of the use of an acronym is in a table or graphic, it may not be spelled out on first reference. Since many acronyms and abbreviations have multiple meanings, the following list includes those used in this guide and the applicable meaning:

ACRONYM/ ABBREVIATION	MEANING
FPPS	Federal Personnel Payroll System
GS	General Schedule
HR	Human Resources
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NID	NASA Interim Directive
NPR	NASA Procedural Requirements
NSSC	NASA Shared Services Center
POC	Point of Contact
SES	Senior Executive Service
WebTADS	Web-based Time and Attendance Distribution System

If you have any questions concerning this document, please contact:

NSSC Customer Contact Center

1-877-677-2123 (1-877-NSSC123) or nssc-contactcenter@nasa.gov