



No.	Policy 007
Name	Apprentice-to-Journeyworker Ratio Policy
Audience	Sponsors, Employers, Participating Employers, ApprenticeshipNC Consultants
Purpose	To establish ApprenticeshipNC's policy and process for reviewing apprentice-to-journeyworker ratios in registered apprenticeship standards, including requests for expanded ratios, consistent with 29 CFR 29.5(b)(7) and USDOL Office of Apprenticeship Circular 2021-02.
Effective Date	05.20.25
Last Reviewed By	State Director, ApprenticeshipNC
Date of Last Review	5.18.26
Authority / Reference	29 CFR 29.5(b)(7); 29 CFR 29.8; 29 CFR 29.11(a); 29 CFR 570.50; USDOL OA Circular 2021-02, Guidelines for Reviewing Apprentice to Journeyworker Ratio Requests.

Table of Contents

Introduction and Policy Statement	3
Key Terms	4
General Policy on Ratios	5
Expanded Ratio Requests	5
Required Submission Materials	6
Evaluation Framework	6
A. Proper Safety and Supervision	6
<i>Proper Safety and Supervision</i>	7
<i>Objective Safety Data ANC May Review</i>	7
<i>Work-Related Accidents Involving Apprentices</i>	7
B. Proper Training and Continuity of Employment	8
Collective Bargaining Agreements	8
Decision Process and Documentation	9
Monitoring, Corrective Action, and Rescission	9
Special Considerations for Youth Apprentices	10
Appendix A	11
Apprentice-to-Journeyworker Ratio Request Form	11
Appendix B	14
ANC Review Checklist and Decision Record	14

Introduction and Policy Statement

Aligned with federal guidelines, ApprenticeshipNC (ANC), as North Carolina's State Apprenticeship Agency, requires every registered apprenticeship program to include a numeric apprentice-to-journeyworker ratio in its approved standards. The ratio must be consistent with proper supervision, training, safety, continuity of employment, and any applicable collective bargaining agreement provisions.

This policy replaces a fixed, blanket-ratio approach with an individualized review process. ANC will evaluate each proposed ratio based on the occupation, work setting, safety risk, supervision model, training design, sponsor performance, and supporting evidence. ANC may approve, deny, conditionally approve, or later rescind an expanded ratio when the evidence shows that the ratio is or is not consistent with 29 CFR 29.5(b)(7).

Ratios must be written clearly in the approved program standards and must state how the ratio applies to the job site, workforce, department, plant, participating employer, or other approved operating unit. No sponsor or participating employer may operate under a ratio different from the approved standards unless ANC has approved the change in writing.

Policy principle: The burden of justifying an appropriate apprentice-to-journeyworker ratio rests with the sponsor. Expanded ratios require evidence that the requested ratio supports safety, supervision, training quality, and continuity of employment.

Key Terms

Term	Definition
Apprentice-to-Journeyworker Ratio	The numeric relationship between apprentices and journeyworkers in an approved registered apprenticeship program. Ratios are expressed as apprentices: journeyworkers. For example, 1:2 means 1 apprentice to 2 journeyworkers; 2:1 means 2 apprentices to 1 journeyworker.
Journeyworker	A worker who has attained the skills, abilities, and competencies recognized within an industry as mastery of the occupation. A journeyworker may be, but is not required to be, a registered apprenticeship completer.
Expanded Ratio	A ratio that assigns more than one apprentice to a journeyworker, such as 2:1 or 3:1, or a ratio structure that permits additional apprentices to be assigned to a journeyworker after the first apprentice has completed a minimum number of supervised hours.
More Stringent Ratio	A ratio that provides more journeyworker supervision per apprentice, such as moving from 1:1 to 1:2. These requests will generally be approved because they are more likely to satisfy the safety, supervision, training, and continuity requirements of 29 CFR 29.5(b)(7).
High-Hazard Industry Sector	For purposes of this policy, an industry sector identified using the two-digit NAICS industry sector code that has an average fatal work injury rate exceeding five deaths per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers over the three most recent calendar years for which BLS data are available. As identified in USDOL OA Circular 2021-02, the sectors requiring heightened scrutiny include construction; transportation and warehousing; mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction; and agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting. This list may change based on current BLS data.
Completion Rate	The percentage of an apprenticeship cohort that receives a Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship within one year of the projected completion date. A cohort does not include apprentices whose agreements are cancelled during the probationary period.

General Policy on Ratios

- Every registered apprenticeship program must include a numeric ratio of apprentices to journeyworkers in the approved standards.
- The ratio must be specific and clearly describe where and how it applies, including whether it applies by job site, workforce, department, plant, participating employer, or other ANC-approved unit.
- ANC will consider all relevant information before approving a ratio, including ratios for approved programs in the same occupation and geography, national ratio practices in the occupation, the level of physical engagement, supervision practices in similar environments, applicable industry or occupational studies, and sponsor-specific safety and completion evidence.
- ANC will review ratio requests on an individualized basis. Approval in one program, occupation, employer, or location does not guarantee approval in another.
- A ratio of more than one apprentice to one journeyworker may be approved only when the sponsor demonstrates that the expanded ratio presents little or no risk to worker safety and remains consistent with proper supervision, training, and continuity of employment.

Expanded Ratio Requests

A sponsor must request ANC approval before using an expanded ratio. A request is required when a new sponsor proposes an expanded ratio in its initial standards, when an existing sponsor seeks to revise approved standards to an expanded ratio, or when a sponsor seeks to use a progressive ratio structure that assigns additional apprentices to a journeyworker after a minimum period of supervised experience.

A request is generally not required when a sponsor seeks a more stringent ratio that increases journeyworker supervision per apprentice; however, the revised ratio must still be reflected in approved standards before implementation.

Required Submission Materials

- Completed Appendix A ratio request form for each occupation and, for group sponsors, each participating employer or employer category when conditions differ materially.
- Current approved ratio and requested ratio, including a plain-language explanation of how the ratio will apply at the job site, workforce, department, plant, or participating employer level.
- Occupation title, RAPIDS occupation code if available, O*NET/SOC if available, NAICS code, and a description of work processes or tasks that may present safety or supervision risk.
- Written justification explaining how the requested ratio will support proper safety, supervision, training, and continuity of employment.
- Safety documentation, where applicable, including OSHA Forms 300 and/or 300A, workers' compensation information, evidence of an OSHA Alliance Program agreement, safety curricula, and the sponsor's process for direct supervision by qualified journeyworkers.
- Program completion rate information for up to the previous five years, or an explanation if the sponsor is new or lacks sufficient completion history.
- Apprentice accident, fatality, or serious injury history and any corrective actions taken.
- Applicable collective bargaining agreement sections governing ratios, if the program is affected by a CBA.

Evaluation Framework

ANC will evaluate expanded ratio requests using two primary criteria: proper safety and supervision, and proper training and continuity of employment. These criteria are interdependent. A ratio that may be reasonable in a low-risk, highly structured setting may not be appropriate in an occupation or environment where apprentices face greater physical hazards or require close, direct mentoring to acquire technical precision.

A. Proper Safety and Supervision

ANC will give particular attention to whether the proposed ratio provides sufficient journeyworker supervision to mitigate the risk of serious bodily injury or death and to ensure apprentices receive appropriate guidance from experienced and capable journeyworkers or supervisors. ANC may consider the level of physical engagement, similarity to other supervised environments, and relevant industry or occupational studies.

Proper Safety and Supervision

Expanded ratio requests in high-hazard industry sectors are subject to heightened scrutiny. Sponsors in these sectors must provide objective data sufficient to justify the expanded ratio. ANC will use the most current available BLS fatal injury data to determine whether an industry sector is high hazard.

- Construction
- Transportation and warehousing
- Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction
- Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting

Objective Safety Data ANC May Review

- OSHA Form 300 and/or OSHA Form 300A work-related injury and illness records, where applicable.
- Proof of a current OSHA Alliance Program agreement, where applicable.
- Safety training contained in the apprenticeship standards, curricula, or related instruction.
- Documentation showing how apprentices receive direct supervision and training from qualified journeyworkers.
- Workers' compensation insurance information or documentation.
- Additional objective data when the listed data are inconclusive or when program-specific conditions warrant further review.

Work-Related Accidents Involving Apprentices

When ANC becomes aware of a fatal accident or serious injury involving an apprentice, ANC may contact the sponsor, coordinate as appropriate with USDOL or other agencies, and conduct an Apprenticeship Program Review. ANC will evaluate whether the sponsor followed its approved standards, adhered to the approved ratio, and maintained proper safety and supervision protocols. If ANC determines that the sponsor failed to follow proper safety or training protocols, ANC may require corrective action or take other appropriate action consistent with 29 CFR 29.8 and applicable SAA authority.

B. Proper Training and Continuity of Employment

ANC will evaluate whether the proposed ratio supports effective on-the-job learning, related instruction, mentoring, skill transfer, progress measurement, feedback, and continuity of employment. Proper training includes safe workplace practices and the ability of journeyworkers to provide meaningful instruction and assessment.

Completion rates are an important objective indicator of training quality and continuity of employment. ANC may review the sponsor's apprentice completion rates for up to the previous five years. Low completion rates do not automatically bar approval, but the sponsor must explain the cause and identify corrective actions or program conditions that support the requested ratio.

Collective Bargaining Agreements

When a program is governed by a collective bargaining agreement, the ratio provisions in the CBA may establish or affect the apprentice-to-journeyworker ratio, provided the language is specific and clearly describes its application to the job site, workforce, department, or plant.

- Joint labor-management programs must submit the section(s) of the CBA relevant to ratios when requesting approval of new standards or a change to an approved ratio.
- Programs not covered by a CBA but operating in industries or occupations commonly covered by CBAs may submit directly comparable CBA ratio provisions as part of their justification, along with evidence that the circumstances are comparable.
- Nothing in this policy reduces or supersedes more stringent CBA standards that require greater journeyworker supervision per apprentice.
- ANC will not approve a ratio that conflicts with applicable law or a controlling CBA provision.

Decision Process and Documentation

1. Sponsor submits Appendix A and supporting documentation to the State Director of Apprenticeship or designee.
2. ANC staff review the request for completeness and may request additional information.
3. ANC evaluates the request using the factors in this policy, including safety and supervision, training quality, continuity of employment, sponsor performance, comparable ratio practices, and applicable CBA provisions.
4. ANC may consult USDOL Office of Apprenticeship, OSHA, the Wage and Hour Division, or other subject-matter resources when appropriate.
5. The State Director or designee issues a written decision approving, conditionally approving, denying, or requesting revision of the proposed ratio within 45 days of receiving all information.
6. ANC documents the information and data used in reaching the decision and retains the decision with the program record.
7. If approved, the ratio must be incorporated into the registered apprenticeship standards before implementation.

Monitoring, Corrective Action, and Rescission

ANC may monitor any approved expanded ratio through program reviews, sponsor reporting, apprentice complaints, safety information, completion data, or other available evidence. ANC reserves the right to reconsider or rescind a previously approved expanded ratio if information shows that the ratio is no longer consistent with proper supervision, training, safety, or continuity of employment.

- If a sponsor's safety record is unsatisfactory, ANC may recalibrate the ratio to a more appropriate level.
- If completion rates, training quality, or continuity of employment indicate that apprentices are not receiving adequate support, ANC may require corrective action, deny expansion, or rescind an expanded ratio.
- Failure to follow the approved ratio may result in corrective action or other action under applicable registration agency authority.

Special Considerations for Youth Apprentices

Nothing in this policy supersedes federal or state child labor requirements, including the limitations and conditions in 29 CFR 570.50 related to employment, training, and supervision of 16- and 17-year-old apprentices in occupations covered by the Secretary of Labor's Hazardous Occupation Orders. Sponsors enrolling youth apprentices must comply with all applicable youth employment, safety, and supervision requirements in addition to the approved apprentice-to-journeyworker ratio.

Appendix A

Apprentice-to-Journeyworker Ratio Request Form

Complete one form per occupation. Group sponsors should complete separate forms when participating employers, locations, occupations, work settings, or supervision models differ materially.

Part I – Sponsor and Program Information

Field	Sponsor Response
Program sponsor name	
Program number	
Primary contact name	
Contact email	
Phone number	
Occupation title	
RAPIDS occupation code, O*NET, or SOC if available	
NAICS code and industry sector	
Participating employer(s), location(s), or work unit(s) covered by this request	
Current approved ratio	
Requested ratio	
Explain how the requested ratio applies (job site, workforce, department, plant, participating employer, or other unit)	

Part II – Expanded Ratio Justification

Field	Sponsor Response
Describe why the requested ratio is needed	
Describe how the requested ratio supports proper apprentice supervision	
Describe how apprentices will receive direct supervision and mentoring from qualified journeyworkers	
Describe how journeyworkers will evaluate progress and provide feedback	
Describe how continuity of employment will be maintained	
Identify whether the requested ratio is progressive, such as adding apprentices after the first apprentice completes a minimum number of supervised hours; if yes, describe the threshold and evidence supporting it	

Part III – Safety and Risk Information

Field	Sponsor Response
Is the occupation or work setting in a high-hazard industry sector? If yes, identify the sector	
Describe the primary workplace hazards associated with this occupation	
Describe safety training included in the standards, OJL, RI, or employer curriculum	
Attach OSHA Form 300 and/or 300A records, where applicable; summarize findings here	
Attach workers' compensation documentation or information; summarize findings here	
Does the sponsor have an OSHA Alliance Program agreement? If yes, attach evidence	
List any apprentice fatality or serious injury incidents in the past five years and corrective action taken	
Explain why the requested expanded ratio presents little or no risk to worker safety	

Part IV –Training Quality and Completion

Field	Sponsor Response
Completion rate for each of the previous five years, if available	
Most recent Apprenticeship Program Review date	
Describe any completion, cancellation, or retention concerns and corrective actions	
Describe how RI and OJL are coordinated to support apprentice progression under the requested ratio	
Describe journeyworker qualifications and training expectations	

Part V – Collective Bargaining Agreement

Field	Sponsor Response
Is the program or occupation affected by a CBA?	
If yes, attach the ratio-related CBA sections and summarize the applicable provision	
If relying on comparable CBA provisions from the occupation or industry, identify the CBA and explain why the circumstances are directly comparable	

Part VI. Sponsor Certification

The sponsor certifies that the information provided is accurate and that no expanded ratio will be implemented unless and until ANC approves the ratio in writing and the ratio is incorporated into approved standards.

Sponsor Representative Name	
Title	
Signature	
Date	

Appendix B

ANC Review Checklist and Decision Record

To be completed by ApprenticeshipNC.

Review Factor	Status	Notes
Request complete	Yes / No / N/A	
Ratio expressed clearly as apprentices:journeyworkers	Yes / No / N/A	
Application of ratio clearly described	Yes / No / N/A	
High-hazard sector determination completed using current data	Yes / No / N/A	
Safety documentation reviewed	Yes / No / N/A	
OSHA/worker's compensation information reviewed where applicable	Yes / No / N/A	
Safety training and direct supervision model adequate	Yes / No / N/A	
Completion rates reviewed for up to five years	Yes / No / N/A	
Training quality and continuity of employment reviewed	Yes / No / N/A	
CBA provisions reviewed where applicable	Yes / No / N/A	
Comparable ratio practices considered	Yes / No / N/A	
Additional consultation completed if needed	Yes / No / N/A	

ANC Decision

Decision	Approved / Conditionally Approved / Denied / Returned for Revision
Approved ratio, if applicable	
Conditions of approval, if applicable	
Reason for decision and evidence relied upon	
State Director or designee signature	
Title	
Date	