



Basic Employee Relations Course

Trial Period

The term ***trial period*** generally applies to employees in the excepted service - although it also applies to some appointments in the competitive service, such as term appointments, which have a one-year trial period set by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). OPM provides excepted service hiring authorities to fill special jobs or to fill any job in unusual or special circumstances under "Schedules A, B, and C." These excepted service authorities enable agencies to hire when it is not feasible or practical to use traditional competitive hiring procedures, and can streamline hiring. Agencies may use any excepted service authority under **Schedule A or Schedule B** when applicable. Only OPM can provide exceptions on a case-by-case basis under **Schedule C** for jobs having a confidential or policy-determining character.

A fundamental difference between a probationary period and a trial period is the length of time which employees must serve. The probationary period is set by law to last one year. When the trial period is set by individual agencies, it can last up to two years.