

# Probation Procedure

## Section 1 - Purpose

(1) To establish the steps associated with the effective use and management of the probationary period for continuing and fixed-term staff members.

### Scope

(2) This Procedure applies to all continuing and fixed-term staff members employed under the relevant industrial instrument who are subject to a probationary period.

## Section 2 - Policy

(3) Nil.

## Section 3 - Procedures

### Responsibilities and Required Actions

#### Background

(4) The probationary period provides the University with an opportunity to assess whether the person, the job and the organisation are an appropriate match. During this period, the employment of the staff member will be either confirmed or terminated.

(5) A successful probationary period involves:

- a. assessment and evaluation;
- b. feedback to the staff member on their progress and performance;
- c. engagement from the staff member and a willingness to respond positively to feedback; and
- d. support and guidance for the staff member when starting their new role.

(6) Throughout the probationary period the supervisor and staff member should communicate regularly to discuss and provide feedback on progress and performance.

#### When does Probation Apply

(7) The probationary period normally applies to all staff commencing a fixed-term or continuing role.

(8) A staff member will not generally have a further probationary period for subsequent contracts or roles, unless there is a significant change in employment. Probation will not apply to a second or subsequent fixed-term appointment in the same position, or to an essentially similar position; nor to a secondment, transfer or promotion.

## Length of Probation

(9) The length of the probationary period should allow sufficient time for a staff member to demonstrate competence in the position. The period will be specified in the offer of employment.

### Professional Staff

(10) The probationary period for professional staff is generally six (6) months.

(11) A longer probationary period of up to twelve (12) months may be appropriate for roles where a longer period of time is needed to assess competence in the role.

(12) If the contract is less than six (6) months, the probationary period is generally the length of the contract.

### Academic Staff

(13) The probationary period for continuing academic staff is generally two (2) years, however in some instances may be one (1) or three (3) years, depending on the position and / or research objectives.

(14) The minimum length of the probationary period for academic staff is one (1) year.

(15) The maximum length of the probationary period for academic staff is three (3) years.

(16) The probationary period for academic staff on a fixed-term contract that is less than two (2) years is generally the length of the contract.

(17) The University may consider a request to extend the probationary period, where a period of approved leave greater than four (4) weeks is taken during the probationary period, and an assessment of performance cannot be made. This must be approved by the Executive Dean or Head of Office and the Chief People Officer.

(18) There is a [Probation Procedure Flowchart](#) available for this Procedure.

## Step 1: Induction

(19) During induction, the supervisor and staff member should meet to discuss the position and work environment, and set goals, objectives and performance expectations. Ideally, this should occur within the first two (2) to four (4) weeks of employment.

(20) The supervisor should document performance expectations during the probationary period, in the [Academic Staff Probation Form](#) or [Professional Staff Probation Form](#).

## Step 2: Mid-point Review

(21) The supervisor and staff member will generally have a formal mid-point review discussion halfway through the probationary period, if the probationary period is longer than three (3) months. Mid-point review feedback must be documented in the [Academic Staff Probation Form](#) or [Professional Staff Probation Form](#).

(22) During the probationary period, the supervisor and staff member should meet regularly to discuss progress and performance, including the supervisor providing clear and constructive feedback.

(23) If there are any issues that may impact on the staff member's ability to meet performance expectations, the staff member should notify the supervisor so that these matters can be considered.

(24) There should be appropriate support for the staff member to achieve the required performance standards. The staff member should inform the supervisor if they require additional support.

(25) Supervisors are encouraged to discuss any concerns about the staff member's progress, performance or conduct as they arise, and to attempt to resolve the concerns promptly. Staff members are expected to attend and to participate in any such discussions.

(26) Staff members are encouraged to act on feedback as required, including cooperating with their supervisor to improve their work, performance and / or conduct as deemed necessary.

(27) Supervisors should make contact with the HR Client Services team if a staff member's attempts to improve are not considered satisfactory.

(28) The University may consider the option of an early final review of probation.

### **Step 3: Final Review**

(29) A final review meeting will be held between the supervisor and staff member, no later than one (1) month prior to the end of the probationary period. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss progress, performance and conduct during the probationary period, and provide the staff member the opportunity to respond to any feedback.

(30) The staff member may provide a written response for the supervisor's consideration. This will be within the probationary period, and will allow sufficient time for review of the feedback.

(31) Following the review meeting, the supervisor should consider the staff member's feedback and provide a recommendation to confirm or terminate the staff member's employment to their Executive Dean or Head of Office.

(32) The outcome should be documented in the [Academic Staff Probation Form](#) or [Professional Staff Probation Form](#).

### **Confirming Employment**

(33) The supervisor must seek approval from the Executive Dean or Head of Office to confirm employment, providing the [Academic Staff Probation Form](#) or [Professional Staff Probation Form](#), any relevant supporting documentation and any written response from the staff member for consideration.

(34) If approved, the supervisor will advise the staff member and forward the completed documentation to their HR Client Services team. HR will then confirm employment and set up a Performance Development Review (PDR) form in the online PDR system. See the [Development, Performance and Review](#) webpage for more details.

### **Terminating Employment**

(35) After considering any feedback from the staff member, the supervisor should consult with their HR Client Services team, then advise the staff member of their recommendation to terminate employment.

(36) The supervisor must provide a recommendation to terminate employment to the Executive Dean or Head of Office for their consideration, providing the [Academic Staff Probation Form](#) or [Professional Staff Probation Form](#), with the reasons for termination stated clearly; any relevant supporting documentation; and any written response from the staff member.

(37) The Executive Dean or Head of Office will review the documentation and either approve or decline the recommendation to terminate employment.

(38) If the Executive Dean or Head of Office approves termination of employment, their recommendation and the documentation must be sent to the Chief People Officer for implementation.

(39) The supervisor should notify the staff member of the termination of their employment prior to the end of the probationary period, and inform their HR Client Services team. Formal notification of the decision will be provided by

the Chief People Officer. If termination is approved, notice periods will apply in accordance with the relevant [Enterprise Agreements](#).

### **Appealing Termination (Academic Staff Only)**

(40) An academic staff member employed on a probationary period greater than one (1) year may appeal against a decision to terminate their employment. An appeal will be considered if received within five (5) days of receiving the approved termination notification from HR.

(41) The Chief People Officer will constitute an Appeal Committee to consider the appeal and make a recommendation. The Chief People Officer will consider the report provided by the Appeal Committee and either confirm or terminate employment.

## **Section 4 - Guidelines**

(42) Nil.

## **Section 5 - Definitions**

(43) Nil.

## Status and Details

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<b>Responsible Executive</b>	Nicole Gower Vice-President, Professional Services
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	David Ward Chief People Officer
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