

Academic Staff Probation and Confirmation Procedures

Section 1 - Scope

(1) These procedures provide guidance on the application of the [Academic Staff Probation and Confirmation Policy](#).

Section 2 - Procedures

Purpose

(2) The period of probation provides:

- a. the opportunity to assess a staff member's performance and to ensure that the goals and objectives of each School/Cost Centre and the University are achieved; and
- b. Ongoing feedback between the supervisor and the staff member prior to a decision being made about whether the contract of employment should continue.

Appointment

(3) The Selection Panel, at the time of initial appointment, will determine any probationary requirements for the new appointee, taking into account:

- a. Academic Position Classification Standards;
- b. Disciplinary norms relating to teaching, research, administration and qualification levels; and
- c. Any other specific conditions that can be reasonably and effectively achieved.

(4) In addition, specific conditions relating to the individual staff member may be included provided they can be reasonably and effectively achieved within the limits of the probation period and take into account the likely workload of the staff member.

(5) Probationary requirements are to be outlined in the Selection Panel Report, and included in the staff member's contract of employment, with the:

- a. probation clause in the Agreement;
- b. name and position of their nominated supervisor; and
- c. requirements for successful completion of each step in the probation process.

Mandatory Probation Period

(6) As soon as practicable after the commencement of duty (normally within two (2) weeks) the Supervisor organises a meeting with the staff member to clarify the:

- a. staff member's responsibilities;

- b. mandatory probation requirements as detailed in the contract of employment; and
- c. resources, staff development and support available.

(7) The Supervisor is to keep a written record of the meeting, which is to be signed by the staff member. A copy is to be provided to the staff member.

(8) Throughout the Mandatory Probation Period the Supervisor provides the staff member with regular constructive feedback on their performance, noting that a formal appraisal of performance is to be provided to the staff member at the end of the initial six (6) months.

(9) Where the Supervisor identifies problems, these should be discussed immediately, and a written plan for resolution (including a proposed timeline) developed between the supervisor and the staff member. The timeline should take into account the formulation of a final Mandatory Probation Report.

(10) At least six (6) weeks prior to the end of the Mandatory Period, the Supervisor will meet with the staff member (and any support person the staff member wishes to attend) to discuss the staff member's performance and probation review and to provide the staff member an opportunity to comment on any concerns.

Period before end of the mandatory probation period	Action	Who by
6 weeks	Meet with the staff member to review probation	HOS/Supervisor
5 weeks	Report finalised and signed by the staff member	HOS/Supervisor & staff member
4 weeks	Written response to be received	Staff member
3 weeks	Report sent from HOS/Supervisor to People and Culture (P&C)	HOS/Supervisor
No later than 1 week	Advice to staff member	People and Culture

(11) In preparing the Mandatory Probation Report the Supervisor must discuss the Report with the staff member who will sign the Report to confirm that the discussion has taken place. Where a staff member does not sign the Report, the Supervisor should note this on the Report.

(12) The final Mandatory Probation Report will include one of the following outcomes:

- a. that the Mandatory Probation Period has been satisfactorily completed and the confirmation period should be waived;
- b. that the Mandatory Probation Period has been satisfactorily completed and the staff member should proceed to the Confirmation Period;
- c. that the Mandatory Probation Period be extended; or
- d. a recommendation that the appointment is to be terminated.
- e. fixed-term staff only: that the mandatory probation period has been satisfactorily completed and that the fixed-term appointment is confirmed.

(13) A copy of the final Mandatory Probation Report is to be given to the staff member no later than five (5) weeks prior to the end of the Mandatory Probation Period.

(14) The staff member may provide a written response to any aspect of the Report within five (5) working days of receiving the copy.

(15) The Mandatory Probation Period process must be completed and a final decision made, no later than four (4) weeks prior to the end of the Mandatory Probation Period.

(16) The Mandatory Probation Report, along with any supporting documentation and any written response form the staff member, will then be forwarded to People and Culture.

Performance Standards not being met during probation

(17) Where the Supervisor has made the decision to extend the Mandatory Probation Period, the mandatory probation steps outlined above are to be repeated.

(18) Where the Supervisor has determined that the probationary appointment is to be terminated they must:

- a. advise the staff member of this decision, in writing, no later than four (4) weeks prior to the expiration of the Mandatory Probation Period;
- b. provide the staff member with an opportunity to respond to any adverse material about the staff member which has been considered in recommending termination of the appointment; and
- c. provide the Mandatory Probation Report to the Head of Cost Centre (or Senior Executive, where the Supervisor is the Head of Cost Centre) for a decision to be made regarding the probationary appointment.

(19) Where, prior to the timeframe outlined above, the Supervisor considers that there are significant problems with the staff member's performance during the Mandatory Probation Period which warrants termination of the probationary appointment, the supervisor must raise the concerns with the staff member and discuss them.

(20) Where the Supervisor, following discussion with the staff member, stills has significant concerns, they may recommend to the Head of Cost Centre (or Senior Executive, where the supervisor is the Head of Cost Centre) that termination of the appointment is warranted before completion of the full Mandatory Probation Period. They must provide the Head of Cost Centre (or Senior Executive, where the Supervisor is the Head of Cost Centre) a detailed report, including any response the staff member may have provided (refer 19 above), for a decision to be made regarding the probationary appointment.

(21) The Head of Cost Centre (or Senior Executive, where the Supervisor is the Head of Cost Centre) will review the recommendation for termination of the probation appointment and the staff member's response, and make a determination on whether:

- a. Termination is warranted; or
- b. Further remedial action needs to be taken.

(22) Where the decision is to terminate the probationary appointment, notice in accordance with the Collective Agreement will be given or payment will be made in lieu of notice.

Confirmation Period

(23) Unless otherwise waived by the Head of Cost Centre, the Confirmation Period will commence following the successful completion of the Mandatory Probation Period.

(24) As soon as practicable after the commencement of the Confirmation Period (normally within two (2) weeks) the Supervisor will organise a meeting with the staff member to clarify the:

- a. staff member's responsibilities;
- b. probation requirements relating to the confirmation period; and
- c. resources, staff development and support available.

(25) The Supervisor is to keep a written record of the meeting, which is to be signed by the staff member. A copy is to be provided to the staff member.

(26) Throughout the Confirmation Period the Supervisor provides the staff member with regular constructive feedback on their performance. If any problems become apparent, these should be discussed immediately, and a written plan for resolution (including a proposed timeline and staff development initiatives) agreed between the Supervisor and the staff member.

(27) At the end of each twelve (12) months during the Confirmation Period, the Supervisor will complete the Annual Probation Report which is to be discussed with and signed by the staff member.

(28) The Annual Probation Report will indicate whether the staff member has met or is progressing towards meeting the probation requirements using the following criteria:

Teaching and Curriculum Development

(29) This section provides a general overview of the staff member's teaching. Issues that Supervisors may consider in completing this part include:

- a. hours of face to face teaching per year;
- b. the nature of teaching — including the level, whether lectures/tutorials/other, e.g. practical classes and the range of subjects;
- c. a comparison of the teaching load with the average for other staff at the same level;
- d. any other contribution to teaching (e.g. postgraduate supervision, curriculum and/or award development);
- e. the introduction of units or innovations made to existing units;
- f. an assessment of the staff member's teaching effectiveness, including evidence used to make this assessment, which must include results of evaluations by students conducted by the Teaching and Learning Centre, and may include evaluations by colleagues or other evidence.
- g. the ways in which the staff member has been encouraged to improve her or his teaching skills; and
- h. the extent to which teaching skills have been improved.

Research/Scholarship/Professional Activity and Creative Achievement

(30) This section provides a general overview of the staff member's research and scholarship. Issues that Supervisors may consider in completing this part include:

- a. any research project/s or creative work/s currently being undertaken (including oral presentations), whether sole or collaborative, whether initiated by the staff member or a continuing interest of the School;
- b. progress that has been made in this research over the last year;
- c. the publications in which the staff member has published work (in print, in press, submitted or in preparation). This should indicate the nature of the journal, publisher involved and whether the Supervisor/Head has read the work and, if so, the Supervisor's/Head's opinion of it;
- d. if the staff member has obtained research funding;
- e. progress towards a higher degree if this was a specific requirement of confirmation; and
- f. an assessment of the staff member's research and scholarship and related to the standards achieved by other staff in the School or Faculty at a similar level.

University and Community Service

(31) This section provides a general overview of the staff member's University and Community Service. Issues that Supervisors may consider in completing this part include:

- a. the staff member's contribution to School activities and comments on his/her level of performance;
- b. the staff member's contribution to Faculty activities and comments on his/her level of performance;

- c. the staff member's contribution to University activities and comments on his/her level of performance; and
- d. an assessment of the staff member's contribution to the above points in relation to similar contributions by other staff at the same level.

Any additional Probation Requirements

(32) The Annual Probation Reports also need to address whether or not the staff member is progressing towards meeting any additional probationary criteria which were set upon appointment.

(33) The Annual Probation Report will include one of the following outcomes:

- a. That the staff member has satisfied all probationary requirements and should be confirmed as a continuing staff member; or
- b. Continuation of the confirmation period

(34) Continuation of the Confirmation Period is normally recommended where all aspects of the Report are positive but the supervisor considers that the staff member's performance does not yet fully comply with all the conditions for confirmation; or the Supervisor considers that there are unsatisfactory aspects of performance that may impact on a decision to confirm the appointment.

(35) The staff member may provide a written response to any aspect of the Report within five (5) working days of receiving the copy.

(36) The Annual Probation Report must be forwarded to People and Culture.

Section 3 - Definitions

For the purposes of this Procedure the following definitions apply

(37) Collective Agreement means the University of New England Academic Staff and ELC Teaching Staff Collective Agreement 2014-2017, as extended or varied from time to time, and is taken to include any agreement that replaces or varies this document.

(38) Supervisor means the role to whom a position reports to.

(39) Where the word 'normally' is used, it means that it is the default position that must be followed unless exceptional circumstances exist that require a departure from the default position, as determined by the Policy Administrator acting reasonably.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	27th July 2015
Review Date	27th March 2018
Approval Authority	Director People & Culture
Approval Date	27th March 2015
Expiry Date	To Be Advised
Unit Head	Kirsten Clayton Director People and Culture
Author	David Thorsen
Enquiries Contact	People and Culture +61 2 6773 3705

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Cost Centre" - Is the relevant Faculty, Directorate or other business unit.

"School" - Is an organisational unit comprising academic staff in related fields of study who are responsible for teaching and research in those academic fields together with support staff. Each School also has lead management for the design and delivery of the courses within its responsibility.