

Academic Staff Probation Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This document sets out Charles Sturt University's policy on academic staff probation, which includes setting appropriate objectives consistent with the University's expectations, reviewing the performance of academic staff during the probation period, ensuring performance is aligned with the University's values, assisting academic staff with professional development, and making decisions on the continuation and confirmation of their employment.

Scope

(2) This Policy applies to all academic staff on probation.

Principles

(3) This Policy is based on principles of:

- a. recruitment, retention and development of high performing academic staff who contribute to the University's mission and operate in accordance with the [Staff Generic Responsibilities Policy](#);
- b. recognition of diversity in the ways in which academic staff contribute to the University's mission and the wide variety of academic work that is appropriate to that mission; and
- c. commitment to a fair, equitable, transparent and confidential process with respect to all decisions made concerning probation and confirmation or annulment of appointment.

(4) At any time during a probation period, the University may confirm or annul the employment of a probationary employee.

(5) Performance management shall commence after confirmation of appointment.

Section 2 - Glossary

(6) In this Policy:

- a. Probation - is an extension of the appointment process and offers a period of mutual testing, during which time decisions on continuation of employment beyond the period of probation can be made. During a period of probation, an employee shall be required to demonstrate that he/she has satisfactorily performed the duties and responsibilities determined by the University for his/her position.
- b. Academic staff - refers to employees of Charles Sturt University (the University) who are employed at Academic Levels A to E.
- c. The supervisor - is normally the Head of School for level A, B, C and D employees and normally the Executive Dean of Faculty for level E employees. The Centre Director is normally the supervisor for staff employed in Research Centres, and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Engagement) is normally the supervisor for Centre Directors.

Section 3 - Policy

Part A - Responsibilities

(7) The Executive Director, People and Culture is responsible for:

- a. developing, reviewing and overseeing the implementation of the Policy, procedure, guidelines and portfolio template for probationary reviews; and
- b. on request, appointing an Executive Officer from the Division of People and Culture to observe at probation reviews and provide advice as needed.

(8) The Head of School or Centre Director is responsible for:

- a. managing the employee during the probationary period, including overseeing induction, clarifying duties and expectations, setting objectives, assisting with professional development, and providing feedback and/or formal counselling on performance;
- b. conducting the five month probation meeting for level A-D employees; and
- c. establishing a Probation Review Committee for the 12, 24 and, if applicable, 30 month meetings for each academic staff member on probation in his/her School/Centre. The Committee will review and make recommendations concerning the academic staff member on probation.

(9) The Executive Dean of Faculty is responsible for:

- a. conducting the five month probation meeting for level E employees based in a School or Faculty;
- b. ensuring that each Head of School establishes a Probation Review Committee for each academic probationary employee in his/her School;
- c. approving recommendations for level A, B and C employees based in a School or Faculty to continue their probationary appointment until the next review;
- d. submitting reports recommending confirmation of appointment of level A, B and C teaching/research and teaching/professional employees to the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) for approval, and level A, B and C research only staff to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Engagement) for approval; and
- e. endorsing the Head of School's recommendations for annulment of appointment of level A, B and C employees based in a School or Faculty, and then forwarding them to the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) (for teaching/research and teaching/professional employees) or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Engagement) (for research only employees) for endorsement.

(10) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Engagement) is responsible for:

- a. conducting the five month probation meeting for level E employees based in a Research Centre;
- b. ensuring that each Centre Director establishes a Probation Review Committee for each academic probationary employee in his/her Centre;
- c. approving recommendations for level A, B and C research only employees to continue their probationary appointment until the next review;
- d. approving confirmation of appointment of level A, B and C research only employees for both continuing and fixed term appointments, including employees whose continuous service arising from two or more appointments at the University totals at least three years, or who have previously held a continuing position for at least three years in an institution of higher education acceptable to the University; and
- e. endorsing a Centre Director's recommendations for annulment of appointment of level A, B and C research only employees and forwarding them to the Vice-Chancellor for decision.

(11) The Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) is responsible for:

- a. approving the procedure, guidelines and portfolio template for probationary reviews;
- b. approving confirmation of appointment of level A, B and C teaching/research and teaching/professional employees for both continuing and fixed term appointments, including employees whose continuous service arising from two or more appointments at the University totals at least three years, or who have previously held a continuing position for at least three years in an institution of higher education acceptable to the University; and
- c. endorsing an Executive Dean's recommendations for annulment of appointment of level A, B and C teaching/research and teaching/professional employees and forwarding them to the Vice-Chancellor for decision.

(12) The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for:

- a. approving the Academic Staff Probation Policy;
- b. presiding over a Probation Review Committee for level D and E employees on probation;
- c. approving confirmation of appointment of level D and E employees, including employees whose continuous service arising from two or more appointments at the University totals at least three years, or who have previously held a continuing position for at least three years in an institution of higher education acceptable to the University; and
- d. making a decision about recommended annulment of appointment of level A to E employees.

Part B - Probation Review Period

Fixed-term Appointments

(13) Unless waived by the University in part or full, the following periods of probation shall normally apply to academic staff on a fixed-term appointment:

| Contract Period | Period of Probation |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Less than 2 years | 3 months |
| 2 years but less than 3 years | 6 months |
| 3 years but less than 4 years | 12 months |
| 4 years or more | Up to 18 months |

Continuing appointments

(14) Unless waived by the University in part or in full, the maximum length of the probation period for academic staff on a continuing appointment shall be three years.

(15) Confirmation of appointment would not normally be approved before completion of 24 months' probation for employees or, in exceptional circumstances, completion of 12 months' probation.

(16) Probation shall not extend beyond three years, with the exception of leave periods without pay, which will have the effect of suspending the probationary period for the duration of the absence.

(17) Where a continuing appointment follows a fixed-term appointment, then the probationary period shall be adjusted to take account of the previous probation served. The total period of probation to be served will be equivalent to the period of probation for a continuing appointment.

Part C - Probationary Review and Development

(18) While on probation, academic staff will participate in a process of review and development to assist them to meet the requirements of his/her appointment.

(19) The probation review process involves formal reviews during the period of probation, which will be used to:

- a. inform the University's determination about whether or not an employee performs at the appropriate standard for continuation of probation until the next review or confirmation of his/her appointment;
- b. assist in the achievement of the University's objectives;
- c. align demonstrated capacities of employees with the University's mission and strategic priorities;
- d. clarify the University's expectations of the employee;
- e. assist an employee to develop and perform to his/her full potential;
- f. provide constructive feedback about performance and progress, and recognise high performing employees for their positive achievements or contributions to the University;
- g. enable individual employees' performance problems to be identified and addressed at an early stage; and
- h. provide access to appropriate professional development activities.

(20) Probation reviews will be conducted in accordance with the University's commitment to equal employment opportunity, and take into account the level of appointment, the opportunities available to the employee during the probation period and his/her approach to academic work.

Part D - Probation Requirements

(21) The requirements and, if applicable, any special conditions for confirmation of a continuing or fixed-term appointment shall be made known to the successful applicant at the time of making an offer of employment. NOTE: The Policy, as amended from time to time, forms part of the probation requirements.

(22) Confirmation of a probationary appointment is dependent upon the employee:

- a. satisfactorily performing the duties and responsibilities of the position to which he/she is appointed;
- b. complying with any special requirements or conditions attached to the offer of appointment and/or probation review reports;
- c. meeting the standards, expectations and qualifications determined by the University for his/her level of appointment (refer to the [Standards, Expectations and Qualifications Policy - Academic Staff](#));
- d. meeting the agreed expectations, objectives and professional development activities;
- e. performing in accordance with the [Staff Generic Responsibilities Policy](#); and
- f. maintaining conduct consistent with the [Code of Conduct for Staff](#).

(23) For a fixed-term appointment of less than three years (other than research only), successful completion of the Foundations of University Learning and Teaching (FULT) program is a minimum requirement of probation, unless waived by the Executive Dean in consultation with the Head of School and the Executive Director, Learning and Teaching Services during the induction period.

(24) For continuing appointments and fixed-term appointments of three years or more (other than research only), the employee will normally be required to:

- a. successfully complete FULT and the subject EEL409 University Learning and Teaching in the Graduate Certificate in University Learning and Teaching course, unless waived by the Executive Dean in consultation with the Head of School and the Executive Director, Learning and Teaching Services during the induction

period; and

- b. use systematic feedback from students and the University's teaching evaluation instruments to reflect on and enhance teaching; and/or
- c. provide evidence that he/she has the capacity to meet the Research Productive, Creative Works or Professional Activity criteria of the University's Performance-Based Funding model.

(25) If an academic staff member (other than research only) has successfully completed a fixed-term appointment and is then employed in a continuing appointment, then the employee will be required to successfully complete EEL409 if he/she has not previously done so, unless waived by the Executive Dean in consultation with the Head of School and the Executive Director, Learning and Teaching Services during the induction period.

Part E - Probation Review Committees

(26) In addition to the first probation meeting with the supervisor, the number of formal reviews to be conducted by a Probation Review Committee will normally be as follows:

- a. two reviews or, if required, three reviews for continuing employees serving three years' probation; and
- b. one review for fixed-term employees serving three to 18 months' probation.

(27) Additional reviews may be held.

(28) The supervisor (within the first five months) or a Probation Review Committee may recommend at any review that:

- a. a probationary appointment continue to the next review and/or provide conditions that the employee is required to meet;
- b. confirmation of appointment be approved; or
- c. a probationary appointment be annulled.

(29) To ensure due process with respect to all decisions made on the continuation, confirmation or annulment of an appointment, the University will advise an employee of any adverse statement, finding or recommendation contained in a probationary report, and provide him/her with an opportunity to submit a written response to it before a decision is reached.

(30) An approving officer shall not be bound by the recommendations of a recommending officer or Probation Review Committee.

(31) The decision of the Vice-Chancellor to annul the employment of a probationary employee shall be final and not subject to internal appeal or review.

Section 4 - Procedures

(32) Refer to the [Academic Staff Probation Procedure](#).

Section 5 - Guidelines

(33) Refer to the [Academic Staff Probation Guidelines - Review Committees and Supervisors](#) .

Status and Details

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Status | Current |
| Effective Date | 24th May 2014 |
| Review Date | 30th June 2017 |
| Approval Authority | Vice-Chancellor |
| Approval Date | 24th May 2014 |
| Expiry Date | Not Applicable |
| Unit Head | Jennifer Anderson Director, HR Partnerships |
| Author | Malcolm Wilson Director, Workplace Relations and Policy |
| Enquiries Contact | Division of People and Culture +61 2 63384884 |