

Academic Staff Probation Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This policy sets out Charles Sturt University's expectations and requirements in relation to academic staff probation.

Scope

(2) This policy applies to all academic staff who are employed under the [Enterprise Agreement](#) and are on probation, and to University employees involved in managing academic staff on probation.

Section 2 - Policy

Purpose of probation

(3) Academic staff probation 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 and strategic direction, assisting academic staff with professional development, and making decisions on the continuation and confirmation of their employment.

(4) The University's probation processes are intended to support:

- a. recruitment, retention and development of high performing academic staff who contribute to the University's object and functions, and operate in accordance with the [Staff Generic Responsibilities Policy](#)
- b. recognition of diversity of ways in which academic staff contribute to the object and functions of the University and the wide variety of academic work that is appropriate to these
- c. the University's equal opportunity policies and strategies by including consideration of applicants' equity categories (if any) and circumstances that have restricted applicants' opportunity to achieve, and
- d. commitment to a fair, equitable, transparent and confidential process with respect to all decisions made concerning probation and confirmation or termination of appointment.

(5) At any time during a probation period, the University may confirm or terminate the employment of a probationary employee (in accordance with the terms and notice requirements applying to that employee's engagement).

(6) Academic staff who are on probation will participate in regular objective setting and performance reviews as part of this process. They will not be subject to the University's Performance Planning, Development and Review until the probation period is complete and their appointment is confirmed.

Probation review period

(7) The [Enterprise Agreement](#) determines the probation periods for academic staff. Unless waived by the University in part or full, the following periods of probation currently apply:

Appointment period	Period of probation
Fixed-term of less than three years	Six months
Fixed-term of three years but less than four years	12 months
Fixed-term of four years or more	Up to 18 months
Continuing	Two years

(8) For continuing employees:

- a. confirmation of appointment will not normally be approved before completion of 24 months probation
- b. probation will normally not be longer than two years, except where approved extended leave is taken (e.g. leave without pay, parental leave) that will have the effect of suspending the probationary period for the duration of the leave.
- c. An employee may request a probation period of three years. This request must be submitted within the first six months of commencement.

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

(10) Any probation previously served by an existing employee in a substantially similar academic role will count as the probation requirements of subsequent appointments.

(11) The probationary period of an employee who returns to a substantially similar position with the University within two (2) years of departing may be waived.

Probationary review and development

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

(13) The probation review process involves formal reviews that:

- a. inform decisions to continue probation or to confirm or terminate appointments, based on evidence of the employee meeting the expectations of their appointment
- b. clarify the University's expectations of the employee
- c. provide constructive feedback about performance and progress, and recognise high performing employees for their positive achievements or contributions to the University
- d. enable performance concerns to be identified and addressed by the employee at an early stage, and
- e. provide access to appropriate professional development activities.

(14) To ensure due process with respect to all decisions made on the continuation, confirmation or termination of an appointment, the University will provide employees with a copy of their probation report and an opportunity to add their comments before approval.

Probation requirements

(15) New academic staff will be informed of the probation requirements and, if applicable, any special conditions for confirmation of their continuing or fixed-term appointment at the time of making an offer of employment. This policy, as amended from time to time, forms part of the notification of the probation requirements.

(16) The minimum probation requirements are:

- a. satisfactorily performing the duties and responsibilities of the position, as set out in the minimum standards for academic levels in the [Enterprise Agreement](#) and, where applicable, the staff member's position description
- 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 the level of appointment (see the [Academic Staff Qualifications and Expectations Procedure](#))
- d. meeting agreed expectations, objectives and professional development activities identified during probation
- e. performing in accordance with the [Staff Generic Responsibilities Policy](#)
- f. maintaining conduct consistent with the [Code of Conduct](#), and
- g. successful completion of the nominated induction program as outlined by the Division of Learning and Teaching and set out in the offer of employment.

(17) Notwithstanding clause 16, during the induction period the Executive Dean, in consultation with the Head of School and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching), may waive the requirement set out in clause 16g.

Probation reviews

(18) Probation review meetings will be held to review the employee's performance and progress:

- a. For continuing appointments, there will normally be probation review committee meetings held at 12 month and 24 month intervals.
- b. A third review at 30 months may be held for an employee who has a 36 month probation.
- c. For fixed-term appointments, the supervisor will normally conduct the probation review.

(19) The [Academic Staff Probation Procedure](#) provides further information about probation review committees.

(20) Having assessed the employee's completion of or progress toward the requirements set out in clause 16, the supervisor or 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. additional reviews are required
- c. confirmation of appointment be approved, or
- d. a probationary appointment be terminated.

(21) Delegated officers are not bound by the recommendations of a supervisor or probation review committee.

Confirmation of appointment

(22) Where a supervisor or probation review committee recommends that an employee has met the probation requirements and their appointment be confirmed, this must be approved by the delegated officer as set out in [Delegation Schedule B - People and Culture](#).

Termination of appointment

(23) Where a supervisor or probation review committee recommends that an employee's appointment be terminated, this must be approved by the delegated officer in accordance with [Delegation Schedule B - People and Culture](#). The [Academic Staff Probation Procedure](#) sets out the process for termination and how the employee may respond to the recommendation.

(24) The [Enterprise Agreement](#) sets out the notice periods that apply to a termination of appointment during probation.

(25) The decision of the delegated officer to terminate the employment of a probationary employee is final and not subject to internal appeal or review.

Section 3 - Procedures

(26) The [Academic Staff Probation Procedure](#) supports this policy.

Section 4 - Guidelines

(27) Nil.

Section 5 - Glossary

(28) For the purpose of this policy:

- a. Academic staff - means University employees who are employed at academic levels A to E of the [Enterprise Agreement](#).
- b. Delegated officer - means a person as set out in [Delegation Schedule B - People and Culture](#) of the [Delegations and Authorisations Policy](#).
- c. Probation - means a defined period after the initial appointment during which the employee is required to show that they can satisfactorily perform the duties and responsibilities for their position before their appointment is confirmed. As stated in the [Enterprise Agreement](#), 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.
- d. Supervisor - means the employee's nominated supervisor.

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