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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to guide the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Dean or nominee in determining whether an appropriate match has been made between a person newly appointed into a position, the position and the work environment, and whether the person is able to perform the required duties of the position at least satisfactorily.

Scope

This policy applies to all academic appointments of more than six (6) months' duration that include a probationary period.

Definitions

| Appeal: | The process used by a employee of obtaining a review of the University's decision to annul an appointment. |
| Natural Justice: | Natural justice is a person's entitlement to know of any detrimental comments made about them or their performance/conduct, by whom the comments were made, and having the opportunity to respond and to be heard. |
| Probationary Period: | The probationary period is a defined period of time during which a new employee's performance and conduct are subject to formal assessment. The employee is provided with continuing constructive counselling and support to confirm progress and/or identify difficulties and develop strategies for their resolution. |
Policy Statement

1. A person who is appointed to an academic position at the University for more than six (6) months' duration shall normally be required to complete a probationary period.

2. In determining the length of the probationary period, the University shall take into account the employee's qualifications and experience and the duration of the appointment.

3. For fixed-term appointments, the probationary period shall be normally not more than half of the duration of the appointment.

4. For continuing appointments, the probationary period shall be normally up to 24 months. However in those cases where it is necessary for the employee to demonstrate research and/or publication activity the probationary period may be up to 36 months.

5. The employee shall be advised of the length of the probationary period and the name and position of their supervisor prior to commencement of employment through the letter of offer or contract of employment.

6. At, or as soon as possible after commencement of employment, the new employee shall be inducted, at which time probation requirements are explained.

7. During the probationary period the employee's performance and conduct shall be subject to formal assessment. The employee shall be provided with continuing constructive counselling and support to confirm progress and/or identify difficulties and develop strategies for their resolution. The role of the supervisor is to:
   • review progress;
   • provide constructive feedback on the employee's performance;
   • discuss problems and concerns;
   • provide assistance and advice;
   • identify and address any professional development needs;
   • clarify teaching and research requirements;
   • make a recommendation/decision to confirm or not to confirm employment, after a final review which can be determined at any time during the probationary period.
   • If the supervisor is not a Dean or other appropriate senior manager, the supervisor shall make a recommendation to the relevant senior manager. If the supervisor is a Dean or other appropriate senior manager, They shall decide on the action to be taken as a result of a probation review.

8. On a recommendation from the Dean or nominee, the Director, Human Resources may approve an extension to the probation by a period of not more than three (3) months to allow the employee to address performance and/or conduct issues.

9. If an assessment of performance cannot be made due to an employee taking a period of approved leave (e.g. leave without pay, personal leave, parental leave) that is greater than four (4) weeks then the end date for probation may be extended. The Director, Human Resources, on a recommendation from the Dean or nominee, may approve to adjust the probationary period to provide the employee with a total probation period equivalent to that contemplated in the contract of employment.

Annulment of Appointment

The University will annul an appointment if:

• an employee is unsuited to the position they hold, either by reason of performance or conduct; and/or
• claims made by the employee during the selection process were either untrue or not substantiated by performance in the position.

Any decision to annul employment during the probationary period will not be made until the employee has completed 12 months service, provided that period does not go beyond the expiry date of the probationary period stipulated in the employment contract.

Where the final probation report to the Vice-Chancellor or Vice-Chancellor's nominee indicates a recommendation to annul the appointment, the employee may appeal against the decision.

Where employment is annulled following a probation review, three (3) months' notice will be given, or by mutual agreement, payment in lieu shall be made.

**Appeal Against Decision to Annul Employment**

Where the probation review process leads to a decision to annul the appointment, the employee may appeal against the decision by lodging a written appeal with the Director, Human Resources within ten (10) working days of receiving the written notice of the decision to annul the appointment.

**Responsibility**

The Human Resources is responsible for:

• providing advice to staff and supervisors about this policy and its implementation;
• coordinating implementation of this policy, including preparation of appropriate correspondence; and
• providing guidance where required to supervisors to ensure effective implementation of this policy.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Dean or nominee have a specific responsibility for ensuring this policy of Academic Probation is implemented for all staff in probationary appointments for whom they are nominated as line manager or supervisor.

**Legislative Context**

• [University Collective Agreement](#) - Academic and General Staff Employees.

**Associated Documents**

• [Academic Probation (Higher Education) Procedure](#)

**Implementation**

The [Academic Probation (Higher Education) Policy](#) will be implemented throughout the University via:

1. An Announcement Notice under the 'FedNews' website and on the 'What's New' page on the 'Policies and Procedures @ FedUni' website to alert the University-wide community of the approved Procedure, and/or
2. Information Sessions to Heads of Schools.