

Name of Policy	Probation for General Staff Policy
Description of Policy	This policy relates to the period immediately following the appointment of a new staff member during which the new staff member may be required to satisfactorily complete a specified period of probationary employment in order for the appointment of the staff member to be confirmed.
<input type="checkbox"/> New Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revision	
Description of Revision	<p><i>This Policy has been updated so that the minimum period of probation for general staff is 6 months (or the duration of a fixed-term contract for periods of less than 6 months)</i></p> <p><i>Insert</i></p> <p><i>Please type brief description of the insert and specify information to be inserted</i></p>

Human Resources Directorate

Policy and Revision Number	
Original Effective Date	6 March 2008
Review Due Date	
Revision Effective Date	
Approval Date	
Vice Chancellor's Approval Date	8 March 2010

Table of Contents

1.	Background Information	1
2.	Policy Statement	1
3.	Policy Purpose	1
4.	Application of Policy	1
5.	Approvals	1
6.	Procedures	4
7.	Policy Review	5
8.	Further Assistance	5

1. Background Information

The period of probation is the final stage of the Recruitment and Selection process. A probationary period is designed to establish whether there is an appropriate match between the person, the job, and the work environment. Successful probation requires the supervisor to be satisfied that the staff member is able to apply, to the satisfaction of the University, the skills, competencies, experience and attributes on which the appointment decision was made.

The probation process is also the first step in the introduction to the annual Performance Development Program for the new staff member.

2. Policy Statement

Prior to confirming an appointment, a general staff member, other than a casual staff member, may be required to complete a specified reasonable period of probationary employment that is directly related to the nature of the work to be carried out.

A general staff member cannot be required to serve more than one period of probation with the University.

3. Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the process and procedures that relate to general staff probation. The policy should be read in conjunction with the University's Interim Qualifying Period Policy.

4. Application of Policy

This policy applies to all general staff employed at ACU who are covered by the provisions of *the Australian Catholic University Staff Enterprise Agreement, 2005 – 2008* and who are required to serve a probationary period.

Probationary periods do not apply where a fixed-term contract is renewed immediately after the expiry of an initial or earlier fixed-term contract in the same position or role, or where a staff member is transferred, seconded or enters into a pre-retirement contract.

5. Approvals

The Selection Committee recommends any specific probationary criteria and the period of probation for the approval of the relevant Executive Dean or Director (for positions classified at HEW 1 to 7), or the relevant Executive Planning Group member (for positions classified at HEW 8 and HEW 9).

A Deputy Vice-Chancellor has the authority to approve a waiver of probation.

The Vice-Chancellor has the authority to approve the termination of a general staff probationary appointment.

6. Procedures

6.1 Length of Probationary Period

The probationary period will normally be six months for continuing appointments.

For fixed-term appointments, the probationary period will normally be six months if the length of the contract is six months or more. If the length of the fixed term contract is less than six months, the probationary period will be equivalent to the length of the contract.

Examples of Probationary Periods are set out below:

All General Staff Continuing Appointments	Six months
Fixed-term appointments of six months or greater	Six months
Fixed term appointments of five months	Five months
Fixed term appointments of four months	Four months
Fixed term appointments of three months	Three months

If during the probationary period, the staff member is absent from the University for a period of more than four weeks, the probationary period will be suspended for a period equal to the duration of the absence, in order to provide the staff member with a total maximum period of probation equivalent to that initially intended. However, any suspension of the probationary period will not affect the term of or change the expiry date of a fixed-term contract.

6.2 Advice of Probationary Period and Probationary Criteria

The probation criteria are determined by the Selection Committee and are detailed in the Selection Committee Report. The probationary period and probation criteria will be advised in writing to the staff member in advance of the commencement of her/his employment. The probationary criteria must be:

- specified as realistic, definable, measurable goals,
- closely aligned to the position description*,
- consistent with the classification description for the level (refer to the University's Interim Policy – Classification Standards for Academic and General Staff),
- achievable in the time frame of the appointment (fixed-term appointments only); and,
- designed to assess whether the staff member has the capacity to work productively in the University.

* It is important for the probationary criteria to be closely aligned to the position description, which forms the basis for the selection process and underpins the expectations of the role. Similarly, the position description forms the basis for the development of performance goals for the annual Performance Development Program.

6.3 Probation and Induction

Induction during the first six months is an important factor in the successful introduction of a new staff member to the University environment and to the development of her/his career in the University. The role of the supervisor is critical in the induction of the new staff member.

Where possible during the first week of duty, the supervisor shall meet with the new staff member to discuss the position description, duties and responsibilities and the standard of performance and results expected in order for the staff member to meet the probationary criteria in a timely manner during the probationary period.

The nominated supervisor shall monitor the progress of the staff member and provide advice regarding her/his progress, including the nature of any improvements which may be necessary in order to meet the probationary criteria, and strategies for achieving the required improvements.

Throughout the probationary period, the supervisor shall assist as appropriate, by counselling and/or coaching the staff member and by providing access to suitable training.

6.4 Probation Review Criteria

The key criteria for confirming a general staff member's employment will be successful performance against all probationary criteria.

It is expected that the probationary staff member will be able to demonstrate satisfactory performance in relation to the probationary criteria specified in the letter of offer; the requirements of the position description and the relevant HEW classification descriptor for general staff, as well as meeting the following general requirements:

- demonstrated behaviour that is consistent with the Staff Code of Conduct
- demonstrated capacity and willingness to undertake all the duties and responsibilities of the position,
- demonstrated willingness to respond to changes in workplace requirements within the scope of the position description; and,
- demonstrated capacity to achieve work outcomes as required within the scope of the position description.

6.5 Probationary Review Meetings

During the probationary period, the nominated supervisor shall regularly hold probationary meetings with the staff member.

At these meetings, direct and constructive feedback shall be provided to the staff member on her/his progress toward meeting the probationary criteria. Any improvements and/or training that are necessary in order for the staff member to meet the probationary criteria of the position shall be identified. The supervisor shall prepare a written report of each meeting, containing clear feedback and recommendations. This report shall be countersigned by both the probationer and the nominated supervisor.

6.6 Confirming Appointment

A confirmation decision may be made at any time during the probationary period. Prior to making a decision about the confirmation of a staff member's appointment, the University will take into consideration all relevant information available to it regarding the staff member's performance.

6.7 Confirmation Review Meeting

If not confirmed beforehand (See Sub-clause 5), a confirmation review meeting shall occur between the nominated supervisor and the staff member normally at least six weeks before the expiration of the probationary period. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss whether the staff member has met the probationary criteria.

Following the confirmation review meeting, the nominated supervisor will make a written recommendation regarding the confirmation or termination of the staff member's appointment and forward it to:

- The relevant Executive Dean or Director (for confirmation of positions classified at HEW 1 – 7) or, the relevant Deputy Vice-Chancellor (for confirmation of positions classified at HEW 8 and 9) (other than for positions in the direct line of responsibility of the senior officer concerned which must be referred to the relevant Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Vice-Chancellor as appropriate); or
- if the recommendation is for termination, to the Director Human Resources and the relevant Deputy Vice-Chancellor for endorsement and thence to the Vice-Chancellor (see below).

A copy will be provided to the Human Resources for placement on the staff member's personal file.

6.8 Possible Outcomes of the Probation Review

Following the confirmation review meeting, the nominated supervisor shall recommend one of the following options:

- **Confirmation** - If the staff member has satisfactorily met the probationary criteria, or,
- **Termination** - If the staff member has failed to meet the probationary criteria; the recommendation may be that the appointment cease before or at the end of the specified probation period. The recommendation shall include any adverse material about the staff member's performance which has been taken into account in making the recommendation for termination. The staff member will be provided with a copy of the supervisor's recommendation and will be given reasonable opportunity to provide a response in writing.

In cases where termination is recommended, the Director, Human Resources shall review the recommendation and the staff member's response, if any, and refer it to the Vice-Chancellor for decision. The Vice-Chancellor may approve the dismissal on performance grounds of a probationary general staff member with notice, provided that:

- The staff member has served a reasonable probationary period, having regard to the nature and circumstances of the employment; and,
- The dismissal complies with the University probation and appeal procedures; and,
- Notice of dismissal is given in writing.

A probationary staff member whose appointment is not confirmed may receive, at the University's discretion, up to two weeks' notice of termination or payment in lieu of notice effective from the date of the written advice.

Subject to the appropriate approvals, probationary staff members will be advised in writing by the Human Resources Directorate of the outcome of her/his probationary review.

Please note that a staff member's probation will be automatically confirmed following the end date of the probationary period if advice to the contrary is not received by Human Resources no later than 4 weeks prior to that date.

6.9 Performance Development

Where the appointment has been confirmed, at the end of the probation period, the supervisor shall establish the first Action Plan with the staff member under the *General Staff Performance Development Policy*.

6.10 Appeals

A general staff member may appeal a decision not to confirm her/his appointment either within or following a period of probation. An appeal may only be made while the general staff member remains employed by the University, and only on the ground that a breach of procedure has occurred which materially affected the University's decision not to confirm her/his employment.

Appeals regarding the decision must be made in writing to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration and Resources), within ten working days of receipt of the letter of notification of termination from the Human Resources in accordance with the provisions of the University's Interim Policy – Staff Appeals.

7. Policy Review

The University may make changes to this policy and procedures from time to time. In this regard, any staff member who wishes to make any comments about this Policy may forward her/his suggestions to the Director, Human Resources.

8. Further Assistance

Any staff member who requires assistance in understanding this Policy should consult her/his nominated supervisor who is responsible for the implementation and operation of these arrangements in her/his work area. Should further advice be needed, she/he should contact the Human Resources Consultant responsible for their campus.