



Probation (Professional Staff) procedure

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) This Procedure is effective from 7 May 2024.

Section 2 - Purpose

(2) This Procedure outlines the process to be followed by Professional staff and leaders during a staff member's period of probation.

Section 3 - Scope

(3) This Procedure applies to continuing and fixed-term Professional staff and leaders with Professional staff on probation. It does not apply to casual staff, staff on Senior Staff Performance Contracts or the Executive.

Section 4 - Policy

(4) This Procedure is pursuant to the [Employment of Staff policy](#).

Section 5 - Procedure

(5) All new Professional staff appointed to a continuing or fixed-term position will normally be required to serve a period of probation.

(6) The period and terms of probation are in accordance with the provisions specified in this Procedure, the [Deakin University Enterprise Agreement 2023 \(2023 EA\)](#) and the staff member's contract of employment.

(Refer also to the [Recruitment of Staff Procedure](#) and Deakin's [Probation website](#))

Period of probation

(7) Professional staff appointed to a continuing position with the University are required to complete a six-month probation period, unless otherwise specified in their contract of employment.

(8) The probation period for Professional staff appointed to a fixed-term position will normally be six months, however a shorter period may be specified in the staff member's contract of employment depending on the length of the fixed-term contract and the nature of the work to be performed by the staff member.

(9) A staff member appointed to a second or subsequent period of fixed-term employment is not normally required to serve an additional probationary period, unless the duties are substantially different from their initial fixed-term appointment and the staff member's initial fixed-term contract was for a period of less than six months. Where a leader is considering requiring a second period of probation, the leader must contact their Senior People and Culture Partner for advice before proceeding with that decision.

(10) In exceptional circumstances a Professional staff member's probationary period may be extended. Where a leader considers that an extension may be required, the leader must contact their Senior People and Culture Partner for advice. Any extension must be approved and communicated to the Professional staff member and the leader by the Chief People and Culture Officer (cp-co@deakin.edu.au) or nominee, prior to the expiry of the original probationary period.

Responsibilities of the leader during probation

(11) The leader is responsible for:

- a. setting clear probationary objectives;
- b. organising an initial meeting within the first two weeks of the staff member's commencement of employment, to discuss the probationary performance and behavioural objectives and to ensure that the probationary objectives are documented in DeakinPeople;
- c. scheduling all other formal probationary review meetings (see the DeakinAchieve Probation Information for Professional Staff); and
- d. facilitating and encouraging ongoing regular discussions with the staff member regarding their performance, which will include:
 - i. monitoring the staff member's performance, behavioural and organisational fit;
 - ii. providing feedback on a regular basis;
 - iii. providing appropriate development, support and training to assist the staff member make a successful transition to the University and the role;
 - iv. maintaining a record of meetings, agreements and outcomes and providing copies to the staff member where appropriate; and
 - v. contacting their Senior People and Culture Partner for advice in situations where they have any concerns in relation to the staff member's performance or behaviour.

(12) Within the probationary period, the leader will determine whether the staff member has the right skills, knowledge and attributes to be confirmed or not confirmed as an ongoing staff member. This decision will be made in accordance with clauses 18 - 26 of this Procedure and clause 21 of the [2023 EA](#).

Responsibilities of the staff member during probation

(13) The staff member is responsible for:

- a. working towards meeting the probationary performance and behavioural objectives set by their leader that are documented in DeakinPeople;
- b. participating actively in all probationary discussions with the leader; and
- c. providing feedback to the leader in relation to performance matters, including:
 - i. seeking further clarification of expectations as required; and
 - ii. advising the leader of any concerns in relation to the achievement of their objectives should this arise during the probationary period.

Reviews during the probation period

(14) At each probationary meeting, the leader will review the staff member's development needs and provide feedback in relation to the staff member's performance and behaviour, as well as providing an opportunity for the staff member to raise any areas of concern.

(15) Where possible, these meetings will be conducted in person and the leader will document the discussions and any

agreed outcomes.

(16) If the leader has concerns in relation to the development, performance or behaviour of the staff member at any stage throughout the probationary period, the leader must immediately contact their Senior People and Culture Partner for further advice and support.

(17) The leader and staff member should at a minimum conduct formal probation reviews midway through the probation period and at least two weeks prior to the end of the probation using the DeakinAchieve Plan to document goals and feedback.

Outcome of probation - confirmation of employment

(18) Where the leader considers the staff member has met their performance and behavioural objectives, at least two weeks prior to the expiry of the probationary period, the leader will provide verbal confirmation of the staff member's continuing or fixed-term appointment with the University.

(19) Any staff member whose employment is confirmed is required to participate in the DeakinAchieve process for the remainder of the DeakinAchieve cycle or for the remainder of their fixed-term contract.

Outcome of probation - termination of employment

(20) A Professional staff member's employment may be terminated by the University at any stage during the probation period for any reason, including unsatisfactory performance, behavioural concerns, misconduct (after the staff member has an opportunity to respond to any adverse material that will be taken into account in any decision to terminate their employment) or serious misconduct.

(21) As per clause 21.3 of the [2023 EA](#), clause 65 (Unsatisfactory Performance), 66 (Misconduct and Serious Misconduct) and 67 (Review of Decision - Termination of Employment or Demotion) do not apply to Professional staff during their probationary period.

(22) Where the leader has concerns regarding the performance, conduct or behaviour of the staff member at any time during probation, they must immediately contact their Senior People and Culture Partner for advice.

(23) Where the leader is considering making a recommendation to terminate the staff member's employment upon or before the expiry of the period of probation, the leader (following advice from their Senior People and Culture Partner) will advise and provide the staff member with an opportunity to respond to any adverse material about the staff member that the University intends to take into account.

(24) The leader will consider any response by the staff member before deciding whether to recommend terminating the staff member's employment. A recommendation to not confirm probationary employment must be referred to the Chief People and Culture Officer (cp-co@deakin.edu.au) or nominee, who will decide whether to accept the recommendation.

(25) Where the Chief People and Culture Officer or nominee has determined that termination of employment during the probationary period is warranted, People and Culture will provide the staff member with a letter confirming termination of their employment.

(26) Except in cases of serious misconduct, where a staff member's employment is terminated at any stage during the probation period, the staff member will be provided with one week's notice unless a greater period is specified in their contract of employment. At the discretion of the Chief People and Culture Officer or nominee a payment in lieu of this notice may be made to the staff member. In cases of serious misconduct, the staff member's employment may be terminated without notice.

Section 6 - Definitions

(27) For the purpose of this Procedure:

- a. probation: an initial defined period of employment during which a leader closely monitors and assesses a staff member's performance and behaviour to determine whether there is an appropriate match between the person, the position and the work environment.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	7th May 2024
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Expiry Date	To Be Advised
Responsible Executive	Kerrie Parker Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University Services dvc-us@deakin.edu.au
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