



University Policy

Academic Probation (Higher Education)

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to guide the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Head of School or nominee in determining whether an appropriate match has been made between a new staff member, the position and the work environment, and whether the staff member is able to perform the required duties of the position at least satisfactorily.

2. Scope

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

3. Definitions

Probationary Period: The probationary period is a defined period of time during which a new staff member's performance and conduct are subject to formal assessment. The staff member is provided with continuing constructive counselling and support to confirm progress and/or identify difficulties and develop strategies for their resolution.

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 be heard.

4. Policy Statement

- 4.1 A person who is appointed to an academic position at the University of Ballarat for more than six months' duration shall normally be required to complete a probationary period.
- 4.2 In determining the length of the probationary period, the University shall take into account the staff member's qualifications and experience and the duration of the appointment.
- 4.3 For fixed-term appointments, the probationary period shall be normally not more than half of the duration of the appointment.
- 4.4 For continuing appointments, the probationary period shall be normally up to twenty-four months. However in those cases where it is necessary for the staff member to demonstrate research and/or publication activity the probationary period may be up to thirty-six months.

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- 4.5 The staff member shall be advised of the length of the probationary period and the name and position of his/her supervisor prior to commencement of employment through the letter of offer or contract of employment.
- 4.6 At, or as soon as possible after commencement of employment, the new staff member shall participate in an induction process, at which time probation requirements are explained. The new staff member and the supervisor shall meet in order to clarify teaching requirements, research directions and expected outcomes, mentoring arrangements and a plan of formal and informal meetings to monitor and review progress.
- 4.7 During the probationary period the staff member's performance and conduct shall be subject to formal assessment. The staff member shall be provided with continuing constructive counselling and support to confirm progress and/or identify difficulties and develop strategies for their resolution. In this process the role of the supervisor is to:
- review progress;
 - provide constructive feedback on the staff member's performance;
 - discuss problems and concerns;
 - provide assistance and advice;
 - identify and address any professional development needs; and
 - clarify teaching and research requirements.

5. Annulment of Appointment

- 5.1 The University will annul an appointment if:
- An employee is unsuited to the position they hold, either by reason of performance or conduct;
 - Claims made by the employee during the selection process were either untrue or not substantiated by performance in the position.

Where the final probation report to the Vice-Chancellor or Vice-Chancellor's nominee indicates a recommendation to annul the appointment, the Vice-Chancellor or Vice-Chancellor's nominee shall give an opportunity to the employee and, if the employee so chooses, their representative, to hold a face-to-face meeting with him/her before a final decision is made. The meeting will provide an opportunity for the employee to make a case for further consideration or provide additional evidence on why the appointment should not be annulled. The Vice-Chancellor or Vice-Chancellor's nominee shall consult with the Director, Human Resources prior to meeting with the relevant employee.

The Vice-Chancellor's or Vice-Chancellor's nominee's decision is final

Where employment is annulled following a probation review, three months' notice of termination shall be given or payment in lieu shall be made.

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6. Responsibility

6.1 The Director-Human Resources or nominee is responsible for:

- providing advice to staff and supervisor about this policy and its implementation;
- coordinating implementation of this policy, including preparation of appropriate correspondence; and
- providing training to supervisors to ensure effective implementation of this policy.

6.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Head of School 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.

7. Associated Documents

University of Ballarat Union Collective Agreement 2006-2008 – Academic and General Staff Employees or relevant Australian Workplace Agreement

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