



SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDE TO  
**PROBATION**

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March 2019

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# DISCLAIMER

This guide has been prepared by Volunteering and Contact ACT (VCA) for the ACT Government in accordance with a contract executed in July 2018.

The information contained within this guide has been prepared by VCA from material obtained through an environmental scan and extensive consultation with the ACT Community Services Industry (the Industry). VCA has relied upon the accuracy, currency, and completeness of the information obtained through the environmental scan and consultations. VCA is not in any way liable for the accuracy of any of the information used or relied on by the ACT Government or a third party.

The project methodology has been limited to assessing available information, resources, tools and templates, and working with the Industry to create a curated set of fit-for-purpose resources. The broad nature of the research and analysis is such that this guide, including the accompanying tools and templates, are intended to be examples only, and do not reflect the opinion or views of VCA.

Furthermore, VCA has not independently validated or verified the information sourced or provided to it for the purpose of the guide, and the content of this guide does not in any way constitute assurance of any of the information contained herein. VCA accepts no responsibility for any errors in the information sourced publicly or provided by the Industry, nor the effect of any such errors on the analysis, suggestions, or guide.

VCA has provided this guide solely for the benefit of the ACT Government and the ACT Community Services Industry and disclaims all liability and responsibility (including arising from its negligence) to any parties for loss, damage, cost, or expense incurred or arising out of any person using or relying on the information contained herein.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Volunteering and Contact ACT acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the traditional custodians of the Canberra Region. Volunteering and Contact ACT pays respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and their vital ongoing contribution to the Canberra Region. Volunteering and Contact ACT acknowledges the volunteers of all sexualities and genders, from all cultures, and with all abilities, and the volunteer involving organisations that contribute to the health and happiness of our city.

This project was made possible thanks to funding from the Community Services Directorate of the ACT Government, which was collected through a levy on organisations in the ACT Community Services Industry. Volunteering and Contact ACT acknowledges the support from Government and the Industry in prioritising and funding this vital piece of work.

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This guide was prepared by Sarah Wilson, Policy Manager at Volunteering and Contact ACT and Sharon Winks, Principal at Galent Management Consulting. The guide has been designed by Roxanne Tulk from 44 Creative and Hannah Baker.

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This supplementary guide has been developed as part of one of the foundation actions in the ACT Community Services Industry Workforce Plan. The ACT Community Services Industry Strategy recognised that workforce attraction and retention were issues for the sector and is seeking to address this through the Workforce Plan. This supplementary guide is part of a framework that encompasses onboarding, supervision, peer support, coaching and mentoring with supplementary information to support supervision on performance appraisal and probation.

It is envisaged that the availability of information, tools and templates across these areas will enable organisations in the Industry to streamline their policies and procedures. Further, the implementation of like policies and procedures across organisations will result in staff having a more consistent experience when moving within the Industry.

This guide is focused on paid employees who work in the Industry. Volunteers are not usually subject to the same probationary process as employees, though your organisation should have a policy and process on how it develops and recognises the performance of volunteers. It is recommended that all volunteer involving organisations implement Volunteering Australia's [National Standards for Volunteer Involvement](#). For more information on how to manage underperformance of volunteers and how to end a volunteer relationship, please see Not-for-Profit Law's [National Volunteer Guide](#).

This supplementary guide was created using research obtained through an extensive environmental scan, as well as through consultation with the Industry. The information and tools provided throughout have been curated from research and developed to cater for the unique requirements of the Industry. The research consulted, and the information provided are not exhaustive, but are examples of good practice that can be implemented by any organisation. Where a concept, statistic, model, tool or template has been copied or adapted from a specific source this source has been provided in the endnotes.

This supplementary guide is by way of general information and is designed for discretionary use. It does not replace the requirement to obtain specific operational, legal, insurance, or other advice. Volunteering and Contact ACT accepts no responsibility for any errors in the information provided, nor the effect of any such errors. The project was finalised in March 2019.

# HOW TO USE THIS SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDE

This supplementary guide is designed to give an overview of what is involved in the probationary process. Probation is a crucial component for ensuring a new staff member is well supported, suitable for the work they have been recruited for, and are a good fit for the organisation.

When using this supplementary guide, it is imperative that you consider the risk profile of your organisation. For example, some of the tools and templates, whilst providing a baseline, may not be enough if your organisation must adhere to specific legislation or national quality standards. In these circumstances it is recommended that you seek further advice, especially regarding policies, to ensure they are compliant with all requisite legislation, standards, and other safeguarding mechanisms.

Not all the concepts introduced in this supplementary guide may be relevant for your organisation – they are provided so that you can decide what is appropriate for you. The tools and templates provided can be considered the foundational building blocks for your probationary process. They are not designed to be all encompassing, rather they provide a starting point that your organisation can adapt and improve.

## ORGANISATIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

You are reading this guide because you are interested in probation. This guide has been structured to provide information on the key components of probation and how probation can be structured in your organisation. The following questions can be used to help you determine your organisation's level of maturity and competence when it comes to probation. If you identify areas of deficiency in your organisation's probation process example tools and templates have been provided to accompany the theoretical concepts in this guide. These tools and templates are included as appendices and are available as individual, editable PDFs and Microsoft Word documents.

### Probation Self-Assessment Questions

- ▼ Does my organisation have a policy on probation?
- ▼ Does my organisation have a probation procedure?
- ▼ Is the process for probation clearly documented and easy to follow? Could anyone in my organisation pick up the process and apply it effectively?
- ▼ Does my organisation talk about probation and prioritise it?
- ▼ Does my organisation dedicate resources to the probationary process?
- ▼ Does my organisation introduce our probationary process during onboarding?
- ▼ Does my organisation explain how performance appraisal is linked to probation?
- ▼ Do staff in my organisation know about our probationary process and what do they think of it?

In addition to ensuring you have adequate policies and procedures in place to support your probationary process there are other important aspects to consider, including:

- ▼ How does my organisation store confidential information? Is this in line with privacy and confidentiality requirements and is this communicated with staff?
- ▼ Does my organisation know if the probationary process is applied to staff consistently?
- ▼ How is my organisation monitoring compliance with our probation policy and procedure?
- ▼ How often is my organisation reviewing our probation policy and procedure?
- ▼ Has my organisation considered if and how it will approach a similar process to probation for volunteers?

## INTRODUCTION

### WHAT IS PROBATION?

Employees are often subject to a probationary period to assess if they are suitable for their role and the organisation. The employer decides on the length of the probationary period, which can range from a few weeks to a few months.<sup>1</sup>

This helps the employee and the organisation to 'test the waters'. It also gives the employee the opportunity to decide if the position is right for them.<sup>2</sup>

It is unusual for volunteers to be subject to probation in the same manner as employees. This is in recognition of and respect for the volunteer's contribution of time for no remuneration. Having said this, some organisations have a similar process for volunteers, whereby they assess the relationship at the end of a defined period of time. Upon review of a volunteer agreement both parties have the opportunity to discuss whether the relationship is working and put forward any suggestions for improvement on both sides. Following this initial period of engagement, the organisation and volunteer can mutually agree to continue or end the arrangement.

Whilst acknowledging that volunteers are not covered by the probation policy, procedure and practice guidelines in this supplementary guide, it is important for your organisation to go through similar processes of setting expectations, providing ongoing feedback, and ensuring there is a good fit for both the organisation and the volunteer. The breadth and depth of this process with volunteers will be dictated by the roles being undertaken by your volunteers and the level of responsibility they have within your organisation.

It is recommended that all volunteer involving organisations implement Volunteering Australia's [National Standards for Volunteer Involvement](#). For more information on how to manage underperformance of volunteers and how to end a volunteer relationship, please see Not-for-Profit Law's [National Volunteer Guide](#).

## WHY IS PROBATION IMPORTANT?

Probation is an important process that needs to be formally managed. Probation:

- ▼ ensures that measures are taken to evaluate an employee's performance in a position prior to confirmation of ongoing appointment;
- ▼ gives the employee the opportunity to decide whether or not the organisation or the position they have been appointed to meets their needs;
- ▼ provides employees with an opportunity to clarify expectations of the job and to identify and address any deficiencies; and,
- ▼ encourages fair and consistent treatment of all employees.

## WHAT DOES PROBATION INVOLVE?

**Probation is a process whereby:**

- ▼ New staff are provided the probation policy and probation procedure during the induction process.
- ▼ An initial probation meeting is held between the supervisor and new employee to agree on and document expectations.
- ▼ Ongoing supervision and regular feedback is provided against the agreed expectations.
- ▼ A final probation discussion is held and a decision is made by the supervisor on the suitability (or otherwise) of the new employee.
- ▼ The new employee is offered ongoing appointment or action is taken to address any deficiencies.
- ▼ If deficiencies are not resolved formal appointment of the employee may not occur. During this stage the employee may be subject to an additional probationary period on top of the standard period to provide them with an opportunity to improve their performance.

Throughout this supplementary guide employees are referred to as probationary employees to reflect they are engaged in the probation process.

## PROBATION PROCESS MAP



## PRINCIPLES OF PROBATION

- ▼ Probation is the initial period of employment when the suitability of a probationary employee is determined. It provides an opportunity for the supervisor to determine whether the probationary employee meets the standards required for confirmation of appointment.
- ▼ The probationary employee's letter of offer will specify the period of the probation.
- ▼ Probation entails setting and clarifying work performance objectives and indicators for probationary employees.
- ▼ During a probationary period the organisation offers appropriate support, development opportunities and feedback to assist the probationary employee.
- ▼ Employment will be deemed to be confirmed, and the probation period concluded, where a probationary employee is appointed as an ongoing employee.

## TOP TIPS FOR PROBATION

### Top tips for the supervisor include:

- ▼ Conduct regular meetings
- ▼ Be prepared
- ▼ Provide feedback
- ▼ Explore problems
- ▼ Set the right tone
- ▼ Encourage an open dialogue
- ▼ Agree on an action plan
- ▼ Make a record and store this record confidentially<sup>3</sup>

### Top tips for the probationary employee include:

- ▼ Know about the organisation in detail
- ▼ Read relevant policies and procedures
- ▼ Know your duties/tasks
- ▼ Understand the expected standards of performance
- ▼ Be organised including managing tasks
- ▼ Work collegiately with other staff members
- ▼ Clarify any queries in a timely manner
- ▼ Be active and energetic
- ▼ Ask for feedback, don't just wait for it to be provided
- ▼ Make sure you have the resources to do the job
- ▼ Be professional, punctual and accountable
- ▼ Show the organisation what you can do, including your skills, knowledge and experience<sup>4</sup>

## LINK WITH OTHER GUIDES

This Supplementary Guide to Probation is part of a series of guides aimed to enhance staff onboarding and ongoing support. The concept of probation is first introduced in the Guide to Onboarding. This guide should be read in conjunction with the Guide to Supervision and the Supplementary Guide to Performance Appraisal.



# PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Supervisors need to ensure that the organisation's policy and procedure for probation are complied with. Organisations need to develop and implement probationary processes that meet the needs of the organisation including timeframes and forms. The information and tools in this guide have been provided as an example of how the probationary process may be designed and implemented. The probationary process should be tailored to meet your organisation's needs.

## FEEDBACK

Feedback lies at the core of an effective probationary process and should be provided on a regular and ongoing basis to improve performance. Feedback should be timely advice relating to performance with the aim of assisting an individual to achieve their goals and improve performance in general. Feedback is crucial to shaping performance and behaviour of staff towards achieving organisational objectives. If regular feedback is given, then the probationary process is easier and more effective.

### Effective ongoing feedback includes:

- ▼ Setting goals – that are appropriate, measurable, achievable and that motivate and drive performance.
- ▼ Monitoring performance – keeping track of probationary employee performance, including achievements and non-achievements.
- ▼ Listening and understanding – making an effort to understand any barriers to performance.
- ▼ Constructive feedback – reviewing past and present behaviours and ensuring feedback is not just focused on one recent event prior to the probation discussion but provides a balanced view over time.

An initial probation meeting between a supervisor and probationary employee will normally occur within one week of the probationary employee commencing in their role. During the initial probation meeting the supervisor will set appropriate performance objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs) for the employee to achieve during the probation period. The KPIs should be recorded and may relate to:

- ▼ the specific requirements of the position;
- ▼ expectations for conduct and suitability to the workplace; and,
- ▼ participation and completion of mandatory training requirements for all staff.

A Probation Performance Plan Template is provided at [Appendix A](#).

Supervisors should provide ongoing monitoring, review and feedback to the probationary employee against the agreed Probation Performance Plan. This is critical to ensuring the supervisor and probationary employee are both clear on what is to be achieved and how the probationary employee is progressing. Supervisors need to ensure that they schedule regular meetings with their probationary employee to support the feedback process. Appropriate documentation needs to be provided at these probation meetings and there must be the opportunity for feedback from both the supervisor and the employee. As soon as is reasonably

practicable following the initial probation meeting and after meetings held throughout the probationary period, the supervisor should provide the probationary employee with written confirmation of the outcomes of these meetings. This document should be treated as highly confidential and kept in a secure location with limited access.

Where the supervisor assesses that the probationary employee's performance, conduct and suitability are acceptable, the supervisor will advise the probationary employee that the probation period is continuing. At the final probation meeting the supervisor should advise the probationary employee that their probation has been completed and (depending on the organisation) a written recommendation is submitted to your organisation's delegate for appointing the new probationary employee on an ongoing basis. Once approved the employee is then formally appointed to their role.

This process is an opportunity for both your organisation and the probationary employee to see if the role is the right fit. A key risk during the probationary process is that any issues with performance of the probationary employee are not identified in a timely manner and are then not addressed.

Where the supervisor is concerned about the performance or conduct of the probationary employee, the supervisor should meet with them as soon as is reasonably practicable to discuss and record these concerns.

The supervisor should advise the probationary employee:

- ▼ that their KPIs have not been met and outline the associated issues;
- ▼ of the expectations for improving performance in accordance with their KPIs;
- ▼ that their performance, conduct and suitability will be closely monitored during the remainder of the probationary period;
- ▼ outline the timeframe for the probationary period; and,
- ▼ if the KPIs are not met the probationary employee's employment may be terminated.

## PROBATION MEETINGS

Probation is a formal process that includes considered and ongoing supervision and feedback and may be managed through the following key meetings:

- ▼ Initial probation meeting
- ▼ Ongoing feedback during supervision meetings
- ▼ Mid-point probation meeting
- ▼ Final probation meeting

### 1. INITIAL PROBATION MEETING

The initial probation meeting is crucial to ensuring the supervisor and the probationary employee are both clear and agreed on what the probationary employee must do to meet the performance expectations of the organisation during the probationary period.

Supervisors and probationary employees each have their own responsibilities in the initial probation meeting. These responsibilities are detailed below.

### **Supervisor responsibilities include:**

- ▼ Set a date – allow one to two hours for discussion and secure a confidential location.
- ▼ Provide notice – send invitation to probationary employee with a minimum of two days' notice.
- ▼ Gather information – including the probationary employee's position description, letter of offer, organisational strategies and planning documents, and team work plans.
- ▼ Prepare – set aside time to prepare for the discussion.

### **Probationary employee responsibilities include:**

- ▼ Verify details – confirm the date/location and availability to attend.
- ▼ Gather information – including position description, letter of offer, expectations, and development actions.
- ▼ Prepare – set aside time to prepare for the discussion.

Probationary employees need to have a clear understanding of what their performance goals and expectations are and why they are important. This will ensure that there are no surprises during the probationary process and will aid in ensuring a successful appointment process.

A Position Description Template is provided at [Appendix B](#). A Letter of Offer template is provided in the Guide to Onboarding.

### **The expectations set in this stage of the probationary process should:**

- ▼ address probationary employee's main accountabilities or tasks which fall under the organisation's strategy and business plan and are documented in the position description;
- ▼ reflect the areas for improvement that have been identified;
- ▼ focus on a few critical expectations to avoid overwhelming the probationary employee; and,
- ▼ be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART).

The initial probation meeting will result in the development of a document that provides an accurate record of agreed deliverables and performance expectations for the probationary period. This provides an ongoing tool for managing probation and providing feedback.

A template for the Probation Performance Plan is provided at [Appendix C](#).

## **2. ONGOING FEEDBACK**

Ongoing feedback is provided through supervision discussions throughout the probationary period. These discussions are relatively informal and focus on a conversation around how the probationary employee is progressing against the objectives set out and agreed at their initial probation meeting.

It is the responsibility of the supervisor and the probationary employee to prepare for these discussions and it is the supervisor's responsibility to record any key points that need to be documented as part of the probationary process.

### 3. MID-POINT PROBATION MEETING

A mid-point probation meeting is conducted to ensure probationary employees have a clear understanding of their performance to date and to reaffirm expectations of performance during the probation period. The mid-point probation discussion is identical to the final probation discussion and provides a formal and documented discussion to:

- ▼ confirm the probation performance plan deliverables and expectations;
- ▼ provide an assessment of successes in achieving the plan and in meeting performance expectations; and,
- ▼ identify any further areas for development or areas requiring attention to ensure satisfactory completion of the probationary process.

### 4. FINAL PROBATION MEETING

The final probation meeting is the most formal part of the probationary process and is conducted at the end of the probationary period to discuss the performance of the probationary employee over the entire period.

**In undertaking the mid-point and final probation meetings the following needs to occur:**

#### Preparation

The main objective of the preparation stage is to identify and consider key points for discussion relevant to the probationary employee's work performance. The supervisor collates relevant feedback on the probationary employee and this may include discussion with others in the organisation. The outcome of this preparation should be that both the supervisor and probationary employee are ready to meet and discuss their key points supported by evidence.

It is crucial that the supervisor and probationary employee share the same understanding of how performance-related behaviours are valued.

#### The Discussion

The discussion is an important part of the probationary process as it provides an opportunity to review the probationary employee's performance and to identify opportunities for improvement. A formal discussion is held at the mid-point and end of the probationary period.

The discussion should result in a mutual understanding between the supervisor and probationary employee regarding the probationary employee's performance and should be documented confidentially on the organisation's agreed template/system. The documentation should be signed by the supervisor and the probationary employee.

At the conclusion of the mid-point and final probation meetings the supervisor should recap and ask the probationary employee the following questions:

- ▼ Is there anything more we should discuss regarding your work performance?
- ▼ Is there anyone else that I should be talking with to improve my understanding of your performance at work?
- ▼ Is there anything more we should discuss regarding my leadership?

The Fair Work Ombudsman provides a range of tools and templates to help organisations manage an employee's probationary period. These can be downloaded from the [Fair Work Website](#) and include templates for both successful and unsuccessful probation letters.

## POLICY

Your organisation should have a probation policy that applies to all employees. The policy should be a high-level statement of intent about your organisation's probationary process. Organisational policies are usually endorsed by the Board of Directors or similar, and rarely change over time.

When creating your probation policy, it is important to consider all of the factors in your working environment that need to be reflected in your policy. This includes references to any legislative, insurance, quality standards, or other safeguarding mechanisms that apply to your organisation. There may also be specific provisions in your funding agreements that affect your policy, and this should be reflected in the content.

A Policy Template is provided at [Appendix C](#) as a starting point, but there are likely additional considerations for your organisation based on your risk profile and the programs and services you deliver. This may be one area where you choose to seek further advice, such as legal advice.

As volunteers are not usually subject to the same probation processes as employees, your organisation may choose to differentiate them in your policy. When differentiating the probation policy for volunteers it is important to be mindful of the roles your volunteers undertake and the level of responsibility they are assuming in their role. Your organisation should still have a policy on reviewing volunteer engagements after a defined period of time, but could refer to this as an engagement review, rather than a probationary review.

## PROCEDURE

Your organisation should have a probation procedure that sits alongside your policy. The procedure should detail how your organisation will approach probation, and what mechanisms you will put in place to support this function of employment. The probation requirements in your organisation will likely be dictated by the type of work you are undertaking and the services you are delivering. It is important to remember that all employees, irrespective of their role, should be subject to probation as it is a key process to ensure the effectiveness of the recruitment and selection process.

A Procedure Template is provided at [Appendix D](#).

As with your probation policy, you may need to adapt your probation procedure for volunteers. This can be as simple as outlining the process you have for reviewing volunteer engagements after a set period of time. The complexity of this procedure will be dictated by the types of volunteer roles you have in your organisation and may differ between roles.

## EVALUATION

Evaluating your probationary process is an important part of your organisation's feedback strategy. Your evaluation should consider the viewpoints of supervisors and probationary employees in your organisation. A subjective survey conducted at the mid-point and end of the probationary period will enable you to understand if your process is effective, and if there are areas for improvement. As an organisation you may also seek to evaluate the effect that the probationary process has on employee retention, engagement, and management. Subjective surveys will contribute to this, but a more thorough evaluation will be required to determine cause and effect.

A list of Sample Probation Feedback Questions can be found at [Appendix E](#).

## CONCLUSION

Probation is a critical but often neglected function of the staff appointment process. The probationary process is often more informal than formal, and issues with performance may not be identified and addressed in a timely manner, or before the ongoing appointment of an employee. This can result in significant long-term difficulties for the organisation. Investing in a sound probation policy and accompanying procedures will have tangible benefits for your organisation including more engaged employees and better outcomes for all stakeholders.

# APPENDIX A – PROBATION PERFORMANCE PLAN TEMPLATE

**Name:**

**Review Date:**

**Last Review:**

---

**The purpose of the Probation Performance Plan Template is to:**

- ▼ Guide the performance planning and development of all probationary employees
- ▼ Establish a holistic probation process
- ▼ Ensure regularity of supervision between probationary employee and supervisor
- ▼ Increase staff engagement, job satisfaction and performance
- ▼ Improve feedback loops
- ▼ Resolve issues in a timely manner
- ▼ Check in to see how probationary employee is tracking against their job expectations

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**Before attending a probation discussion you should:**

- ▼ Be prepared
- ▼ Be ready to discuss the key areas of job performance
- ▼ Be open to giving and receiving feedback
- ▼ Consider what goals you should be working on, and those you would like to start working on (both personal and professional)
- ▼ Openly discuss any areas for improvement
- ▼ Discuss and set an action plan going forward

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**You are encouraged to:**

- ▼ Monitor and reflect critically on your own performance
  - ▼ Follow up with your supervisor as required
  - ▼ Action feedback and goals
-

**Key objectives for the probationary period for all positions:**

Not rated

Expectations  
not metMeets  
expectationsExceeds  
expectations**1** Task and activity  
priorities**2** Critical thinking  
and problem  
solving**3** Communication**4** Ethical behaviour,  
values and  
diversity**5** Innovation,  
initiative and  
creativity**6** Team work and  
interpersonal  
skills**7** Customer service**8** Change and  
adaptability**9** Self-management



Please summarise below any comments on overall probationary performance including any positive outcomes, as well as areas for growth/improvement. You can also comment on the effectiveness of your working relationship and ideas for future improvement. It is essential that you and your supervisor have reached consensus in this area before signing off.

**Probationary staff member comments:**

**Supervisor comments:**

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the  3 month  6 month *(tick whichever is appropriate)*

- Probation assessment is acceptable, and employment continues
- Probation assessment is not yet acceptable and needs improvement
- Probation assessment is unacceptable, and termination of employment is recommended

In signing this probation form, I confirm that the probation process has been undertaken in a fair and reasonable manner, and all items documented are accurately represented by both probationary employee and supervisor. All performance improvement areas have been agreed on and both probationary employee and supervisor commit to undertaking and achieving this improvement.

**Probationary employee signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDIX B – POSITION DESCRIPTION TEMPLATE

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**Position Title**

---

**Position Type**

---

**Responsible to**

---

**Location**

---

**Hours and duration**

---

**DESCRIPTION OF ROLE/PURPOSE OF PROJECT OR ASSIGNMENT**

**DUTIES**

**OUTCOMES/GOALS**

**TRAINING AND SUPPORT PLAN**

**BENEFITS**

**SELECTION CRITERIA**

**COMPETENCIES**

# APPENDIX C – EMPLOYEE PROBATION POLICY TEMPLATE

**Policy Title** Employee Probation Policy

**Policy Owner**

**Policy Approver**

**Related Policies**

**Related Procedures**

**Storage Location**

**Effective Date**

**Review Date**

## PURPOSE

The Employee Probation Policy governs the probation process for all employees at

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees.

## DEFINITIONS

**Probation:** a process which allows to assess the suitability of an employee for the role they have been offered.

## POLICY STATEMENT

is committed to delivering on organisational objectives through an empowered, skilled and high performing workforce. To ensure this all employees will be involved in a robust probationary process that meets good practice guidelines.

recognises that probation plays an integral role in ensuring an effective recruitment and selection process.

The content of probation meetings will remain confidential between the supervisor and probationary employee except for agreed actions and goals, or where the disclosure of the information is consented to or required by law.

## PROCEDURE OVERVIEW

The policy is accompanied by the Employee Probation Procedure that provides detailed information on the process of probation at . The Employee Probation Procedure details the persons responsible for probation.

## REVISION HISTORY

Version	Change	Author	Date of Change

# APPENDIX D – EMPLOYEE PROBATION PROCEDURE TEMPLATE

**Procedure Title** Employee Probation Procedure

**Procedure Owner**

**Procedure Approver**

**Related Policies**

**Related Procedures**

**Storage Location**

**Effective Date**

**Review Date**

## PURPOSE

The Employee Probation Procedure details the probation process for all employees. The procedure also details the roles and responsibilities associated with probation.

## SCOPE

This procedure applies to all employees.

## DEFINITIONS

**Probation:** a process which allows \_\_\_\_\_ to assess the suitability of an employee for the role they have been offered.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

The \_\_\_\_\_ has responsibility for ensuring all employees are aware of the organisation's probation procedure and their responsibilities under the procedure.

The \_\_\_\_\_ will delegate different parts of the probation process to members of the \_\_\_\_\_ team who will be responsible for probation. Anyone who has been delegated responsibility by the \_\_\_\_\_ to conduct an aspect of probation must comply with the Employee Probation Policy and this procedure.

Both supervisors and probationary employees have a responsibility to participate in the probationary process and recognise it as an important part of their accountability to the organisation.

\_\_\_\_\_ values high performance in the workplace. Probation plays a critical role in ensuring clear expectations of performance and identifying areas for improvement.

\_\_\_\_\_ prides itself on being a workplace of choice and recognises probation as a powerful means of ensuring employees feel supported in the workplace and appropriately skilled employees are appointed to the right roles.

## PROCESS

The probationary process at

includes the following steps:

- ▼ Provision of the policy and procedure for probation to new employees during the induction process.
- ▼ Initial probation meeting is held between the supervisor and probationary employee to agree on and document expectations.
- ▼ Ongoing supervision and regular feedback is provided against the agreed expectations.
- ▼ Decision by the supervisor on the suitability (or otherwise) of the probationary employee.
- ▼ Appointment of the probationary employee or action taken to address any deficiencies.
- ▼ If deficiencies not resolved formal appointment of the employee may not occur.

There are three formal occasions for discussing and reviewing probation performance and these are supported by regular and ongoing supervision and feedback.

1. Initial probation meeting – this involves establishing and documenting agreed key goals (key performance indicators) for probationary employees to achieve during probation.
2. Mid-point probation meeting – to ensure probationary employee has a clear understanding of their performance relative to KPIs and any areas for development.
3. Final probation meeting – a thorough review is conducted at the end of the probationary period to appraise the performance of the probationary employee over the probationary period. This final probation meeting is a precursor to successful ongoing employment.

Per the Employee Probation Policy, the content of probation meetings will remain confidential between the supervisor and probationary employee except for agreed actions and goals, or where the disclosure of the information is consented to or required by law.

# APPENDIX E – SAMPLE PROBATION FEEDBACK QUESTIONS<sup>5</sup>

## SUPERVISOR EVALUATION OF PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEE

Please respond to the following statements using the rating scale.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I felt accepted and respected by my probationary employee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My probationary employee willingly participated in the probationary process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My probationary employee was open to feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My probationary employee actioned feedback given during probation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My probationary employee was prepared for our meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt well equipped to provide probationary feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I was supported by my organisation during the probationary process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt like probation enhanced the performance and wellbeing of my probationary employee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall, I think I provided helpful and valuable probation performance feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you have any further feedback about the probationary process or suggestions for improvement?

## PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEE EVALUATION OF SUPERVISOR

Please respond to the following statements using the rating scale.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
My supervisor made me feel accepted and respected	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My supervisor created a safe and trustworthy environment for the probationary process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My supervisor provided me with useful and specific areas for improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My supervisor adequately emphasised my strengths and capabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My supervisor was open to receiving feedback from me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My supervisor was prepared for our meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I recognise the benefits of the probationary process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feedback received during probation made me better at my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall, I found probation to be helpful and valuable <sup>5</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you have any further feedback about the probationary process or suggestions for improvement?



## ENDNOTES

- 1 Fair Work Ombudsman - <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/employee-entitlements/types-of-employees/probation>
- 2 <https://roubler.com/au/probation-workplace-work/>
- 3 Huberman, B (2016) Probation meetings: eight tips for line managers available online at <https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/probation-meetings-eight-tips-line-managers/>
- 4 Adapted from Reddy, K (2019) 17 Awesome Tips for Passing Your Probation Period available online at <https://content.wisestep.com/awesome-tips-passing-probation-period/>
- 5 Questions adapted from Syracuse University (2019) Student Evaluation of Supervision available online at [http://soe.syr.edu/academic/counseling\\_and\\_human\\_services/modules/Preparing\\_for\\_Supervision/student\\_evaluation\\_of\\_supervision.aspx](http://soe.syr.edu/academic/counseling_and_human_services/modules/Preparing_for_Supervision/student_evaluation_of_supervision.aspx)