

Fact Sheet No. 1 – Information for Employees

What is a probation period?

The probation period is the initial period of employment during which your supervisor has an opportunity to induct you to Defence and to assess your performance and conduct in the workplace. During the probation period closer supervision, monitoring and regular feedback is provided to support you in achieving the required performance and conduct standards. Where action to address identified weaknesses does not result in improved performance or conduct is assessed as not complying with the APS Values or Code of Conduct your employment may be terminated.

How long is probation?

The standard period of probation for ongoing APS employees in Defence is six months. Some individuals for example those engaged to traineeships, cadetships or graduate schemes will be on probation for the duration of their program. Longer periods of probation may also be imposed where a delegate decides it is reasonable given the nature and circumstances of the specific employment. You will have been notified of the maximum length of your probation period prior to your engagement to Defence. Satisfactory completion of your probationary period is a condition of engagement. The period of probation cannot be extended by Defence past the period that was notified to you in advance.

Your Responsibilities as an APS Employee

- Under the *Public Service Act 1999* all APS employees must adhere to the APS Values and comply with the APS Code of Conduct. More information: DWRM Chapter 11 – Values and Conduct
- Defence employees also have an obligation to display behaviours that support the Defence Values encompassed in the words: *Professionalism, Loyalty, Integrity, Courage, Innovation, Teamwork*. More information: DWRM Chapter 11; [Leadership, Values and Culture Engagement website](#).
- The *Defence Collective Agreement (DeCA) 2006-2009* at paragraph A4 articulates the mutual responsibilities of Defence APS employees and their supervisors. Adherence to the behaviours set out at A4 of the DeCA 2006-2009 will promote teamwork and innovation and support the delivery of better results to Government. More information: DWRM Chapter 11.

Key Elements of Probation

Your supervisor has responsibility for managing probation by overseeing and reporting on your performance and conduct. Key elements of the probation process are:

- **Induction** – This will assist you to become familiar with the goals and values of the APS and Defence as well as being an introduction to the levels of performance and conduct required. Your induction will include discussion of the probation period including, timeframe, monitoring and feedback, training, formal reporting criteria and standards that will be used to determine suitability for continued employment and consequences of you not meeting the standard.
- **Performance agreement** – As soon as practicable after you commence (normally within the first week) you and your supervisor will have a performance exchange to develop and put in place a performance agreement. This will provide an opportunity for you to clarify expected standards of work, identify training needs and agree priorities. Under the DeCA 2006-2009 you are required to participate in the Performance Feedback and Development Scheme (PFADS). Probationary

employees are not eligible for performance progression or a lump sum payment under PFADS.

- **Monitoring and providing feedback** – Feedback with your supervisor may be formal or informal. You should self assess and seek feedback from your supervisor.
- **Timely management of performance and conduct** – Issues of concern should be discussed as soon as they arise. You should not wait until a pre-arranged meeting with your supervisor to seek clarification of required performance standards. Under the 'mutual responsibilities' you are obliged to do your job to the best of your ability. You must also have the courage to accept valid criticism and recognise opportunities for further development. If at any point it is clear that your performance or conduct is not up to the standard expected and remedial action has proven ineffective, your supervisor may recommend to the delegate that your engagement be terminated.
- **Reporting** – Your supervisor in consultation with you must complete a minimum of two formal reports no later than week 10 and week 22. You will receive a copy of each report. The report forms the basis of a recommendation to the delegate on whether employment should continue or be terminated prior to the end of the probation period. Where termination is recommended employees are provided with opportunity to respond prior to the delegate's final decision. Employment can be terminated at any stage of the probation period where that course of action is determined by the delegate.