

PROBATION

Fact Sheet No. 1 – Information for Employees

What is probation?

Probation 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 close supervision, monitoring of your performance and behaviour 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, and you are 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 traineeship, cadetship or graduate scheme. 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 length of your probation period prior to your engagement to Defence. Satisfactory completion of your probationary period is a condition of engagement. In Defence probation cannot be extended past the period that was notified to you in your letter of offer.

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](#).
- 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: [Employment Principles and Conditions webpage](#).
- The [Defence workplace Agreement](#) at A3 articulates the Mutual Responsibilities of Defence APS employees and their supervisors. Adherence to the behaviours set out at A3 of the Agreement will promote teamwork and innovation, and support the delivery of better results to Government.

Key elements of probation

Your supervisor has responsibility for managing your 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 providing an introduction to the levels of performance and conduct required. Your induction will include discussion about the probation period including, timeframe, monitoring and feedback, training, formal reporting criteria and standards that will be used to determine suitability for continued employment. Any consequences of not meeting the standard will also be discussed.
- **Monitoring your performance** – 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 performance exchange provides an opportunity for you to discuss your work requirements including timeframes and priorities, and clarify expected standards of work. It also facilitates discussion around learning needs, and work arrangements such as patterns of attendance, flextime and flexible work options. You are to engage in regular formal or informal feedback with your supervisor and should self assess and seek feedback from your supervisor.

Participation in Defence's performance management scheme – the Performance Feedback Assessment and Development Scheme (PFADS) – is a requirement under the Agreement. **Probationary employees are not eligible to be considered for performance progression or a lump sum payment under PFADS.**

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- **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 constructive 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 of your probationary period. You will receive a copy of each report and will have the opportunity to provide comments on both reports. The report forms the basis of a recommendation to the delegate, prior to the end of the probation period, on whether your employment with Defence is to continue or be terminated. Where termination is recommended, you will be provided with opportunity to respond prior to the delegate's decision. The delegate may terminate your employment at any stage during the probation period.

Reference:

- [The Agreement Part D – Performance](#)