

Probation

Human Resources Policy

Effective Date: August 2009

1 PURPOSE

To outline employment probation in Queensland Health.

2 APPLICATION

This policy applies to all appointments in Queensland Health, except:

- casual employees
- temporary employees
- employees engaged on contract
- employees transferred at level or promoted
- permanent public service officers recruited from other Queensland government agencies.

3 GUIDELINES

Guidelines may be developed to facilitate implementation of this policy. The guidelines must be consistent with this policy.

4 DELEGATION

The 'delegate' is as listed in the Queensland Health Human Resource Delegations Manual as amended from time to time.

5 REFERENCES

- *Public Service Act 2008*
- *Industrial Relations Act 1999*
- *Health Services Act 1991*
- District Health Services Employees' Award – State 2003
- Queensland Public Hospitals Award - State 2003
- District Health Services Senior Medical Officers' and Resident Medical Officers' Award – State 2003
- Nurses (Queensland Health) – Section 170MX Award 2003
- Nurses (Queensland Public Health Sector) Award – 2004
- Nurses (Queensland Public Hospitals) Award – 2004
- Visiting Medical Officers Agreement 2005
- Queensland Health Building, Engineering and Maintenance Services Certified Agreement 2001
- Performance Appraisal and Development HR Policy G9
- Medical Officers with Rights of Private Practice and Medical Superintendents with Rights of Private Practice – Terms and Conditions (Administrative Arrangements) HR Policy

6 SUPERSEDES

- IRM 1.0-3 Probation

7 POLICY

7.1 Requirement for and purpose of probation

Employees who are permanently appointed to Queensland Health are to undertake a period of probation appropriate to the appointment unless the appointee is exempt from the requirements of this policy.

The purpose of a probationary period is to provide:

- a period of orientation and training
- an opportunity to assess the employee's aptitude and capacity to perform in the role.

An employee on probation has been appointed although he/she is not yet confirmed in a permanent role.

If an employee's engagement is terminated during the probationary period, the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission lacks jurisdiction to deal with the matter if all of the following circumstances are met:

- If the employee has signed the letter of appointment **prior** to commencing employment.
- If the letter of appointment details a reasonable probationary period having regard to the nature and circumstances of employment.

7.2 Probationary period

Probationary periods are to be no less than the following:

Employment category	Duration of probation
Corporate Office public service employees (<i>Public Service Act 2008</i>)	• Three months
Health service districts (includes the District Health Services Employees' Award – State 2003)	• Three months (administration and operational stream) • Six months professional, technical, dental and health practitioner streams
Health services districts - visiting medical officers (Visiting Medical Officers Agreement 2005)	• Six months
Nurses (various nursing Awards)	• Six months registered nurses • Three months enrolled nurses and assistants in nursing
Building, Engineering and Maintenance Services Certified Agreement 2001	• Three months

Employment category	Duration of probation
District Health Services Senior Medical Officers' (SMO) and Resident Medical Officers' (RMO) Award State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six months (SMO) • Not applicable to RMOs as they are appointed for a 12 month engagement
Medical Officers with Rights of Private Practice (MORPP) and Medical Superintendents with Rights of Private Practice (MSRPP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 months

8 APPLYING THE POLICY

8.1 Written notification of probation

The period of probation is to be stated in the letter of offer of appointment to the employee prior to the employee's commencement. The letter is also to state that the probationary period may be extended (and the time frame of any extension which is to be not more than three months) if the outcomes are not achieved. A verbal statement that a period of probation is to be applied or extended is not sufficient. If challenged in a tribunal, a verbal statement does not validly allow for the extension of the probationary period.

8.2 Performance appraisal and development (PAD)

Expectations of the role are to be outlined to all employees through the performance appraisal and development (PAD) process no later than one month from date of commencement (refer Performance Appraisal and Development HR Policy G9).

This PAD process is to be used to initiate effective communication between the manager and appointee so that any work performance issues are addressed.

If a manager has concerns about the performance of an employee during the probationary period, they are to consult with human resources (HR).

8.3 Confirm Appointment form

Managers are to complete the Confirm Appointment form and return it to their HR unit at the completion of the probationary period (refer to QHEPS for HR forms). The Confirm Appointment form is also completed to extend a period of probation, but only following performance meeting/s.

8.4 Extension of probation

The delegate may extend the period of probation if the employee has not met the expected performance outcomes of their role within the probation period.

Ongoing evaluation is to occur during the probationary period and the manager and employee are to identify if the expected outcomes are not being achieved. If an extension period is warranted, the manager is to notify the employee in writing **before** the end of the probationary period.

The period of the extension is to be a reasonable period based on the nature of the role and the circumstances that warrant the extension of probation. Probation is to be extended only once. The extension is not to be more than three months in duration.

9 DEFINITIONS

Appointment letter	A letter offering employment to a prospective employee. In the case of permanent positions, the letter is to outline the terms of probation applying to the role.
Confirmation of appointment	The process used to end a probation period and appoint an employee permanently to the workforce.
Extension of probation	A period of up to three months that an existing probation period may be extended in order to allow an employee to meet the requirements of the role.
Merit	The extent to which an individual has abilities, aptitude, skills, qualifications, knowledge, experience and personal qualities relevant to carry out the role in question.
Probation	A set period of time during which the employer assesses the suitability of the employee.

10 HISTORY

August 2009	Amended to include MORPPs and MSRPPs in section 7.2
March 2009	Amended to reference health practitioner stream in section 7.2.
July 2008	Amended to reflect <i>Public Service Act 2008</i> .
April 2008	Developed as a result of the HR Policy Framework consolidation project as an introduction document.