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## Professional Staff Probationary Review Policy

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**Department Policy Number**

050 005

**Effective Date**

Revised November 1994

Revised February 2002

Revised May 2006

**Purpose**

This policy outlines the probationary review process for AUFA professional staff members.

**Definitions**

<b>Agreement</b>	Terms and Conditions of Agreement between The Governors of Athabasca University (the Board) and Athabasca University Faculty Association (AUFA).
<b>Section(s)</b>	Section(s) referenced from the Agreement.
<b>Committee</b>	Professional Probationary Review Committee.
<b>Confidential Personal File</b>	The probationary staff member's permanent confidential file maintained in Human Resources.
<b>Temporary Review File</b>	A temporary file containing documents relating to the probationary review, maintained during the review and destroyed after the period of appeal.
<b>Executive Officer</b>	President, Vice President Academic, Associate Vice President Research, Vice President Advancement or Executive Director External Relations, Vice President Finance and Administration, Chief Information Officer, Executive Director Centre for Innovative Management.



## **Policy**

### 1.0 General

The following procedures are based on key processes contained in Section 4.2 of the Agreement. Where these procedures are inconsistent with the Agreement, the latter shall prevail. The Agreement provides for the following:

- 1.1 All regular professional appointments are subject to a probationary period which is specified in the letter of offer and extends from the date of employment (Section 4.1.2 and 4.1.3).
- 1.2 In accordance with Section 4.2.5, a Committee having a composition similar to that of the search committee recommending initial appointment shall review the staff member's appointment and performance and make a recommendation to the appropriate Executive Officer in accordance with the following:

- a) Initial Probationary Period

Between six (6) and four (4) months before the end of the staff member's probationary period (Section 4.2.5). The staff member shall be advised no later than three (3) months prior to the end of the term of the probationary period (Section 4.2.6).

- b) Extended Probation

No later than six (6) months prior to the end of the term of an extended probationary period. The staff member shall be advised no later than five (5) months prior to the end of the extended term or probation (Section 4.2.7).

### 2.0 Criteria and Purpose

- 2.1 The essential criteria for probationary reviews are outlined in Section 4.8 and must be weighted according to the duties assigned. Since the review is based directly on job performance, it is the fundamental responsibility of the Committee to marshal and consider evidence of performance for the entire probationary period, or for the period of extended probation, if appropriate.
- 2.2 probationary reviews are of utmost importance to the University since they affect the fundamental health of the institution. Probationary reviews consider the competence of the staff member to perform all tasks assigned based on the work completed during the probation period.

### 3.0 Procedures and Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Human Resources Officer



- a) shall advise the appropriate executive officer, the department head, supervisor, and the staff member that a probationary review is due approximately six months in advance;
- b) shall advise the appropriate executive officer of the composition of the original search committee and shall discuss any concerns regarding Committee structure with the appropriate executive officer;
- c) shall ensure a Temporary Personal File containing relevant documentation is established and is available to the Committee including:
  - i. a copy of the staff member's Confidential Personal File
  - ii. a copy of the original job advertisement
  - iii. the staff member's current job description
  - iv. the staff member's current curriculum vitae
  - v. the staff member's written submission, if any
  - vi. an up-to-date performance assessment (within 9 months)
- d) shall set up or assist the chair to set up the Committee meetings;
- e) shall be the collecting point for all information supplied to the Committee;
- f) shall be a non-voting member of the Committee;
- g) shall prepare the letters to referees and send them out according to the schedule set by the Committee;
- h) shall make available to internal referees, for viewing in Human Resources (AU Central and ELC or electronic), the original job advertisement, the staff member's current job description and curriculum vitae, and any written submission the probationary staff member may have made. And, shall make available to external referees Section 4.8 of the Agreement and the staff member's current curriculum vitae and job description. All other documentation is considered confidential;
- i) shall provide the staff member with a list of documents reviewed and persons solicited;
- j) shall ensure that the Committee's summary report, the appropriate executive officer's decision and in the event of an extension, the development plan are placed on the staff member's Confidential Personal File at the completion of the review;



- k) shall ensure the contents of the Temporary Review File are destroyed after the period of appeal.

### 3.2 The Probationary Staff Member

- a) may suggest, via the Human Resources Officer, the names of colleagues to be consulted on his/her behalf;
- b) shall submit an up-to-date curriculum vitae and shall verify that the job description provided is current;
- c) may make a written submission on his/her behalf;
- d) shall submit all documentation to the Human Resources Officer;

### 3.3 The Committee

- a) shall hold an initial meeting to:
  - i) review the contents of the staff member's Temporary Review File;
  - ii) solicit in confidence the written comments of at least five (5) staff members who are familiar with, or affected by the work of the probationary staff member, at least three (3) of whom should be from outside the department, and may solicit in confidence the written comments of other staff members or individuals external to the University who are familiar with or affected by the work of the probationary staff member. Committee members may also submit their individual written comments provided such comments are submitted prior to the internal and external solicitation process.

Subordinate support staff may request to make verbal comments to the committee in lieu of a written submission.

- b) shall give all referees requested to make comment a minimum of one (1) week's notice to prepare and submit such comments;
- c) shall hold a second meeting to review in confidence all written comments received and any additional information added to the Temporary Review File;
- d) may interview any referee to clarify written comments submitted;
- e) When the Committee interviews or receives verbal comments from a referee, the referee's comments shall be recorded in detail and signed by all members of the Committee and the referee attesting to the accuracy of the record;
- f) may seek further comments from additional referees if it is, in the Committee's judgment, appropriate to do so;



- g) shall return any unsigned submissions (email responses are acceptable);
- h) may choose to meet with the probationary staff member to gain further information or clarification. May present in writing, to the probationary staff member any areas significant enough to affect the judgment of the Committee allowing at least one (1) week for the staff member to respond in writing or in person as he/she wishes;
- i) shall present its findings to the appropriate executive officer in the form of a written summary report with a copy to the supervisor/department head. This summary report must include a recommendation with respect to the probationary period in accordance with Section 4.2.5 of the Agreement. If the recommendation is for extension of probation, the summary report shall specify the period of extension (maximum two years), the areas in which improvement is required and possible remedial actions needed;
- j) each individual Committee member shall ensure confidentiality is maintained, including committee discussions and recommendations.

#### 3.4 The Appropriate Executive Officer

- a) shall strike the Committee ensuring it resembles the original search committee with a Chair and a Human Resources Officer;
- b) shall review the findings of the Committee, notify the staff member in writing of the nature of his/her decision (per Section 4.2.5) and provide a copy of the Committee's summary report to the staff member;
- c) if the decision is for extension of probation, the appropriate executive officer will ensure the supervisor or department head prepare a development plan and discuss it with the staff member;
- d) shall ensure a copy of the Committee's summary report, his/her decision and, in case of extension, a copy of the development plan, are forwarded to Human Resources.

#### 4.0 Access to Temporary Review File

- 4.1 All Committee members, Human Resources and the appropriate executive officer have access to the staff member's Temporary Review File.
- 4.2 The appellant and respondent and their respective representatives have access to the Temporary Review File in the event of an appeal.

#### 5.0 Appeal

- 5.1 A staff member has the right to appeal any recommendation regarding extension or termination of his/her probation period (Section 9.5.1 a).



5.2 The staff member shall provide the President with written notification within ten (10) working days of receipt of the decision.

**Regulation**

N/A

**Procedure**

N/A

**Approved By**

Executive Group, May 2002

**Amended Date/Motion No.**

Executive Group, May 19, 2006

**Related References, Policies and Procedures**

[080 009 - Procedural Guidelines For Appeals With Respect to Probation, Salaries and Academic Promotion](#)

**Applicable Legislation/Regulation**

[AUFA/The Governors of Athabasca University \(the Board\) Terms and Conditions Agreement](#)  
[Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)

**Responsible Position/Department**

This policy is maintained and administered by Human Resources. For further information, please contact the Human Resources Advisor. Contact information is available on the Human Resources web-site at: <http://intra.athabascau.ca/hr/dept.htm>

**Keywords**