

SESLHD PROCEDURE COVER SHEET



Health
South Eastern Sydney
Local Health District

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TYPE OF DOCUMENT	Procedure
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LEVEL OF EVIDENCE	National Safety and Quality Health Service Standard 1 NSW Ministry of Health Policy Directive - PD2017_040 Recruitment and Selection of Staff to the NSW Health Service
REVIEW DATE	November 2025
FORMER REFERENCE(S)	N/A
EXECUTIVE SPONSOR or EXECUTIVE CLINICAL SPONSOR	Director People and Culture caroline.skipper@health.nsw.gov.au
AUTHOR	Human Resources Advisory Services
POSITION RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DOCUMENT	Director People and Culture caroline.skipper@health.nsw.gov.au
KEY TERMS	Probation, probationary period
SUMMARY	The procedure contains detailed information about the process to be followed by managers and employee during an employee's probationary period. It also includes practical tools and resources to assist in the process for conducting and finalising probationary periods.

COMPLIANCE WITH THIS DOCUMENT IS MANDATORY

**This Procedure is intellectual property of South Eastern Sydney Local Health District.
Procedure content cannot be duplicated.**

1. POLICY STATEMENT

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) is committed to providing and maintaining a workplace that reflects the CORE values of Collaboration, Openness, Respect and Empowerment.

The primary objective of the procedure is to assist managers with setting clear performance and behavioural expectations for new employees, as part of their three month probationary review period.

2. BACKGROUND

The purpose of the probationary period is to offer support and guidance to new employees of NSW Health Service, so there is a clear understanding of the requirements of their role along with offering the necessary support to achieve the required standard during the initial period of employment. At the same time, it provides SESLHD with an opportunity to assess the performance and future potential of the employee before deciding whether or not to confirm the appointment.

Who does the procedure apply to?

New employees appointed to SESLHD are required to complete a three month probationary period, with the exception of:

- Casual employees
- Existing NSW Health Service staff regardless of whether their new role is in the same Health organisation or elsewhere in NSW Health.
- Any trainee programs that already contain their own progress assessment processes (including Junior Medical Officers).

For both fixed-term and continuing appointments, a probationary period only applies to the initial period of a person's employment at SESLHD.

At the start of the probation period it is the responsibility of the manager of the department/unit to ensure a probation plan is implemented, although day-to-day responsibility and monitoring can be delegated to a line manager. Where this is in operation, the Department/Unit Head must be kept informed of progress and issues as they arise and have oversight of the probationary period documents.

Probation is linked to the annual Performance Development and Review process (PDR).

The successful applicant must be advised that they will be subject to probation review during and at the end of the probation period.

3 DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this procedure the following definitions apply:

Letter of Offer	A letter offering employment to a prospective employee. In the case of permanent positions (and temporary positions of 13 weeks or longer), the letter is to outline the terms of probation applying to the role.
Confirmation of employment	The process used to end a probation period and appoint an employee permanently to the workforce.
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 period	A set period of time during which the employer assesses the suitability of the employee.

4 RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Employees will:

- Discuss with their manager at an early stage if they require any support of development or are experiencing difficulty in attaining the standard of performance required;
- Familiarise themselves with this procedure and participate fully at all stages of their probation period;
- Work with their manager to establish goals and objectives;
- Work towards achieving expectations;
- Act on feedback as required;
- Provide feedback to their manager in relation to performance matters including:
 - Seeking further clarification of expectations if in doubt of requirements; or
 - Advising their manager of any concerns relating to the achievement of expectations as they arise during the probationary period.

4.2 Line Managers will:

- Set clear performance expectations;
- Monitor performance;
- Provide support when needed;
- Take appropriate action if the new employee does not meet the performance expectations set during the probation period;
- Seek Human Resources advice and/or the advice of a more senior manager if there are any concerns with any new employee’s probation at the earliest opportunity.

4.3 Human Resources Advisors will:

- Communicate the implementation of this procedure, ensuring updates are incorporated in a timely manner;
- Support employees and managers to understand this procedure and provide training as required;

- Advise managers on the fair and consistent implementation of this procedure.

4.4 General Managers / Directors will:

- Review and endorse any decisions in relation to the probation period of an employee.

4.5 Director People and Culture will:

- Ensure that mechanisms are in place for the overall implementation, monitoring and revision of the procedure.

4.6 Chief Executive will:

- Make a final decision in regard to discontinuing the employment of a new employee on the basis of an unsatisfactory probation period.

5 PROCEDURE**5.1 Probation process**

Throughout the probationary period, the Line Manager is responsible for carrying out regular 1:1 meetings with the new employees.

There will be at least four probation period meetings. The meetings will take place as follows:

- Step 1 - Initial meeting (within the first week of commencement)
- Step 2 - First review meeting (after four weeks)
- Step 3 - Second review meeting (after eight weeks)
- Step 4 - Final review meeting (after ten weeks)

The purpose of each meeting is to review the new employee's conduct and work performance over the three-month probationary period so that a decision can be made about the employee's continued employment.

The manager must complete a Probation Report (refer to Appendix 1: Part B) at each meeting.

Although the probation period is for three months, employment can be terminated at any time if:

- Following an appropriate investigation, a new employee is found to have committed an act of misconduct; or
- There is a serious performance/competency issue, for example that could harm and put at risk; patients, service quality, other staff or the probationer.

In such cases, the line manager should contact Human Resources for advice.

Step 1: Initial Meeting (within the first week of commencement)

The line manager and new employee discuss and clarify performance expectations within the first week of commencement of employment. At the initial meeting, the line manager and employee should set and discuss a Probation Plan (Appendix 1: Part A).

The line manager should explain to the new employee:

- The required performance standards against the requirements of the role;
- Conduct and behaviour in line with [NSW Health Code of Conduct](#) and Core Values;
- Absence/attendance and time keeping;
- Additional learning and development opportunities/other support required;
- That satisfactory performance against the set goals and objectives and the position description is to be achieved for the probationary appointment to be confirmed.

Step 2: First review meeting (after four weeks)

The Line Manager will invite the new employee to a review meeting to discuss the employee's progress. The meeting should allow the line manager and employee to review the employee's performance during the first four weeks in the role.

Key areas to focus on include:

- Performance standards against the requirements of the role
- Conduct and behaviour in line with NSW Health Core Values
- Absence/attendance and time keeping
- Additional learning and development opportunities/other support required
- Progress on the completion of local induction, statutory and mandatory training
- Any other issues that may be affecting the employee's standard of work; and performance.

During this meeting the line manager and the employee complete the Probation Report – four weeks (Appendix 1: Part B). The report should contain a summary of the employee's achievement of set performance goals and any areas they may need to focus on during the remainder of the probation period.

Step 3: Second review meeting (after eight weeks)

This meeting should follow the same format as the first review meeting. The manager should complete the Probation Report – 8 weeks (Appendix 1: Part B).

By the end of the second review meeting the manager and employee should have a strong indication if the employee is meeting the performance expectations of the role and the likelihood of continuation of the employment.

If there are serious concerns about the employee's performance the line manager should contact Human Resources Advisory Services for advice as soon as possible.

Step 4: Final review meeting (after ten weeks)

During this meeting any performance and development goals that were set at the first review meeting will be evaluated and discussed together with the overall performance of the employee. An assessment should be made as to whether the employee has met the required performance expectations.

This meeting will have one of two outcomes:

Outcome One – Confirmation of employment

The employee should be told that they have now successfully completed their probationary period and be given a copy of the completed Probation Plan and Reports and issued with the Successful completion of three month probation period letter (Refer to Appendix 2: Confirmation of appointment letter).

OR:

Outcome Two – Discontinuation of employment

A decision to discontinue an employee's employment can be made when the manager is of the view that the employee's performance is unsatisfactory taking into account any performance and development goals set, action plans developed, and meetings held during the 3 month probation period.

6 DISCONTINUATION OF EMPLOYMENT

Discontinuation of employment during probation occurs where an employee is assessed as not meeting performance and conduct expectations. Decisions about termination of employment during probation need to be made in consultation with Human Resources Advisory Services and in accordance with NSW Health and SESLHD policies.

Decisions about whether or not the employee has been successful should not be left until the end of the probation period (i.e. at three months).

Where the line manager has formed the preliminary view that employment is likely to be discontinued, the line manager must seek approval from the CE to discontinue the employee's employment. (Refer to Appendix 3 - Brief seeking approval from CE to discontinue the employment).

Where discontinuation of employment is being considered Human Resources Advisory Services must attend the final review meeting (after 10 weeks).

The employee may be accompanied by a support person during this meeting, such as a colleague, union member or other representative. Their role is to observe the discussions and provide support to the employee.

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7 FINAL DECISION

Following approval from the Chief Executive the manager will:

- Confirm employment and issue – Confirmation of appointment letter (Appendix 2); or
- Discontinue employment and issue – Discontinuation of employment letter (Appendix 4).

Where employment is discontinued, the effective date will be determined by the line manager. The effective date of termination cannot be retrospective and the employee must be provided with notice or pay in lieu of notice in accordance with the applicable industrial agreement.

8 REFERENCES

[NSW Ministry of Health Policy Directive - PD2017_040 Recruitment and Selection of Staff to the NSW Health Service](#)
[NSW Health Code of Conduct](#)

9 RETENTION OF RECORDS

Records will be retained in accordance with *State Records Authority of NSW General Retention Disposal Authority – Administrative Records, GA28*.

10 DOCUMENTATION

N/A

11 AUDIT

Not required.

12 REVISION AND APPROVAL HISTORY

Date	Revision No.	Author and Approval
March 2019	DRAFT	Initial draft
March 2019	DRAFT	Listed on Draft for Comment
April 2019	DRAFT	Final version incorporating feedback approved by Director Workforce Services.
May 2019	DRAFT	For tabling at next Executive Council meeting for approval.
June 2019	1	Endorsed at June 2019 Executive Council meeting.
November 2020	1.1	Minor review - Manager Workforce Operations – updated contact details, change from Workforce Services to People and Culture and updated email address on appendix 2. Approved by Executive Sponsor. Processed by Executive Services prior to publishing.

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APPENDIX 1 - PROBATION PLAN AND REPORT

PART A: This Probation plan outlines the agreed performance and development expectations of the employee during their probation period.

This section should be completed during the first week of the employee's probationary period.

Instructions:

It is the Manager's responsibility to implement a probation plan.

Employee Name		Employee Number	
Position Title		Employment Status	<input type="checkbox"/> FT <input type="checkbox"/> PT
Department			
Manager			
Date of commencement			

Date of Initial Meeting:		
Part A - Items for discussion at initial meeting Manager to provide an overview of the departmental and clarify expectations of the role		Agree
Key Accountabilities	I am clear on what is expected of me in my role based on the key accountabilities/challenges and other requirements outlined in the Position Description.	<input type="checkbox"/>
CORE Values	I am aware of the NSW Health CORE Values and agree to uphold them in my role (refer to CORE Values section below).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Code of Conduct	I have read, understood, and agree to abide by the NSW Health Code of Conduct and all relevant policies (including health documentation) and procedures.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part B – Probation Report Formal follow-up meetings and Probation Reports should be made after 4 weeks, 8 weeks, and 10 weeks.

- At each probation meeting complete the Probation Report in the section below
- Informal discussions and catch-ups do not need to be recorded on this form
- Include any important feedback and changes to the performance and development plans in the comments section for each probation report
- At the final review meeting (after 10 weeks), the manager should verbally confirm whether or not the employee has successfully completed their probationary period. The line manager should follow this up in writing with a letter to confirm the decision. EAP Services should be offered to employees

who have not successfully completed their probationary period.		
Stages	Performance (delete as applicable)	Comments
Probation Report at end of 4 weeks	Meets requirements	
	Requires Development	
Employee Signature:		Date:
Manager Signature:		Date:
Probation Report at end of 8 weeks	Meets requirements	
	Requires Development	
Employee Signature:		Date:
Manager Signature:		Date:
Probation Report at end of 10 weeks	Meets requirements	
	Does not meet requirements	
Employee Signature:		Date:
Manager Signature:		Date:
Copies must be retained by the manager and employee		

APPENDIX 2 – Confirmation of appointment Template Letter

Ref: Txx/xxxxx

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

[Insert: Employee name]

[Insert: Postal address]

[Insert: Postal address]

Dear <insert salutation + surname>

Re: Confirmation of Appointment – Three (3) Month Probationary Period

I refer to your letter of offer dated [insert date] and the probationary period referred to in same.

In reference to PD2017_040 Recruitment and Selection of Staff, NSW Health – Three Month Probation Period, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District's (SESLHD) confirms you have successfully completed the probationary period. You are now offered ongoing employment for position [insert title of specifics of role and recruitment identification].

Your employment commenced on [insert date] and the manager has undertaken orientation, monitored your performance and provided feedback during your probationary period. It is confirmed that you have achieved the performance indicators that were outlined in your Probation Plan and met South Eastern Sydney Local Health District's (SESLHD) performance expectations. If you have not already developed a Performance Development Plan with your Manager, please discuss this further with them.

If you have any queries in relation to this matter, please contact your manager.

The terms and conditions of employment set out in your original letter of offer will continue to apply to your ongoing position.

Thank you for your contribution and to SESLHD.

Yours sincerely,

[Line Manager Name]

[Line Manager Job Title]

Date:

cc. SESLHD-PeopleandCultureEnquiries@health.nsw.gov.au

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Self-Initiated Briefing****TXX/XXXX****Purpose:**

To provide advice to the Chief Executive regarding <name> <position title>, <classification>, <facility/department> unsatisfactory probationary period, and to recommend that <his/her> employment be discontinued.

Background and Key Issues:

- <name> has been employed as <position> in <facility> since <start date> on a part-time/full time basis <as appropriate>.
- On <date> an initial meeting was held and Probation Plan recorded (TAB A)
- On <date> the <insert first or second> review meeting was held and performance concerns were identified and recorded in the Probation Report (TAB B:)
- At the <insert second or third> there was no sustained improvement (TAB C)
- <Add any other relevant information>
- Over 10 weeks progress against the probation improvement plan continued to be monitored (TAB D).
- No satisfactory improvement in performance has been made over 10 weeks since the commencement of <name> employment.
- <name> has not met the expectations of the role
- <Add any other relevant information and copy in any other relevant documentation>

Risk

This brief {identifies / does not identify} unmitigated risks *(do not delete this line)*
Enterprise Risk Management System [ERMS] risk number XXXXX and current risk rating XXXX *(delete this line if not applicable)*

Recommendation:

That the above information be noted.

That the Chief Executive consider discontinuing the employment of <name> due to not meeting the expectations of the role and sign the attached letter if approved advising the employee that their employment will be discontinued (TAB E).

Author:**Phone:****Date:****Title:****Consultation:** (List officers consulted)**Approval:**

1. Manager Human Resources Advisory Services
2. Director/General Manager
3. Director People & Culture

Submit electronically to SESLHD-Mail@health.nsw.gov.au

4. Manager Executive Services

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5. Chief Executive

Executive Services, for noting, dispatch and file

6. Return to Author

SESLHD PROCEDURE**Probation Period Procedure****SESLHDPR/647****APPENDIX 4 – Discontinuation of Employment Template Letter**

Ref: Txx/xxxxx

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

[Insert: Employee name]
[Insert: Postal address]
[Insert: Postal address]

Dear <insert salutation + surname>

Discontinuation of Employment

Your probation period with South East Sydney Local Health District is due to end on <insert date>.

I confirm that your manager <name> <title> has decided not to continue your employment beyond your 3 month probationary period. This decision is based on the agreed outcomes of your Probation Plan and Report that you completed with your manager during your probation period.

As a result, your employment will end on <insert date>.

In accordance with <insert clause from relevant Award> you will receive <insert> week's pay in lieu of notice.

Enclosed is a copy of your Probation Report.

You are also reminded of the availability of confidential counselling through the Employee Assistance Program, available on: 1300 687 327. This number is answered 24 hours per day, seven days per week, to facilitate enquiries and booking requests.

Please contact <HR contact name> on <phone number> if you have any questions about the content of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Chief Executive

Date: