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**New South Wales
Police Force**

Administrative Officer Probation Procedures

HR Policy / Human Resources Command

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Administrative Officer Probation Procedures

Procedures for managing the probationary period of administrative officers.

Essential Summary

- This document provides commanders, managers and supervisors with information and guidance about managing the performance of administrative officers during their probationary period.
- Allegations of serious misconduct against administrative officers during their probationary period are managed by the Administrative Officer Conduct Unit at the Professional Standards Command.
- Generally, administrative officers are appointed on probation for a period of six months.
- During the probation period there will be formal reviews of the officer's performance after two and then four months of employment.
- The appointment is confirmed if the administrative officer's conduct, attendance and performance of duty are assessed as being satisfactory.
- An administrative officer's appointment may be annulled at any time if their performance or conduct does not meet the required standard.

Document Control Sheet

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Version #	Version approval date	Author/Position	Summary of changes
1.0	24 February 2015	Teresa Heien Senior HR Officer	Original version
2.0	18 December 2015	Teresa Heien Senior Policy Officer	All references to <i>Police Regulation 2008</i> and the <i>Administrative Officer Remedial Performance Program Guidelines</i> have been updated. Sections 5.2 and 5.3 have been amended to include probationary provisions for NV1 and NV2 security clearances. Section 5.3 has also been amended to reflect the new health declaration form and medical examination processes. Section 8.1 has been updated to reflect the tighter restrictions for extending probationary periods and in Section 9.1 the timeframe for responding to a show cause has been refined as has the determination of the last day of service. Appendix B has been amended to reflect the changes in Section 8.1.

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1. Scope

This document has been developed to provide commanders, managers and supervisors with information and guidance about managing the performance of administrative officers during their probationary period.

Allegations of serious misconduct against administrative officers during their probationary period are managed by the Administrative Officer Conduct Unit at the Professional Standards Command in accordance with [NSW Police Administrative Officer Discipline Policy](#).

The unsatisfactory performance of a confirmed administrative officer (i.e. not on probation), will continue to be managed in accordance with the procedures detailed in the [Guidelines for Managing Unsatisfactory Performance of Administrative Employees](#).

2. Introduction

It is a requirement of the *Police Regulation 2015*, that when a person is first appointed as an administrative officer, they are to be appointed on probation for a period of six months, subject to the discretion of the Commissioner.

The purpose of the probationary period is to assess the administrative officer's suitability for permanent employment in the NSW Police Force.

An administrative officer's permanent appointment is confirmed if the officer's conduct, attendance and performance of duty are assessed by the Commissioner (or their delegate) as being satisfactory at the conclusion of the probationary period.

During or after the probationary period, the administrative officer's appointment may be annulled by the Commissioner (or their delegate). If this occurs, the administrative officer will no longer be employed by the NSW Police Force.

3. Definitions

Administrative officer a member of the NSW Police Force other than a police officer or temporary employee (as defined in Section 3 of the *Police Act 1990*).

Annulment the dissolution of the employment relationship during the probationary period, such that, the administrative officer will no longer be employed by the NSW Police Force.

AKRs	agreed key responsibilities are the principal duties, responsibilities and expectations of the administrative officer's position.
Confirmation	permanent employment with the NSW Police Force is confirmed by the Commissioner (or their delegate) after the expiration of the probationary period and a formal report is submitted, acknowledging the administrative officer's satisfactory performance and the meeting of all other conditions.
Probation	defined period of time during which the administrative officer is assessed for their suitability for permanent employment with the NSW Police Force.

4. Delegations

Manager/Commander

- Confirmation of the permanent employment of an administrative officer
- Deferral of confirmation for a period of up to three months. (refer to **8.1**)

Assistant Commissioner, Human Resources

Annulment of the permanent employment of an administrative officer due to unsatisfactory performance and/or attendance.

Disciplinary action imposed as a consequence of proven misconduct

- Assistant Commissioner, Professional Standards Command
- Director, Corporate Advice and Response, Professional Standards Command
- Director, Investigation and Field Services, Professional Standards Command.

5. Probationary Period

5.1 Purpose of probation

The purpose of a probationary period is to:

- provide for induction and support; and
- allow an assessment to be made of the administrative officer's standard of work, conduct and services, attendance and other relevant factors as deemed appropriate.

5.2 Length of probation

In the NSW Police Force, administrative officers are generally appointed on probation for a period of six months, which is considered to be an appropriate length of time to assess the conduct and services of the administrative officer and their suitability for confirmation.

The exception is positions that require the successful completion of a compulsory twelve month training program before confirmation, or those requiring an NV1 or NV2 security clearance (refer to **5.3**).

However, an administrative officer's appointment may be annulled at any time if there is a substantive and demonstrable basis on which to do so. It is envisaged that at the very latest, by four months a supervisor will be able to make an informed decision about whether the appointment will proceed to confirmation, annulment or an extension of the probationary period.

The administrative officer will be advised of their probationary status, the length of the probation and the requirements for confirmation in their letter of offer.

As a period of probation only needs to be completed on initial appointment to the NSW government sector, administrative officers transferring to the NSW Police Force on promotion or lateral transfer from within the NSW government sector are not required to complete another probationary period.

If an administrative officer is successful in obtaining a promotion or transfer during their first six months of employment, the probationary requirements detailed in this document must still be satisfied. When considering the suitability for confirmation of an administrative officer who changed positions during the probationary period, it may be appropriate to seek comment from the officer's previous supervisor.

5.3 Other requirements during probation

Health declaration form or medical assessment

The permanent employment of an administrative officer cannot be confirmed until the officer's fitness to carry out the inherent job requirements and job demands of their position has been established.

For the majority of new administrative officers, this will simply require completion of the health declaration form prior to being offered employment with the NSW Police Force. The completed form is then filed on the employee's electronic P file.

Due to the nature of the duties of some identified positions, the assessment of an applicant's suitability for employment will include a medical examination with the NSW Police Force's nominated medical assessor, prior to any offer of employment.

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Where there are concerns that a particular aspect of a new officer's health may detrimentally affect their capacity to carry out the inherent requirements of the position, some administrative officers will require a medical assessment during their probationary period to determine their fitness for permanent employment.

The [Administrative Officer Health Assessment Policy & Procedures](#) provides advice on the process.

Security clearances

In addition to the baseline vetting completed before an administrative officer is offered employment, a number of identified positions require the occupant to have a 'secret' (NV1) or 'top secret' (NV2) level of security clearance. For the occupants of these positions the probation period will be six calendar months, or the period required to obtain the requisite security clearance for their role, whichever is longer.

Failure to obtain the requisite security clearance may result in the administrative officer's appointment being annulled.

The probationary period of administrative officers requiring baseline vetting will remain unchanged at six months.

Training

The confirmation of some administrative officers will be subject to the successful completion of mandatory training requirements during their probationary period, for example, communications officers and customer service representatives at PoliceLink.

The administrative officer will be advised of these additional requirements in their letter of offer.

Documentation

Prior to making any recommendation to confirm the administrative officer's permanent appointment, the officer's electronic personnel file is to be checked to ensure that the copies of the following documentation have been attached:

- birth certificate
- proof of change of name (if applicable)
- evidence of Australian citizenship/permanent residence status (if applicable)
- educational qualifications (if applicable).

6. Managing Probation

6.1 Role of manager and direct supervisor

Managers and supervisors are required to:

- lead the probation process by clearly setting out the expectations of the role and providing detail on how the *Career Management System* (CMS) and Agreed Key Responsibilities (AKRs) will be used to support and monitor development and performance;
- support the administrative officer to meet the requirements and performance expectations of their position;
- actively monitor the administrative officer during the probationary period, discussing progress against their AKRs;
- provide a supportive environment where by work priorities are set down and competing work demands are negotiated with the employee; and
- provide consistent direction and feedback to the employee.

6.2 Responsibilities of the administrative officer

Administrative officers on probation are expected to:

- know and understand what work they need to do, why and how it is to be done;
- be prepared to have their work monitored and be willing to listen to and act on advice and feedback provided;
- be aware of the standards of work required at their grade;
- know and comply with all policies, procedures and guidelines that relate to their duties;
- share responsibility for the development of their AKRs;
- actively participate in probation review discussions regarding induction, performance and development goals and outcomes relevant to the objectives of their work area and the NSW Police Force; and
- seek assistance if they are unsure about anything.

6.3 Induction

Corporate/Command induction

During the administrative officer's first week of employment, the immediate supervisor is responsible for initiating the induction of the new employee.

This process must include:

- Corporate orientation
- Command/Business Unit induction
- Specific induction issues, e.g. Aboriginal Employment Programs Unit Program

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The administrative officer should also be provided with relevant documentation, which includes a copy of these Procedures. Good sources of information are the HR and PSC intranet sites which provide information on:

- Administrative officer Awards and Agreements
- NSW Police Force policies, procedures and guidelines, including the *Sick Leave Management (non work related) Policy & Procedures*
- NSW Police Force *Code of Conduct & Ethics*

The induction is to be conducted in accordance with the [Organisational Induction Package](#).

Job induction

The purpose of the job induction is to:

- explain the position, including key outcomes and where the position sits within the command and the NSW Police Force;
- ensure that the administrative officer has a clear understanding of the responsibilities and duties of their position, how their performance will be assessed and what the expectations are in relation to reporting relationships, timeframes for completion of work and protocols for taking leave etc; and
- set the AKRs and update the CMS which will be used to monitor the officer's progress during the probationary period.

Both the position description and the [NSW Public Sector Capability Framework](#) provide a guide from which to develop AKRs. The Capability Framework is strongly recommended for use by managers and supervisors to tailor AKRs utilising the language the Framework provides.

Also to be discussed:

- the purpose of the probationary period, the process and duration;
- what the administrative officer can expect from their supervisor;
- setting of dates for formal probation review meetings and final formal assessment (see below); and
- potential outcomes of probation (confirmation of appointment, extension of probation and termination of employment through an annulment).

6.4 Ongoing informal review of performance

In addition to formal probation review meetings (**refer to 6.5**), the supervisor is responsible for monthly, informal reviews of the administrative officer's performance.

These reviews are in the nature of day to day management and do not need to be onerous but should normally:

- review the initial discussion about the position and its direction;
- acknowledge areas in which the officer is performing at, or above, expectations; and

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- identify any areas for improvement and strategies to achieve.

These reviews should be documented as a file note. It is also good practice to confirm the matters discussed (and any performance issues to be addressed) in an email to the officer.

Further guidance is available from the NSW Public Sector [Performance Development Framework](#) which contains guidelines for both managers and employees and sets the approach for managing all aspects of employee performance.

6.5 Formal probation review meetings

The supervisor is responsible for conducting two formal reviews at two and four months. The purpose of the second review is to make a recommendation and allow time for the annulment or confirmation of appointment to be processed.

These meetings should be managed and documented in detail, supported by examples, through the CMS.

The meetings should:

- give honest and constructive feedback to the officer about their performance to date and outline aspects of their performance that require improvement. This will ensure that the administrative officer is offered reasonable support and opportunities to achieve the AKRs;
- provide the administrative officer with the opportunity for professional self reflection and, give constructive feedback in how they are being supported to achieve work outcomes;
- identify any reasonable additional training, development or support that the administrative officer may require; and
- discuss any barriers the administrative officer may be having in achieving their objectives.

At the conclusion of each probation review meeting an assessment will be made and recorded within CMS that the administrative officer:

1. exceeds requirements – at times/consistently exceeds required capabilities
2. fully meets requirements - consistently meets required capabilities
3. still developing – partially/inconsistently meets capabilities
4. development required – rarely meets required capabilities.

6.6 Unsatisfactory Performance

Note: The *Guidelines for Managing Unsatisfactory Performance of Administrative Employees* do not apply to administrative officers on probation.

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Where an administrative officer's performance does not meet the required standard, best practice requires that instances of unsatisfactory performance are documented by the supervisor prior to being discussed with the officer. This will ensure that the organisation is better able to justify annulment decisions if they are later challenged by the administrative officer.

Detailed examples of unsatisfactory performance will need to be discussed with the officer during reviews and documented. This includes specific examples of unsatisfactory performance relevant to the position - for instance, if the administrative officer has not completed allocated tasks to a satisfactory standard or has not communicated in a polite or respectful manner.

The administrative officer must be given the opportunity to respond during the meeting and, if relevant, provide any explanation for the poor performance. Where there is a lack of understanding of the position the supervisor must clarify expectations. The officer also has the opportunity to respond in their final comments as part of the CMS process.

During this process the administrative officer may seek the support of the Public Service Association (PSA) and request that a PSA representative attend the probation review meetings. Any request is to be accommodated on the basis that the PSA representative may attend as a support person for the administrative officer, not advocate.

Issues which have been previously discussed (either at the monthly or formal reviews) should only be captured if there has been no demonstrated improvement.

Advise the administrative officer of the possibility that their appointment may be annulled should they not attain and sustain the required standards.

Note: It is not necessary to wait until a formal review meeting to advise the officer of deficiencies in their conduct or performance. Further, any serious conduct and/or performance issues should be dealt with immediately and not held over until the next scheduled probation review.

6.7 Probation timeline

Time frame	Action
Week 1	Induction
Month 1	Ongoing review of performance – capture AKRs within CMS
Month 2	First formal probation review meeting – captured within CMS

Month 3	Ongoing review of performance
Month 4	Final formal probation review meeting - captured within CMS The manager/supervisor should be in a position to make a decision about whether the permanent appointment will be confirmed or whether it will be necessary to extend the probation or refer to the Assistant Commissioner, Human Resources for annulment.

7. Attendance

Satisfactory attendance is an essential requirement of employment. Additionally, the officer's sick leave record should be monitored and managed during the probationary period in accordance with the requirements of the *Sick Leave Management (non-work related) Policy & Procedures*.

It is not appropriate to extend the probationary period when the manager/commander is satisfied that the administrative officer's absences have been genuine and there was no inappropriate use of sick leave.

Where inappropriate use of sick leave has been established and the imposition of sanctions as detailed in the *Sick Leave Management (non-work related) Policy & Procedures* has failed to improve the officer's attendance record, then the manager/commander should make a recommendation to annul the appointment.

If the administrative officer has a non-work related injury or health condition that has impacted on their ability to safely carry out the inherent requirements and demands of the position for which they were employed. The manager/commander is to request that the Fitness to Continue Unit refer the officer for a medical assessment.

If the administrative officer is assessed as being permanently unable to carry out the inherent requirements and demands of the position, then they are to be referred to the Assistant Commissioner, Human Resources for annulment.

8. Decision to confirm or not confirm appointment

After the final probation review meeting the direct supervisor is to complete a review of the administrative officer's conduct and services which encompasses:

- the comments on CMS from each probation review meeting plus any other relevant sources;
- consideration of any complaints or grievances that have been lodged against the administrative officer; and

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- verification that the administrative officer has completed all of the requirements for confirmation, e.g. required original documentation has been sighted, a health declaration form (or medical assessment) has been completed, the 'secret' security clearance has been obtained (where required) and all mandatory training requirements have been satisfied (where required).

The direct supervisor should then prepare a recommendation for the consideration of the manager/commander.

If the recommendation is to defer or annul the appointment, copies of the CMS reviews and any other relevant documentation should be attached and to ensure that any decision is made prior to the expiration of the probationary period, the recommendation is to be submitted as soon as possible after completion of the final review.

If the recommendation is to confirm the permanent appointment, the documentation should be prepared and finalised at least four weeks before the end of the probationary period.

The direct supervisor is also responsible for:

- preparing the formal written advice to the administrative officer (**refer to appendices A,B,C for template letters**); and
- notifying by email the relevant Pay Team at Payroll Services so that the decision can be captured on *SAP*.

8.1 Extending the probation period

Where the administrative officer was advised prior to the commencement of employment, e.g. in the letter of offer, a manager/commander with appropriate delegation may extend an administrative officer's period of probation for up to three months. However:

- it should only be extended under the terms provided for and communicated prior to employment, e.g. in the letter of offer. An example would be an administrative officer absent due to an extended period of paid or unpaid leave during the probation; and
- it must be notified to the officer in writing prior to the completion of the current period of probation.

An administrative officer's probation cannot be extended for the purpose of giving a command more time to make a decision about the officer's suitability for confirmation.

It is never appropriate to extend the probationary period because the administrative officer has been relieving in another position for an extended period during the probation. If the employee has been assessed as suitable for relief at a higher grade

and their performance has been satisfactory, then the appointment is to be confirmed.

A sample letter is attached at **appendix B**.

9. Annulment of Appointment

A recommendation for annulment:

- can be made at any time during the probationary period, providing it can be clearly demonstrated that the administrative officer has been provided with appropriate support and given a fair opportunity to address their performance issues. In most circumstances, such recommendation should be made no later than the final review, that is, at four months.
- must be submitted by report via the chain of command to the Assistant Commissioner, Human Resources.

The report should include the following information:

- the key duties and responsibilities of the position;
- the aspects of conduct, performance and/or attendance that were unsatisfactory;
- what action was taken to support the administrative officer to address the deficiencies in their performance and the outcome of that support;
- any interim arrangements that were implemented to manage risk associated with the administrative officer's performance and whether they were sustainable over an extended period;
- interpersonal relationships with supervisors and colleagues;
- impact on service delivery; and
- any other information considered relevant.

The following documentation should be attached:

- a copy of the position description;
- a copy of the letter of offer;
- a copy of all performance related correspondence sent to the officer (including emails);
- a copy of all notes from informal and formal meetings with the officer (if hand-written, the notes should be legible);
- a copy of the CMS comments by both the administrative officer and their supervisor;
- a copy of any representations made by the officer (or their representative); and
- any other material considered relevant.

The officer should be formally advised that the recommendation has been made and provided with information about the annulment process, estimated timeframe and

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support services offered by EAPS, Peer Support Officers or the Police Chaplains. A sample letter is attached at **appendix C**.

If continuation of the support provided is not sustainable whilst the annulment process takes place, the manager/commander should review the officer's duties to manage the risks relating to an individual's impact on a workplace. It may be appropriate to remove the officer from the duties of their position and assign other suitable, meaningful work.

9.1 Annulment Process

Show cause

If the Assistant Commissioner, Human Resources considers there to be sufficient grounds to annul the appointment of the administrative officer, the Human Resources Command will invite the officer to, within a maximum period of seven calendar days, show cause in writing why their appointment should not be annulled. This letter will be forwarded to the manager or commander with the request that where possible, the letter be personally delivered to the administrative officer.

If it is not possible for the letter to be delivered personally, then the administrative officer should be contacted by telephone (or email if phone contact is not possible) prior to the delivery (by registered post) and advised of the above. Should the officer refuse to accept delivery of the letter, the command should contact the Human Resources Command for further advice.

Response

The administrative officer's response will be considered by the Human Resources Command which may require further information from the Command.

If the officer fails to provide a response to the 'show cause' letter within the allocated timeframe, the Human Resources Command will contact the officer and offer an extension. Should the administrative officer decline this offer, the annulment will proceed based on the information already submitted for consideration.

Final Determination

After reviewing the officer's response to the 'show cause' letter, the Assistant Commissioner, Human Resources will make a determination as to whether to proceed with the annulment. Letters will be issued to both the administrative officer and the manager/commander accordingly, again with a request that the manager or commander personally deliver the letter to the officer.

Last Day of Service

The last day of service for the administrative officer will be the date as determined by the delegate (Assistant Commissioner, Human Resources) and as notified to the employee.

9.2 Appeals

An administrative officer, appointed on probation, whose appointment is annulled may or may not have a right of appeal to the Industrial Relations Commission (IRC).

10. References

Police Regulation 2015

Police Act 1990

[NSW Police Administrative Officer Discipline Policy](#)

[Guidelines for Managing Unsatisfactory Performance of Administrative Employees](#)

[Administrative Officer Health Assessment Policy & Procedures](#)

[Organisational Induction Package](#)

[NSW Public Sector Capability Framework](#)

[Performance Development Framework](#)

11. Further Information

HR Policy: Ph: (02) 8835 9537 or Eaglenet: 29537

or

#HRPOLICY

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12. Appendix

- A** Template Letter – Confirmation of appointment
- B** Template Letter – Extension of probation and deferral of increment
- C** Template Letter – Recommendation of annulment

APPENDIX A – Confirmation of Appointment

[Insert Name]
[Insert Location]

Dear [Insert Name],

I refer to your appointment on probation to the position of [insert position title and grade], [location].

I am pleased to advise that after a review of your conduct, performance and attendance during the six month probation period, your permanent appointment has been confirmed.

Advice has been forwarded to Payroll Services so that your personnel records can be updated.

Please accept my congratulations.

Yours sincerely,

[Manager/Commander]

APPENDIX B – Extension of probation and deferral of increment

[Insert Name]
[Insert Location]

Dear [Insert Name],

I refer to your appointment on probation to the position of [insert position title/grade], [location].

I also refer to recent discussions with your supervisor [insert name] about your absence from duty [insert dates] and how as a consequence there has been insufficient time to assess your suitability for permanent employment.

As a consequence, I have decided to extend your probationary period for a further [insert no.] months until [insert date] and defer the payment of your increment for the same length of time.

Advice has been forwarded to Payroll Services to update SAP to reflect the extension of your probationary period and the deferral of your increment.

If you have any questions regarding this decision, please contact [insert supervisor's name] in the first instance.

Yours sincerely,

Manager/Commander

APPENDIX C – Recommendation of annulment

[Insert Name]
[Insert Location]

Dear [Insert Name],

I refer to your appointment on probation to the position of [insert position title/grade], [location].

As a consequence of your failure to achieve the standards of performance and/or conduct and attendance detailed in the Career Management System, I have decided to recommend the annulment of your appointment on probation to the Assistant Commissioner, Human Resources. The effect of an annulment is that you will no longer be employed by the NSW Police Force.

The reasons for my decision are [insert specifics] and a copy of the submission and supporting documentation I base my decision on are attached for your information.

If the Assistant Commissioner, Human Resources determines there are sufficient grounds to annul your appointment, you will be given the opportunity to respond and show cause why your employment with the NSW Police Force should not be terminated.

If you have any questions regarding this decision, please contact [insert supervisor's name] in the first instance. I would remind you that the assistance can be provided to you through the *Employee Assistance Program* (1300 667 197) should you wish to take up this option.

Yours sincerely,

Manager/Commander