



ANU probation procedure: tips for supervisors

The [probation procedure](#) outlines the process a supervisor needs to undertake during a staff member's probation period. Probation is the responsibility of the supervisor. Where a supervisor has a probation query or concern, they should notify their local [People and Culture HR team](#) as soon as possible. Probation periods differ depending on the type of ANU employment and are detailed within the [ANU Enterprise Agreement](#). Refer to the attached **ANU probation procedure workflow** for a summary of the probation process.

Supervisors need to have regular performance, development and career discussions with their direct reports, probationary and otherwise. The probation process is supported by the [Focus](#) performance and development tool, with emphasis on regular discussion and feedback outside of the Focus tool, rather than only once or twice-yearly performance and development discussions. Focus sends email reminders to supervisors if a step is not completed in time.

Benefits of regular discussion and feedback, especially during the probation period

1. Expectation setting, early alignment and accountability

Regular discussions help supervisors and employees stay aligned with team objectives and ANU priorities, while feedback reinforces accountability and clarifies expectations. Frequent discussions ensure probationary employees clearly understand role expectations, team dynamics, and performance and behaviour standards.

Tip for supervisors: Frame expectations as shared goals rather than rigid demands. Invite questions to ensure mutual understanding.

2. Skill development, agility, learning and confidence building

Constructive feedback identifies strengths and areas for growth, enabling supervisors and employees to adapt quickly, and where needed, put in place development and improvement measures. Timely, constructive feedback helps new employees quickly identify areas for improvement, reinforce strengths, and gain confidence in their contributions during a key adjustment period.

Tip for supervisors: Balance praise with actionable suggestions. Reinforce what is working, while guiding improvement with specific examples.

3. Engagement, integration and retention

Open dialogue fosters trust, recognition, and a sense of value — key drivers of employee satisfaction and engagement, and long-term retention. Regular check-ins foster a sense of belonging, demonstrate support from leadership, and encourage open communication, which are key to helping probationary, and other employees alike, feel valued and committed.

Tip for supervisors: Ask open-ended questions about the employee's experience so far. Show genuine interest in their wellbeing and integration to ANU.

These practices align with the [ANU Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2030](#) which identifies that positive employee engagement, performance and wellbeing are underpinned by consistent and enduring supervisor, and leader, actions and behaviour that demonstrate kindness, connection, care and listening.