



LIVERPOOL
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UNIVERSITY

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Probation Policy

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POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR THE REVIEW OF EMPLOYEES ON PROBATION

Introduction

The probationary period provides the opportunity for managers to assess the suitability of new members of employees for the position to which they have been appointed. It also provides the opportunity for employees to develop their skills, knowledge and experience, as well as understanding how their role fits in with those of their colleagues and how the University operates. Whilst in many cases experienced employees are appointed to posts, managers should bear in mind that all new members of employees require a settling-in period. In some instances, some duties will be new to them and some procedures will differ from those of other universities at which they have worked.

These guidelines are intended to support the University's probation process. They are designed to provide a clear and simple process to assist managers with inducting new employees and to ensure equality of opportunity for all employees. This Policy is intended to operate in accordance with the Employment Rights Act 2025. Nothing in this Policy shall diminish an employee's statutory rights, including the right not to be unfairly dismissed, day-one employment protections, or rights relating to family leave, sickness absence or whistleblowing.

Scope

This policy applies to employees employed by the University. It does not apply to workers, contractors, consultants or any self-employed individuals working for the university.

The guidelines have been designed to maximise flexibility to meet the needs of all stakeholders, any significant variations should be discussed with People Services.

All HR Managers are able to provide professional advice and support at all stages of the process. **Managers are urged to speak to People Services if they have any queries about this policy.**

A formal probation procedure helps to ensure that:

- The performance, conduct, attendance, timekeeping and training/support needs of all new employees to the University are assessed fairly, consistently and equally, across the University through regular two-way communication with the line manager
- Managers provide new employees with the appropriate support, guidance, training, encouragement and feedback
- Both managers and probationers understand the purpose of the probation
- The probationary period will be as outlined in the employee's employment contract. Existing members of employees who are promoted, re-graded or

transferred within the University will not normally be subject to a probationary period unless their initial probation period is not yet completed. In this case, the probation period will be carried over to the new contract, and the appointment will not be confirmed until the original period has been successfully completed.

Responsibilities Under this Policy

Employee Responsibilities: All employees have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a professional manner and with consideration for others. To enable this all employees have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with, and adhere to, the University's rules and procedures which are available on the University web pages.

Management Responsibilities: University managers are responsible for supporting, monitoring and reviewing employee performance and conduct, and for addressing problems as soon as they are aware of them. Managers are responsible for ensuring that probation meetings take place at the appropriate intervals throughout the probation process.

People Services Department Responsibilities: The People Services Department is responsible for providing advice and guidance to managers on the application of the policy and procedure and has a specific role to fulfil during any formal stage of the Procedure.

Induction for New Employees

All new employees are required to attend the overall University Induction, details of which will be sent to the new employee when they start

The line manager is responsible for ensuring that the new employee is inducted locally (i.e. in the School/Department) and given the relevant information necessary to enable them to commence work.

The line manager should normally arrange an appointment with the new employee during their first month of employment. During this meeting, the line manager should clarify the duties and responsibilities of the new employee, in line with the job description as well as the following:

- Policy and procedures (e.g. absence reporting) that must be followed
- Key aspects of role, structure of the department and how it fits within the University structure
- Skills/competences to be attained
- Standard of work expected (quality and quantity)
- Deadlines to be met
- Behaviour/conduct (including timekeeping and attendance)
- Working relationships
- Working environment

- Training needs including any 'on the job' training
- Identifying a mentor
- Any other issues specific to the role/grade.

The line manager should set objectives of what should be achieved in the role during the probationary period, which should be clear, specific to the role and measurable.

The line manager will give the employee the appropriate support/guidance (including training) necessary to help them achieve the set objectives.

Standard Probationary Periods

The probation period for all employees will be 12 months. In some cases, within Professional Services and depending on the job role, it may be possible to complete probation between six and twelve months if performance is acceptable. Managers should discuss this with HR Managers if this is considered.

Successful completion of probation does not affect an employee's statutory employment rights, which apply from the commencement of employment where prescribed by law. The existence of a probationary period does not remove or reduce statutory protection against unfair dismissal, discrimination, or detriment as they might have the right to make a claim if they've been dismissed for 'automatically unfair' reasons.

Probationary Reviews

The line manager must ensure they meet regularly with the probationer in the early stages of appointment to discuss the probationer's progress. In addition, if concerns arise during the probationary period the probationer and line manager should discuss these as and when they arise rather than wait for the next formal probationary review meeting.

Where concerns arise that may lead to dismissal or extension of probation, the employee will be informed in writing of the concerns in advance of any formal meeting and provided with reasonable opportunity to respond. Again, advice should be sought from People Services if this is considered.

As a minimum requirement three formal probationary review meetings should be held as outlined below.

- **Initial Review:** Within the first month of employment
- **Interim Review:** there should be an interim review at four months.
- **Final Review:** At 8 – 9 months

Prior to holding a probationary review meeting the line manager should discuss the probationer's progress with any other relevant member of employees.

People Services will remind the relevant line manager of the need to complete these reviews. The line manager should confirm the agreed dates and times with the employee.

During the formal reviews, line managers should cover the following:

- Praise good performance/achievements so far
- Review timekeeping/attendance, including sickness absence
- Discuss the employee's performance to date against the objectives set at induction
- Review/agree training/development needs
- Identify aspects of performance/conduct that need improving through constructive feedback
- Explore any problems the employee has encountered in their role
- Provide guidance/support as appropriate
- Introduce/agree any changes to the objectives set
- Confirm the next review meeting
- Role Profiles and Job Description
- The objectives and role of the University/Department.

This should be facilitated by the use of the Probationary Review Forms, as described below.

Line managers are advised to hold **frequent informal** meetings with their probationer in order to ensure a good working relationship and feedback on the probationer's progress.

It is the line manager's responsibility to ensure that reviews are conducted within the timescale described in this policy and that People Services is supplied with the appropriate documentation as soon as possible.

During the final review, discussions should be held between the probationer and their line manager about setting objectives and an individual development plan to be reviewed at their first performance review meeting.

Probationary Review Forms

Before the new employee starts, the line manager should download the relevant Probationary Review forms from the People Services Intranet pages.

The forms should be completed to record details of each review (including agreed objectives and set review dates) after each formal meeting. They should be signed by the probationer and line manager and then kept in a confidential place for the next review. Any issues arising should be discussed with People Services.

Written documentation is essential to the probation process, as it informs both parties for the forthcoming performance review process, on successful completion of the probationary period. Furthermore, it will clearly document areas of concern and potentially why an appointment is not confirmed.

It is very important that formal meetings are held within the first month, within the fourth month and within the ninth month to ensure support and feedback are provided and probationary progress is clear throughout the probationary period.

Confirmation of Appointment

After the final review meeting a report should be completed by the Head of School/Department/Senior Manager making a recommendation in relation to either confirming employment, extending the probation period or terminating employment.

For consistency this report will be viewed by the **relevant UEB member** for the employee, for a final decision. If the appointment is confirmed, People Services will write to the employee to confirm the appointment.

Dealing with Unsatisfactory Performance

Any difficulties should be addressed as early as possible, it is not necessary to wait for the next formal review, and line managers should seek advice from their HR Manager whenever a probationer's performance/conduct gives cause for concern. If appropriate, the HR Manager may be present at formal reviews.

Where a formal meeting may result in extension of probation or termination of employment, the employee will be notified in writing of:

- the concerns to be discussed;
- the possible outcomes;
- their right to be accompanied by a work colleague or Trade Union representative; and
- any evidence to be considered.

If an employee has problems meeting the required performance standards, appropriate training and support for improvement will be provided.

The line manager should meet with the employee as soon as possible to:

- discuss any problems identified
- explain what aspect of the work is not considered satisfactory
- explain which objectives/standards are not being met as well as the shortfall between standards and timescales expected of the employee
- offer remedial guidance and training as appropriate
- give clear early warnings of what may happen if required standards are not met (e.g, extension of probationary period, and/or appointment may not be confirmed)
- clearly explain any necessary improvements
- agree an action plan for improvements and timescales
- record the outcome of the meeting in writing and give a copy to the employee
- If a member of employees has a disability, reasonable adjustments should always be considered.

Consideration will also be given to any statutory protection relating to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental leave, carers' leave, flexible working requests, trade union

activity, whistleblowing, or long-term sickness absence. No decision will be taken for a reason that is automatically unfair under the Employment Rights Act 2025.

Extending the Probation Period

The line manager may decide to extend the probationary period, if there are performance, conduct, attendance concerns etc and there is evidence that the employee could improve given extra time. The decision to extend your probationary period will be entirely at our discretion.

Initially, the probationary period may be extended for one month or more, to allow a reasonable amount of time to achieve the actions and standard agreed, however further extensions may be appropriate depending on the circumstances. The probationary period should never normally be extended for more than a total of six months except in exceptional cases.

Any extension must be reasonable, proportionate, confirmed in writing, and supported by documented evidence of the required improvements and support provided. The employee will have the opportunity to make representations before any extension is confirmed.

Where the probation period is extended, the following must be discussed between the line manager and employee:

- reasons for the extension
- length of the extension period
- identify any assistance/training to be given during the period of extension
- areas for improvement and indication of how these will be monitored and measured
- appointment will be terminated at the end of extension period if the employee fails to meet standards of performance expected for their grade/post.

At the end of the extended period, the line manager and employee should meet to review progress. If progress, performance and/or attendance are satisfactory, the line manager will recommend that the appointment should be confirmed and will inform People Services who will write to the probationer to confirm the appointment once this is approved.

We will not extend a period of probation more than once unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If, at the end of the extended period, progress is still considered unsatisfactory, the line manager will inform the employee, and make a recommendation that the appointment be terminated, as per below.

Terminating the Appointment

In the regrettable situation of an employee not performing to the required standard within their probationary period (or extended probationary period), despite any support having been given to improve their performance, it may be necessary to terminate the employee's appointment, during or at the end of the original probationary period or the end of the

extended probationary period. In these circumstances, the line manager and HR Manager will meet with the probationer to advise them of the reasons for the decision and consider any mitigation put forward by the probationer before confirming any decision. The probationer must be informed of their right to be represented at this meeting by a work colleague or a Trade Union representative.

It should be noted that an employee on probation can have their appointment terminated earlier than the scheduled end date of their probationary period if the performance and/or conduct issue is considered that serious to warrant such action. In this circumstance, the individual will be invited to a meeting as highlighted above.

Right of Appeal

An employee, whose employment is terminated during probation, will be given the right to appeal.

They should submit in writing to the Director of People Services (or their nominee), notice of their intention to appeal within 10 working days of receiving the letter confirming the termination of employment during the probationary period.

A manager not previously involved in the matter will hear the appeal. The appeal will be a review of the decision and the fairness of the procedure. The employee will have the right to be accompanied.

The manager viewing the appeal will confirm their decision in writing within 10 working days of receiving the appeal. The appeal outcome will be final within the University's internal procedures.

Data protection

We process any personal data collected during the probationary period in accordance with our [data protection policy \(data protection\)](#). In particular, we will record only the personal information required and keep the information only for as long as necessary.

Equality and Diversity Statement

Liverpool Hope University is committed to the principles of equality and diversity as well as the elimination of discriminatory practices. These principles apply to the treatment of all employees.

This policy, together with any supporting procedures, will be implemented in a non-discriminatory manner. Members of the University administering the policy are responsible for ensuring that in its application, those to whom the policy applies, shall not receive less favourable treatment on grounds of sex, marital status, gender reassignment, racial group, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, socio-economic background, trade union membership, family circumstances, or any other irrelevant distinction.



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