

Probation Policy – Manager's Quick Guide

Purpose of Probation

Probation provides an opportunity to:

- Support new employees to settle into their role.
- Clarify expectations and standards.
- Monitor performance, attendance, conduct and development.
- Identify training and support needs.
- Confirm whether the employee is suitable for the role.

Manager Responsibilities

During the First Month

1. Complete a local induction.

2. Explain:

- Key duties and responsibilities.
- University policies and procedures.
- Performance expectations.
- Attendance and timekeeping requirements.
- Team and departmental structure.
- Training and development opportunities.

3. Set clear SMART objectives.

SMART objectives	
Specific	Clearly states what is expected
Measurable	How success can be evidenced
Achievable	Realistic for the role and the timescale
Relevant	Linked to the most important role requirements
Time-bound	Deadline clearly stated

4. Arrange the Initial Review meeting.

Probation Review Timetable

Review Stage	Timescale	Key Focus
Initial Review	Within first month	Local induction, objectives, support needs
Interim Review	Around months 3-4	Progress against objectives, attendance, training
Interim Review	If further interim reviews are needed	Any issues to be managed should be flagged prior to 6 months
Final Review	Months 8-9	Overall performance and recommendation

During Review Meetings Discuss

- Progress against objectives.
- Performance and achievements.
- Attendance and timekeeping.
- Training and development needs.
- Any concerns or barriers.
- Support required.
- Updated objectives where necessary.

Record outcomes and agreed actions after every formal review. If relevant, note any reasonable adjustments made.

If Concerns Arise

Do not wait for the next formal review.

1. Discuss concerns promptly.
2. Explain the required standard and any shortfall.
3. Provide guidance, training and support.
4. Agree an improvement plan with timescales.
5. Keep written records.
6. Seek advice from People Services early.

Possible outcomes

Outcome	
Successful completion	Recommendation to confirm appointment/progress is satisfactory.
Extension of probation	May be considered where improvement is achievable with additional support and time.
Termination of employment	May be considered where performance, conduct or attendance remains unsatisfactory despite appropriate support and review.

Always seek advice from People Services before progressing to formal action. Always discuss and performance concerns as early as possible with People Services.

Examples of SMART objectives

These are only examples for illustration. As the line manager you should consider what is appropriate for the level of role and the knowledge, skills and behaviour needed.

Academic Roles	Throughout the probation period, deliver all assigned teaching sessions to the required standard, ensure module materials are available to students at least one working day in advance of teaching activities. Complete assessment marking and feedback within University deadlines and achieve satisfactory performance in teaching observation and student feedback conducted during probation period.
	Contribute to administrative tasks and be an active member of the School community – participate in open or applicant days, the

	research group, other activities and events within the first three months.
	By the end of the probation period, participate in at least one research project or research-related activity. Attend departmental research meetings regularly and develop an agreed research paper or funding proposal to submission ready standard by month X.
Professional Services roles	Complete 100% of mandatory training modules within three months of appointment and demonstrate compliance with departmental procedures
	Produce and circulate accurate meeting minutes within three working days of meetings supported during the probation period with minimal amendments from the Chair
	Meet individually with assigned client manager within the first month, establish agreed communication arrangements and achieve positive feedback from at least X% of stakeholders during the probation review period.