

## Probation Procedure- Academic

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## Introduction

This Procedure outlines the University's approach to Probation for new academic members of staff including the support, training and guidance that should be provided during this time, the formal reviews that should take place and the assessment of suitability for the role.

The Probation procedure aims to ensure fair, equal, and consistent treatment for all new staff.

### 1. Scope

This procedure applies only to staff newly appointed to the University, both permanent and fixed term whose terms and conditions of employment state that their appointment is subject to a probationary period.

The Probation process is designed to confirm the suitability of the member of staff to the post they have been appointed to.

Key areas of assessment during this period will include standards of conduct, capability and attendance.

This process will not apply to 're-deployees' who will be dealt with in accordance with the Managing Organisation Restructures Procedure (MOR).

### 2. Equality

Because we value diversity and equality highly, we have designed this policy to be fair and inclusive. In putting this policy into practice, we expect all members of the University community to abide by the spirit and detail of the Equality Act 2010 and our policy and strategy for equality, diversity, and inclusion.

### 3. Length of Probation

The length of the probation period is stated within the terms and conditions and will normally be:

- Academic / Senior Leaders - 12 months
- Academics new to teaching and/or required to undertake the Introduction to Learning & Teaching - 18 months (ILT) programme

### 4. Summary of Probation Structure

Please refer to Appendix B for a summary of the probation structure

### 5. Link to Induction

The Probation period works alongside the Induction process which details the support, development and training that will be provided to ensure new starters settle into the University.

New starters will receive instructions on how to familiarise themselves with how the University works. Information will mainly be made available via the StaffSpace.

New starters are invited to attend a series of 'Welcome to Kingston' events which provide key information from across the University. Each Faculty and Directorate provides information to support the new starter's local induction.

### 6. Responsibilities during Probation

#### Manager

The line manager should provide local information to support the new starter's induction. Induction guidance for managers is available on Staffspace.

If an individual manages more than 12 staff the line manager may delegate responsibility for probation to a nominated individual.

During the probation period, the line manager (or nominated individual) is responsible for:

- Welcoming the new member of staff to the team and overall aims/expectations during the probation period Ensuring the probationer understands what is required of them in the role
- Oversight of the probationer's workload to enable them to achieve the required standard within the probationary period

- Setting the required standards to be met during the probationary period as per the Role Profile, UKPSF via KAPS and ILT as appropriate
- Identifying probation objectives at the start of employment (within the first month). This should be in line with the formal Performance & Development Appraisal procedure using the appropriate Probation Review form on Unified.
- Meeting with the new member of staff monthly during probation to discuss progress and provide feedback and guidance.
- Undertaking both informal and formal reviews during the probationary period setting, reviewing and recording progress against objectives.
- Working with the probationer to support them and identify key development needed during the probation period
- Identifying any issues and highlighting them to their own line manager; seeking advice from HR as appropriate
- Completing a review one month prior to the end of the probation period which will include an assessment against objectives and a recommendation regarding confirmation of employment
- Completing probationary forms through Unified.

### **Probationer**

- Acquainting themselves to the University's policies, processes and procedures
- Demonstrating suitability for the role
- Meeting probationary objectives
- Understanding and familiarising themselves with the required standards to be met during the probationary period as per the Academic Grade Profile, UKPSF and ILT as appropriate
- Highlighting any difficulties at the earliest opportunity and sharing them with the line manager (or nominated individual)
- Highlighting any reasonable and relevant training or development needs that they consider they have
- Participating in their induction and any training events required
- Completing their induction programme
- Obtaining the appropriate level of Fellowship of the HEA.

### **7. Confirmation of Appointment**

At the conclusion of the probationary period, subject to satisfactory performance, conduct and attendance the appointment will be confirmed in writing to the probationer.

### **8. Performance Issues during probation**

As performance issues can be dealt with through the probation policy and procedure the University's capability and disciplinary procedures will not normally apply to probationers except for cases of gross misconduct which may result in summary dismissal under the disciplinary procedure.

Any performance or conduct problems that emerge and highlighted to the line Manager (and/or Dean/Director should be brought to the immediate attention of the probationer,) and if necessary, discussed with HR.

The probationer must be given clear information concerning where and how performance, conduct or attendance is falling below acceptable standards. The probationer must be given the opportunity and support to make necessary improvements in a reasonable timeframe. If a performance improvement plan is appropriate it should include review periods leading up to the final probationary review meeting.

The probationer should be informed in writing of any underperformance, the improvements required within the timeframe and possible consequences of failing to meet the required standards e.g., termination of employment.

## **9. Extension of the Probationary Period**

In exceptional cases, an extension to the probationary period may be granted. An extension will only be granted where it is considered that a further opportunity for the probationer to demonstrate suitability for the post is likely to result in confirmation of the appointment.

Before extending a probationary period the line manager will consult with their own line manager and with HR. A formal review meeting will be held one month before the end of the extension. Any extensions would not normally exceed 3 months.

## **10. Termination of Appointment**

A decision whether to terminate employment should be made by the line manager as soon as it is clear that the probationer will not meet the required standards, or after the final review meeting at the latest. After this final review, if performance conduct or attendance has not improved to the satisfaction of the line manager, and the line manager considers that a potential outcome could be dismissal, a formal meeting chaired by the Dean should be convened. The employee will be informed of the reasons for their recommendation.

The probationer will be entitled to be accompanied to any formal probation review meeting by a trade union representative or colleague.

After the hearing, should the decision to terminate employment be confirmed; a letter will be sent to the probationer confirming the final date of employment and any final pay arrangements. They must also be advised of the right to appeal.

## **11. Appeals**

Appeals against termination of employment should be made in writing. The appeal process will be the same as any other termination

## **12. Governance and Review**

HR owns this policy and will review every three years.

## **13. Academic Provision**

The University's policy on academic staff probation requires that all new academic staff have the qualification and professional recognition relevant to their level of appointment as per their role profile.

Where new to teaching or not possessing the appropriate professional recognition, this should be achieved during their probationary period (as outlined above and Appendix B). The University is accredited via KAPS to assess and award UKPSF fellowships at Associate, Fellow, Senior Fellow and Principal Fellow levels.

Additionally, for new staff with less than 3 years teaching experience, they are required to successfully complete the University's "Introduction to Learning and Teaching" (ILT) programme. Time should be apportioned/allocated for the completion of the ILT during the probation period outside of the teaching workload and /or non-teaching responsibilities.

An approximate time estimate of 20 notional hours to complete the ILT and an additional 20 hours for the application for Fellowship are suggested, although this may differ on an individual basis.

All new academic staff will be expected to show evidence during their probation period of having maintained continuing professional development by way of engaging with the University's CPD framework and keeping an annotated CPD record.