

Induction and Probation Procedures

1 Aims

- 1.1 These procedures are designed to support the University's induction of new employees and provide guidance on the operation of probation periods, ensuring consistency of treatment across the University.
- 1.2 The aim of probation is to ensure that performance of new employees is assessed fairly across the University, and that appropriate training and support is provided.

2 Scope

- 2.1 These procedures are applicable to all new staff employed by the University.
- 2.2 The period of probation operating is as follows:
Grades 1-6 6 Months
Grades 7-9 12 months
Senior Staff 12 months, or longer period as specified in contract
- 2.3 Existing members of staff who are re-graded or redeployed within the University will not normally be subject to a probation period unless their initial probation period is not yet completed. Staff who are promoted to higher graded posts will serve a probation period. People appointed from other Universities in similar positions will serve a probation period.
- 2.4 If an employee's performance is sub-standard due to negligence, lack of application or misconduct then the matter will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedures. Disciplinary records will be taken into account in considering whether the requirements of probation have been met.
- 2.5 Matters relating to absence will be dealt with under the Management of Sickness Absence Procedures. Absence records, excluding absence relating to disability or pregnancy/maternity, will be taken into account in considering whether the requirements of probation have been met.

3 Induction Requirements

- 3.1 Induction allows a smooth transition into work at the University and/or introduction to a new role. An effective induction is likely to increase retention of staff and increase performance at work. It allows the employee to get to know their work environment and to understand University procedures and the requirements of the job. It also allows the manager to set the standards required by the University and ensure the employee receives the training they need to do their job
- 3.2 The activities required to support an employee's induction should be determined by the nature of the job. Guidance on how to set up an induction programme and what it might include is provided in Appendix 1.

4 Probation Procedures

- 4.1 The line manager will meet with the employee on a regular basis as part of regular work routines. However there are key times when the line manager needs to meet and discuss progress as part of the probation process. For those employees with a six-month probation

period the line manager should meet at the end of the first month, the end of the third month and the end of the sixth month. For those employees with a twelve-month probation period the line manager should meet with the employee at the end of the first month, third month, sixth month and the end of the first year of employment. At each meeting the line manager and employee should review work to date, identify any areas of improvement and identify any support that can be provided. A brief record of the meetings should be made and the employee should receive a copy.

- 4.2 Where performance is not as expected this should be clearly identified, targets for improvement set and clear systems of support identified. If performance standards do not improve you will need to pursue matters under section 5. Formal procedures can be started at any point during the probation period. Once it becomes clear there are performance issues that are not being addressed formal procedures should be followed.

5 Formal Procedure

- 5.1 A formal meeting will be held to discuss the employee's performance and the consequences for the probation period. The employee will be given five working days notice of the meeting and be advised of their entitlement to be accompanied by a trade union representative or friend. A Human Resources representative will also be present to advise on procedural issues.
- 5.2 Evidence of how performance is unsatisfactory and any action taken to date, including details of any support provided and work observation records, will be provided in writing to the employee before the meeting. Targets, standards, deadlines and further support will be identified and compiled into a draft action plan. The draft action plan will be in writing and given to the employee before the meeting.
- 5.3 At the meeting the employee will be given the opportunity to provide any relevant evidence of matters that may affect performance and which may be unknown to the manager. The employee will also have opportunity to comment on the action plan and will be invited to suggest further sources of support.
- 5.4 A review date will be set where progress will be measured against the action plan targets. The actual length of the review period will depend on what targets have been set. The manager should identify how progress against the action plan will be measured and what evidence will be used for review purposes.
- 5.5 The manager will prepare a note of the meeting and send a copy to the employee, together with a copy of the finalised action plan.
- 5.6 If the employee does not accept that their performance is unsatisfactory and/or if they disagree with any of the manager's notes then the employee may enter a note of dissent which will form part of the record.
- 5.7 Before the review meeting, the manager will consider all available evidence to determine whether sufficient progress has been made. The manager will write a report that provides an assessment of where targets have/have not been met and other supporting documentation, e.g. copies of observation reports, details of support provided. The report and supporting documentation will be sent to the employee five working days before the review meeting.
- 5.8 At the meeting the employee will have opportunity to provide details of any relevant matters that may be affecting performance and which may be unknown to the manager. The employee will also have opportunity to comment on the report and will be invited to suggest further sources of support that may be required. The employee is entitled to be accompanied by a trade union representative or friend. A Human Resources representative will also be present to advise on procedural issues

5.9 The outcomes of the meeting and appropriate responses are likely to include:

Outcome	Response
All targets are met and the employee is performing at a satisfactory standard	No further action required. Normal probation requirements continued
Significant progress has been made but further limited support is required to secure a permanent satisfactory standard	Extension of the review period.
Targets not met with mitigating circumstances, e.g. a period of ill health or it became impossible to provide a vital part of the agreed support package.	Extension of the review period or extension of the probation period.
Targets not met.	The employee will be notified that their performance remains unsatisfactory, and that the probation period has been failed leading to dismissal

5.10 The manager will prepare a note of the meeting including the assessment of where targets have/have not been met. A copy of the note will be sent to the employee together with a copy of any revised action plan.

5.11 If the employee does not accept that their performance remains unsatisfactory, or if they disagree with any of the manager's notes then the employee may enter a note of dissent which will form part of the record.

5.12 Alternatively if the decision is to fail the probationary period the employee will be dismissed with contractual notice or with pay in-lieu of notice (PILON). The Panel will determine what duties may be required from the individual during any notice period.

6 Appeal

6.1 An employee may appeal against a decision to fail their probationary period. The employee must exercise the right to appeal within 10 working days of being notified of the outcome and must provide written grounds of appeal to Human Resources.

6.2 The Appeal will be heard by a Panel of three Senior Managers from outside the School or Service.

6.3 The employee must be given at least 10 working days notice of the appeal hearing and advised of the entitlement to be represented by a trade union representative or a friend. The letter giving such notice should state the date, time and place of the appeal hearing, attach all relevant documentation, give the names of those hearing the appeal and any witnesses to be called in person.

6.4 All relevant documents, including the grounds of appeal and manager response, will be made available to the Appeal Panel in sufficient time to enable the Panel to read the evidence on both sides and prepare questions. Appeal Panel members must not discuss the case with anyone (apart from fellow Panel members) prior to the hearing.

6.5 A member of Human Resources staff will be present to advise the Panel on procedure.

- 6.6 The Panel should arrange for all persons present to introduce themselves and all witnesses as they are called. The purpose of the appeal hearing should be explained. The Chair will remind those present (and in turn the witnesses) that the proceedings are confidential.
- 6.7 Once all the evidence has been presented and all questions asked, the appeal hearing will be concluded, all parties except the Panel and any advisors will leave the room. The Appeal Panel must consider all the evidence presented to them and decide whether to confirm, modify or overturn the decision regarding the probationary period.
- 6.8 The outcome of the hearing must be confirmed in writing to the employee within five working days.
- 6.9 Where an appeal against dismissal is successful the notice will be immediately withdrawn or where PILON has operated the employee will be immediately re-instated and adjustments to salary made to reclaim any PILON payments already made.
- 6.10 The decision of the Appeal Panel is final. This does not affect an individual's statutory rights.

Appendix One: Guidance on Induction Programmes

- 1 Induction arrangements apply wherever someone undertakes a new role, or has been absent for a long period e.g. return from maternity leave, return from sabbatical.
- 2 Before the employee starts work you need to ensure that you have planned out the activities for the first week at work. Use the Induction Checklist to help you.
- 3 Ideally you should always arrange for a new employee to start work when you are available. However this is not always possible and in such circumstances you must ensure that a named person is responsible for day one/week one arrangements. You should write to the employee before they start work explaining your absence and informing them of who they should report to on their first day.
- 4 On the first day you should meet with the employee to outline the activities for that day. Whilst the activities will need to be determined by each school/service the first day activities should include the following:
 - A tour of the School/Service/University
 - Opportunity to meet immediate work colleagues
 - Know where work is carried out
 - Know where personal possessions are stored
 - Check that each employee has resources they need to do the job (e.g. office, computer, IT password, library access, supplies, uniform, specialist equipment)
 - Checking that each employee knows how to use equipment in regular use (e.g. photocopier, fax machine). Checking understanding of use of specialist equipment in immediate use and identify week one training needs
 - School/Service health and safety requirements
 - Social routines e.g. tea/coffee, lottery, birthdays etc...
 - Planned lunch arrangements with manager and/or colleagues
- 5 Activities will be determined by the nature of the job but by the end of week one should include the following:
 - Central training and orientation activities (from the central programme)
 - Training in specialist equipment
 - Opportunity to meet colleagues from outside the School/Service
 - Work tasks and activities
 - Understand any University or School/Service procedures e.g. reporting sickness, annual leave, leave of absence, financial regulations
 - Understand how the job fits into the School/Service
 - Understand who important work contacts are and how to reach them
 - Understand how to access the tools needed to do the job
 - Identify training needs
- 6 You should meet the new employee at the end of their first day to assess how things have gone, to introduce the week one programme and to answer any questions the employee may have. You should arrange to meet the employee at the end of week one to assess how things have gone, to discuss clear work expectations, to identify any immediate development needs and to answer any questions the employee may have.
- 7 The induction programme may be spread over several days or weeks, and may incorporate specific job training, but the following points should be considered:
 - All employees need to be able to work in a safe and healthy manner
 - People can take in only so much information at any given time, and should not be overloaded

- If there are special health and safety requirements make sure the employee fully understands their importance
- Don't forget induction needs for shift workers – they may need to work on modified shift patterns for a short period.
- The time needed to learn in-house software may be longer than anticipated. Some programmes are not very user friendly but because they are so well known to existing staff, it is easy to forget how long it takes to become used to them.
- People should always have time to practice the use of specialist machinery with supervision before being expected to operate it alone under normal conditions.