



LEEDS  
BECKETT  
UNIVERSITY

# Probationary Policy and Procedure

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# Policy and Procedure

## 1. Purpose

1.1 The Employment Probation Policy provides for the introduction of:

- Probationary periods of employment for all newly appointed employees to Leeds Beckett University, during which suitability for the position to which they have been appointed will be assessed.
- Procedures to facilitate the support, review and assessment of newly appointed employees.

1.2 The Policy complements and supports the provision and operation of other key areas including:

- Recruitment and Selection
- Employee Induction
- Performance & Development Review scheme
- Equal Opportunities Statement

## 2. Introduction

2.1 It is regarded as good employment practice to provide all newly appointed employees with a pre-determined period of planned induction, training and assessment. A probationary period included as an integral part of the employment contract provides a focus and engenders commitment to the above processes.

2.2 The probationary period should be regarded as a period of continuous review providing positive benefit to the employee and our University. The time should be taken to develop an employee's competency, capability and conduct (hereafter referred to as performance), and to induct, train and advise employees of their duties, and responsibilities. Suitable support, on-the-job training and internal and external training interventions should be provided where appropriate in order for the employee to reach a fully competent standard as quickly as possible for a fair assessment to be made of his/her progress and performance. The intention is to support the employee to reach their full potential.

Where performance is unsatisfactory it may result in the employee's contract being terminated.

## 3. Staff Designated to Determine Probationary Periods

3.1 **Appointment Category** **Designated Manager**

Senior Management (excluding senior post holders) ***Vice Chancellor / Nominee***

Local Management, Academic, Support Staff ***Dean / Director / Nominee***

***\* Otherwise staff designated to determine probationary periods will be as advised by Human Resources.***

#### **4. Probationary Periods**

4.1 The probationary period determined should reflect the diversity and nature of the responsibilities and duties of the appointment and should therefore allow the staff member responsible for the management of the employee's probation to:

- Assess/review the performance of a new employee and to determine their suitability to do the job.
- Assess the employee's satisfaction with the job role.
- Give some initial consideration to the employee's actual and potential training and development needs.

4.2 In most cases the staff member responsible for managing probation will be the immediate/direct line manager.

4.3 The following probationary periods of employment are intended as a guide:

Grades 1 - 5	up to 6 months
Grades 6 & above	up to 12 months

4.4 Employees appointed to academic posts will normally be required to serve a probationary period of employment where the appointee is a new entrant to teaching in Higher or Further Education and/or where the appointee has significantly different job responsibilities.

4.5 For appointments which are relatively short term i.e. one year and under, and/or where it is unlikely that the contract will be extended, the period of probation may be reduced following consultation with the Designated Manager and Human Resources. Examples include employees who are appointed to work on time/funding limited projects, and cover for maternity/long term absence etc.

4.6 At the end of the probationary period the Manager Responsible will recommend to the Designated Manager whether the employee has demonstrated the necessary standard of performance for the appointment to be confirmed.

#### **5. Probation – Periods of Notice**

5.1 Where a decision is made to terminate an employee's contract during probation, this would normally be with immediate effect and our University reserves the right to pay lieu instead of notice.

#### **6. Extension of a Probationary Period**

6.1 Following a formal review it is open for the Manager responsible to recommend that the probationary appointment of a member of staff should be extended. Recommendations should be forwarded to the designated Manager who will in turn consult with Human Resources. Where an extension is considered to be appropriate, the following points should be set out clearly in a letter to the employee concerned.

- That the employee's performance to date, has not met the required standard as specified at the review.

- Explain what improvements are needed in order for the employee to know what to aim for.
- The support, help or guidance that, within reason, is available.
- Set a final review date (not longer than 3 months would be envisaged for an extended probationary period).
- Make it clear what will happen if the required standard is still not achieved by the next review date, i.e. termination of appointment.
- Remind the employee that if they do not understand or are still not clear about what is required of them, it is their responsibility to seek further information from the Manager Responsible.

## **7. Probationary Procedures**

- 7.1 The procedures which follow, have been drawn up in order that all employees within their probationary period of employment are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner.
- 7.2 On appointment, the manager responsible will be assigned with responsibility for induction, basic training, monitoring the employee's work and performance, probation review and assessment.
- 7.3 It is stressed that the probationary procedure is intended to support the employee during the probation period.
- 7.4 The probationary period is to be regarded as a period of continuous informal review supported by a formal structure of meetings and report as follows.

## **8. Probation Interview**

- 8.1 A probation interview, between the employee and the Manager responsible, will normally be held within the first week of the employee's appointment.
- 8.2 The purpose of the probation interview is to conduct a joint review of the:
  - Induction programme
  - Job Description – duties and outcomes
  - Required levels of performance and monitoring
  - Support and training requirements
  - Probation Policy
- 8.3 The Manager responsible will make a note of the meeting using a standard proforma (Appendix 1). A copy will be given to the employee concerned, the Designated Manager and Human Resources.
- 8.4 The Manager responsible, following consultation with the employee, may make arrangements for the allocation of a buddy/mentor.

## **9. Progress Reviews**

- 9.1 During the probationary period of employment, it is recommended that the Manager Responsible will normally conduct a minimum of two progress review meetings with the

employee. The meetings shall be held at appropriate intervals having regard for the duration of the probation period.

- 9.2 The employee concerned will be notified in writing of the arrangements for the meeting and requested to complete Section B of the Probationary Progress Report Form (attached Appendix 2).
- 9.3 The purpose of the meeting should be to review and record progress and agree measures towards the realisation of the outcomes and levels of performance discussed at the probation interview.
- 9.4 If, at a progress review meeting, areas of development/improvement are identified, it should be made clear to the employee:
  - which performance indicators will be used to monitor progress in the future
  - what action is necessary to improve performance from our University's viewpoint
  - the process to be followed should the employee's performance not reach the required standard.
- 9.5 Every opportunity must be afforded to the employee to explain their views and disclose any extraneous factors e.g. medical or domestic problems which may be relevant to their performance. The timescale for improvement should reflect the 'weight of' extraneous factors.
- 9.6 Following the progress review meeting the Manager Responsible should complete Section C of the Probationary Progress Report Form. Copies should be forwarded to the employee, the Designated Manager and Human Resources.

## **10. Assessment**

- 10.1 A final review/assessment meeting held between the employee and the manager responsible will take place towards the end of the probationary period. However, where appropriate, this may take place earlier, depending upon performance and progress. The purpose of the meeting will be to undertake a review and to assess the employee's performance such as to enable the manager responsible to recommend:
  - confirmation of appointment
  - termination of appointment
  - alternative action i.e. extension of probationary period
- 10.2 The timing of the meeting must be such as to allow for a formal consideration of the recommendations made.
- 10.3 The review and assessment should focus on the outcomes and levels of performance outlined at the probation interview and take into account any previous progress review report/s and progress since the last review.
- 10.4 As probation is a non-disciplinary process the presumption is that employees will not be accompanied at meetings within the procedure. However where non-confirmation of

employment has been indicated as a possible outcome, the employee will have the right to be accompanied by either a trade union representative or a fellow employee.

- 10.5 The employee concerned will be notified in writing of the arrangements for the meeting.
- 10.6 Following the final review/assessment meeting the manager responsible will complete a Final Probationary Progress Report and Recommendation for Completion Form (Appendix 3). The form with recommendations should be forwarded to the designated manager and a copy sent to Human Resources.
- 10.7 On receipt of the form the Designated Manager will, following consultation with the manager responsible and Human Resources, decide if the probationary period has been satisfactorily completed.
- 10.8 Where it is decided that performance is satisfactory in all areas the designated manager will notify Human Resources in writing to this effect.
- 10.9 All employees will be informed by Human Resources in writing, of the successful completion of their probationary period.

## **11. Confirmation of appointment for employees on temporary contracts**

- 11.1 Employees on temporary contracts may be considered to have satisfactorily completed probation without conferring the right to a permanent appointment.

## **12. Recommendation to terminate the appointment**

- 12.1 When on receipt of the Final Probationary Progress Report Form and following consultation with the manager responsible and Human Resources, the designated manager decides to terminate the appointment; a report should be submitted to the Vice Chancellor/nominee. The report should include the following information:

- A copy of the Final Probationary Progress Report Form.
- A copy of the note/s of the Probationary Interview and subsequent Probationary Progress Reports.
- Full details of the duties of the employee during the probationary period.
- Any record/s of the oral and written advice and guidance given to the employee concerned, and of the occasions on which cautions, whether oral or written, were given of inadequacies and how they might be remedied.
- The name/s of other employees e.g. a mentor who have been consulted and who concur with it.
- Any other information thought to be relevant by the manager responsible.

- 12.2 For senior post holders, please refer to separate procedures for dismissal.

## **13. Formal consideration of the recommendation**

- 13.1 Human Resources will write to the employee to arrange a meeting to discuss the recommendation that their contract be terminated and to take the opportunity of stating

his/her case before the Vice Chancellor/nominee. The letter will outline the reasons/circumstances leading to the recommendation to terminate the contract.

- 13.2 The meeting will be chaired by the Vice Chancellor/nominee (who has not had any prior involvement in reviewing the performance of the employee) and the designated manager, a senior member of Human Resources, the employee and as appropriate, his/her representative will be invited to attend.
- 13.3 The meeting will be conducted in a way which permits our University and employee to state their case fully, ask questions and respond to any written statements. The Vice Chancellor/nominee has the right to decide to interview any other person/s if so wished.
- 13.4 On conclusion of the meeting the Vice Chancellor/nominee, supported by a senior member of Human Resources, will consider the representations and reach a decision on the matter.
- 13.5 The decision of the Vice Chancellor/nominee will normally be advised verbally at the conclusion of the meeting and will be conveyed in writing to the employee within 3 working days of the meeting and copied to the designated manager, the Manager Responsible and Human Resources. The employee will also be notified of the right to appeal.

#### **14. Appeals against termination of contract**

- 14.1 Employees have a statutory right to appeal against termination of contract. The process and timescales for appealing are outlined in the Staff Appeals Policy and Procedure.

#### **15. Miscellaneous**

- 15.1 Those employed in a trainee capacity are covered by the above. However, consideration may need to be given to extend the period specified. Such an extension should only be made following consultation with the designated manager and Human Resources.
- 15.2 Any period of maternity leave during a probationary period does not count towards completion of probation. In other cases of absence, the advice of Human Resources should be sought.
- 15.3 The needs of employees with a disability should be discussed in relation to possible impact on performance and taking appropriate advice. Any adjustments which may overcome potential difficulties will be considered. A referral to Occupational Health may also be made where appropriate.
- 15.4 If an employee's probationary performance is giving cause for concern the employee should be informed immediately what the problems are and what improvement is necessary. At the same time consideration should be given to what help and advice might be provided in order to obtain the required improvement.
- 15.5 It should be made clear at all formal and informal meetings with the employee that failure to achieve an acceptable level of performance/improvement is likely to result in a recommendation to terminate the appointment.

## 16. Operation and Review

16.1 The procedure will be effective from September 2007 and will apply to all appointments within purview of the following terms and conditions of employment:

- ***Support Staff***
- ***Academic***
- ***Local Contracts for Managers***
- ***Senior Managers (excluding Senior Postholders)***

16.2 A copy of our University's Employment Probation Policy and Procedures will be made available to all employees where appointment is subject to the satisfactory completion of probation.

16.3 The content and application of the procedure will be periodically reviewed in light of experience, changes to legislation and other relevant factors. Employees will be informed of any changes, following consultation with Trade Unions.

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PROBATION INTERVIEW REPORT**

To be completed by the Manager Responsible for probation.

Name of employee:	Job Title:
Start date:	Mentor / Buddy (if applicable):
Date of initial probation interview:	Period of Probation: From: // to //

	Comments and follow up actions	Who responsible	Deadline
Outline of Induction Programme			
Job Description: Review / Explanation of Duties			
Required Levels of Performance and Monitoring			
Support and Training Requirements			
Explanation of Probationary Policy			
Date of next review			

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Manager Responsible)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Employee)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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PROBATIONARY PROGRESS REPORT

SECTION A

To be completed by the Manager Responsible for probation and forwarded to the employee concerned.

Name of employee on probation:	Job Title:
Start date:	Mentor / Buddy (if applicable):
Period of Probation: From: // to //	Dates which report refers to: to

SECTION B

To be completed by the **employee on probation** and passed to the **Manager Responsible for completion of Section C overleaf** before the progress meeting.

1. With reference to your current job description please state your main achievements over the review period and include examples of any objectives met as agreed at the probation interview.	
2. Please list any training or other self-development initiatives taken during the review period.	
3. Please comment on any further training/advise etc. required for the remainder of the probation period.	
Signed: _____	Date: _____

## SECTION C

To be completed by the **Manager Responsible for the employee's probation.**

1. Assessment of employee's progress. Please comment on performance and progress concentrating on the performance and outcomes outlined at the probation interview.	
2. Are there any areas in which performance/progress is not satisfactory? <b>Yes/No</b> (If answer is 'yes' please state specific areas of difficulty and a brief structural plan of advice, guidance and training to be provided.)	
3. Please state agreed outcomes for the review period and plans for providing guidance and developmental opportunities and in the case of unsatisfactory progress state specific goals and objectives that will permit progress to be judged as satisfactory.	
4. Date of next/final review meeting.	
<b>Signatures</b> I confirm that the comments on this form were discussed and agreed at the probationary progress meeting.	
_____ (Manager Responsible)	_____ (Date)
_____ (Designation)	
_____ (Employee)	_____ (Date)
Early completion of probation Recommendations for early completion of probation are encouraged, where appropriate, at any time during the appointment. Recommendations should be submitted on the Final Probationary Progress Report and Recommendation for Completion Form to the Designated Manager, copied to the employee and Human Resources.	

**This report should be retained by the Manager Responsible and copies sent to the Designated Manager, the employee and Human Resources**

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**FINAL PROBATIONARY PROGRESS REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION FOR COMPLETION**

To be completed by the **Manager Responsible for the employee's probation** following the final review/assessment meeting and returned to **the Designated Manager** at the end of the period of probation (or sooner if early completion of probation is recommended).

Name of employee:	Job Title:
Start Date:	Mentor / Buddy(if applicable):
Period of Probation: From: // to //	

<b>Performance and Progress</b>
<b>Objectives/ Standard achieved</b>
<b>Training/Support put in place</b>

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<b>Recommendation</b>		
Do you wish to recommend:		
	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Early completion of probation and confirmation of appointment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Date from which confirmed appointment should take effect:		
Confirmation of appointment at end of Probationary Period	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Extension of Probationary Period to (maximum extension period 3 months)		
Non-confirmation of appointment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where extension of the probationary period or non-confirmation of appointment are recommended please state fully the reasons for your decision:		
_____ (Manager Responsible) _____		(Date)
_____ (Designation)		

**This report should be forwarded to the Designated Manager, a copy should be retained by the Manager Responsible and copies sent to the employee and Human Resources.**