

Probationary Policy and Procedure

March 2021

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Version Control History

Version Number	Date of Change	Summary of Revisions Made
.0		
.5	March 2021	Footer updated to reflect new template model. Update of job titles and people responsible. Update on the guidance notes on Teaching Observations Process and Teaching Observation Forms.

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A - Probation Policy

A1 Purpose

The purpose of probation is to ensure that the performance of the new members of staff and existing staff who are internally promoted or transfer roles is monitored regularly, problems are resolved at an early stage, and any inability to meet the requirements of the job is recognised and necessary action taken promptly.

A2 Scope

When a new member of staff is appointed, there is an expectation and belief that the individual is capable of performing their duties to a satisfactory standard. All newly appointed staff will, unless otherwise agreed, be subject to a period of probation, of normally 6 months in duration.

Equally when an existing staff member is promoted internally or transfers to another role the expectation is that they will be able to undertake the role. All existing staff who are promoted internally or who transfer to a new role will, unless otherwise agreed, be subject to a period of probation, of normally 6 months in duration.

A3 Definitions

Probationer: A new member of staff or an existing staff member who has been internally promoted or has transferred role.

A4 Key Principles

A4.1 The performance of probationers is monitored at defined intervals from commencements in post.

A4.2 The process is inclusive. Probationers have input into the action plans that document the process, and must sign to show their agreement. Probationers also have the right of appeal on a decision not to continue the probationer in post after the probationary period.

A4.3 Early intervention is taken in cases where performance is found to be unsatisfactory.

A4.4 This Policy and Procedure will be applied fairly and consistently for all probationers and has been impact assessed to ensure that it is inclusive and fair.

A4.5 This Policy and Procedure will be regularly reviewed to ensure that it reflects current thinking and best practice.

Title: Probationary Policy and Procedure

Version/Status: 5, Final

Approved By/Date: CMT/March 2021

Effective Publication Date: March 2021

Owner: Depute Principal, Academic

Lead Author: Head of HR & Organisational Development

Review Timing/Date: 4 years/2024-25

A5 Responsibilities

- A5.1 The Head of HR and Organisational Development has overall responsibility for implementing and updating this Policy and Procedure.
- A5.2 The probationer's Line Manager will be responsible for managing the probationary period. In some instances the Line Manager's Line Manager may become involved during the probationary period, for example, when conducting a meeting to confirm that the probation is to be extended.
- A5.3 All probationers have a responsibility to attend and engage with meetings held as part of the probationary process.
- A5.4 Quality approval check of the policy is the responsibility of the Quality Manager who will arrange for the policy to be posted on the web.

A6 Linked Policies/Related Documents

- Induction Procedure
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Policy
- Sickness Absence Procedure
- Staff Complaints and Grievance Procedure
- Staff Disciplinary Procedure
- Capability Procedure
- Safeguarding Policy and Procedure: Protecting Children, Young People, Adults at Risk and Staff.

A7 Relevant Legislation

N/A

B - Probation Procedure

B1 Purpose

This Procedure describes the steps that will be followed in applying the key principles of the Probation Policy.

B2 Scope

This Procedure applies to all new members of staff and existing staff members who have been internally promoted or transferred role.

B3 Definitions

Probationer A new member of staff or an existing staff member who has been internally promoted or has transferred role.

B4 Responsibilities

B4.1 The probationer's Line Manager will be responsible for managing the probationary period. In some instances the Line Manager's Line Manager may become involved during the probationary period, for example, when conducting a meeting to confirm that the probation is to be extended.

B4.2 All probationers have a responsibility to attend and engage with meetings held as part of the probationary process.

B5 Procedure

There are 3 stages to the probationary process: first meeting, second meeting, and final assessment. They are described in more detail below.

B5.1 The First Meeting

The first meeting should take place within 2 weeks of the probationer commencing employment. The purpose of the first meeting between the probationer and the line manager is to explain:

- What tasks and responsibilities constitute the job as detailed in the job description.
- What is the required standard of performance.
- The 3 stages of the probationary process: first meeting, review meeting, and final assessment.
- How their performance is going to be assessed.
- The possible outcomes of not meeting the standards required.

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The Line Manager and the probationer shall complete the First Meeting Action Plan (Appendix 1) to assist the probationer fully understand and undertake the role as quickly as possible. The action plan should include:

- Specific job objectives or tasks.
- Skills and competencies that need to be developed to meet the required standard.
- Support to be provided.
- Any training or development requirements, there are a number of mandatory trainings that must be completed for all staff
- New academic staff without a teaching qualification should discuss appropriate qualifications, enrolment and completion. Ongoing support should be provided by a mentor within the academic area, as well as the appropriate college support units. The probationer should have the opportunity to peer observe teaching to inform their professional practice.
- The standards of performance required to be achieved.
- How the achievement of the objectives or tasks are to be measured (for new academic staff measurement will include a classroom observation/review of teaching practice).
- Time frames for achievement.

The action plan must be realistic, deliverable within existing resources, recognise any constraints and allow for monitoring and review.

At the end of the meeting the action plan should be agreed. Both the probationer and the Line Manager should sign the action plan and retain a copy for their own reference. A copy shall also be forwarded to the Human Resources (HR) Department to be placed on the probationer's personal file.

The support agreed in the action plan to be provided by the college will be monitored by the Line Manager. The Line Manager must explain to the probationer that the consequences of inaction or non-achievement of the objectives or tasks in the action plan may result in the probationer not being confirmed in post and their employment may eventually be terminated.

B5.2 The Second Meeting

The purpose of the second meeting is to undertake a review of the probationer's progress towards the objectives set in the First Meeting Action Plan and their performance of the responsibilities documented in the job description for the role.

The meeting should take place at a pre-determined time allowing for adequate time between the first meeting and second review meeting to enable the employee to demonstrate their capability to fulfil the requirements of the job.

For newly appointed academic staff a teaching observation by the Head of Learning and Teaching Enhancement must have been undertaken prior to the second meeting. The timing of this must be agreed in consultation with the probationer, who

should have had the opportunity for informal peer feedback and support prior to this. This observation should be arranged to take place around 12 weeks after the probationer's start date. The Head of Learning and Teaching Enhancement will use the Guidance Notes on the Teaching Observation Process and Teaching Observation Form – Academic Probation Reviews (Appendix 2).

For lecturers that teaching asynchronously only a review of asynchronous teaching practice will be done as an alternative to observation by the Head of Learning and Teaching Enhancement.

The second review meeting shall take place no later than 4 months after the probationer has commenced employment.

The meeting is an opportunity for the Line Manager to give feedback on performance to date, to acknowledge successes, and to discuss alternative strategies where objectives are not being met. The Line Manager must also provide adequate opportunity for the employee to explain how things are going and for the manager to gain understanding of the situation from the employee's perspective with a view to clarifying and discussing any issues which emerge.

At the end of the meeting the Second Meeting Action Plan (Appendix 3) should be completed. Both the employee and the Line Manager should sign the action plan and retain a copy for their own reference. A copy shall also be forwarded to the HR Department to be placed on the employee's personal file.

B5.3 If there is a Problem with the Performance

During the probation period it is crucial that the Line Manager contacts the HR Department immediately should they start to have concerns about the ability of the probationer to successfully complete their probationary period.

The Line Manager should seek to have a meeting with the employee at the earliest opportunity to determine what is causing the problem. If the employee cites factors at the workplace that impede performance, then the line manager should investigate/consider those factors and where it is reasonable and appropriate, steps should be taken to change or minimise these factors.

If a personal or health issue is identified as causing the problem, the Line Manager via the HR Department, should consider referring the individual to the Occupational Health Adviser who will explore if the health issue may be affecting work performance and provide appropriate advice.

As part of identifying what can be done to resolve the problem, consideration should also be given to providing additional training and development.

Where the area of concern is related to the probationer's teaching capability, the nature of this should be clearly identified and an appropriate development plan supported in collaboration with the Head of Learning and Teaching Enhancement. A

further teaching observation should be arranged at an agreed time to confirm that performance meets the required standard.

Details of the areas of non performance together with the agreed action should be documented in writing on the Action Plans. Copies should be retained by both parties, with the College's copy placed on the employee's personal HR file.

If there are serious concerns about the probationer's ability and/or conduct at any time between review meetings, the line manager must contact the HR Department immediately. The HR Department will arrange a meeting between the Line Manager's Line Manager, or an appropriate Senior Manager and the probationer to discuss the concerns and consider any mitigating circumstances. The Line Manager's Line Manager or appropriate Senior Manager will chair the meeting. The probationer can have a work colleague or trade union representative present at the meeting.

Following consideration of the issues discussed at the meeting, the Chair of the meeting will decide whether to terminate the probationer's employment or continue with the probationary period.

The Chair's decision will be communicated in writing to the probationer. In the event of a dismissal, the probationer will have a right of appeal, details of which will be provided in any outcome letter.

B5.4 The Final Assessment

The Line Manager should arrange a meeting with the employee to take place at the pre-arranged final assessment date. This date shall be at least 2 weeks prior to the completion of the 6 month probationary period. The employee should be informed of the meeting time, date and place.

For newly appointed academic staff a management observation/review of teaching practice must have been undertaken prior to the final assessment meeting. The timing of this must be agreed in consultation with the probationer, who should have had the opportunity for feedback and support prior to this from the Head of Learning and Teaching Enhancement. The management observation should be arranged to take place around 21 weeks after the probationer's start date. The function of this management observation is to assess whether the probationers teaching is off the required standard. The line manager will use the Guidance Notes on the Teaching Observation Process and Teaching Observation Form – Academic Probation Reviews (Appendix 2). For lecturers that teaching asynchronously only, a review of asynchronous teaching practice will be done as an alternative by the Sector Manager/Subject Leader.

The purpose of this meeting will be to carry out a final assessment of performance and provide feedback to the employee on the content of the final report. The report should detail an assessment of the employee's performance against the established criteria detailed in the action plan and against the job description for the role, this review will also confirm that all mandatory training has been completed.

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Version/Status: 5, Final
Approved By/Date: CMT/March 2021
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Review Timing/Date: 4 years/2024-25

The evaluation should be based on factual, observable, measurable job related information. Resolutions and/or recommendations, either favourable or adverse, must be specified in the final report.

The meeting should focus on:

- The achievement or non-achievement of objectives, and
- The effectiveness or non-effectiveness of activities related to the agreed standards and targets.
- The performance or non-performance of the duties as specified in the job description for the role.

The outcome of the final assessment can be either:

- 1 The employee continued to perform to an acceptable standard.
- 2 The previously recorded non-effective performance has been satisfactorily resolved, or;
- 3 The previously recorded non-effective performance has not improved.

If the performance has not reached the expected standard, the Line Manager should during the course of the review meeting try to ascertain whether there has been any organisationally imposed barriers to effective performance, such as:

- Failing to provide the agreed training or support.
- Insufficient support mechanisms being made available.

If organisational barriers are not identified, the manager may conclude that the non-improvement in performance is attributable to the employee. If the Line Manager intends to submit an adverse report they must advise the employee of their intention to do so, and that the situation will be discussed with the HR Department.

After the meeting, the manager should complete and sign the Probationary Record of Final Assessment and provide a copy to the employee. A copy should also be forwarded to HR Department for discussion.

In the event that an adverse report is submitted, the Line Manager will discuss with the HR Department whether an extension of the probationary period would enable the employee to reach the desired level of performance, including completion of any outstanding mandatory trainings. In the event that this is considered to be an appropriate option a meeting will be arranged with the employee to discuss the length of the extension; the acceptable standard of performance that must be reached and any support that will be provided. The employee has the right to be accompanied to this meeting by a work place colleague or union representative. The outcome of this meeting will be documented in a letter to the employee.

Where an extension to a probationary period is not considered appropriate or if an extension to the probationary period has not resulted in the necessary standard of

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performance being achieved then the HR Department will write to the employee inviting them to attend a meeting. The letter will detail the areas of non performance and the possible outcomes of the meeting. The employee has the right to be accompanied to this meeting by a work place colleague or trade union representative.

The meeting will be chaired by the Line Manager's Line Manager, or an appropriate Senior Manager and an HR representative will be present. During the meeting the probationer's Line Manager's report will be considered. The employee will be given the opportunity to provide an explanation and details of any mitigating circumstances. There will then follow an adjournment to consider the outcome of the meeting. The outcome will be one of the following:

- Dismissal of the employee.
- A further extension of the probationary period.

The conclusion will be communicated to the probationer at the meeting. The probationer will also be sent a letter confirming the decision.

B5.5 Appeals

In the event that the decision is taken to terminate the probationer's employment they will have the right of appeal and details of this will be provided in the outcome letter..

The Appeal must be lodged within 10 working days of receipt of the letter confirming the decision. The appeal letter should detail the full grounds of the appeal.

Appendix 1

Week 2

Probationary Period First Meeting Action Plan

Name	
Job Title	
Department	
Manager	
Date Commenced	
Date of Meeting	

Action Plan

Job/Task Objectives

Detail Specific Objective	Person Responsible to Complete

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Training/Development Required (Update 'Development Needs' in Ciph'r Net)

Development Activity	Person Responsible to Complete	Date for Completion
Mandatory Trainings		

Date agreed for second probationary review: _____ at _____ am/pm

(Should be no later than 4 months after commencement of employee's start date.)

I hereby acknowledge this represents an accurate reflection of the key discussion points of the first probationary review.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
(Employee)

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
(Manager)

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Appendix 2

Guidance Notes on the Teaching Observation Process and Teaching Observation Form – Academic Probation Reviews

There are 2 teaching observations required as part of Perth College UHI Probation Policy for Academic staff, and you will also have an opportunity to observe a colleague teaching. There will be 2 observations of your own teaching. The Head of Learning and Teaching Enhancement will observe you initially and he/she will work with you to prepare for this and to reflect on it when it is completed. This first observation is designed to be formative and developmental and during this process the Head of Learning and Teaching Enhancement will assume a role of mentor and coach in order to help you prepare for your observation by your line manager.

Both teaching observations will be around an hour in duration and should be of one of your regular classes. Your second observation will be with your Sector Manager/Subject leader and will follow the same format but have the function of a management observation where an assessment of your teaching performance will be made.

The teaching/lesson plan provided allows you to prepare for your role in the teaching environment and to demonstrate the way in which your planned activities encourage a successful learner. The plan is completed by you and the observation report will be completed by your observer.

The Teaching Plan

You should prepare your teaching plan in advance of your observed session and send it to your observer. It should normally be sent one **week in advance** of the observation; later submission must be agreed with your observer.

The Observation

On the day of your observation your observer will arrange to meet you in advance of your class. During your class he/she will observe from a place in the room which does not restrict your delivery and it is perfectly acceptable for you to suggest an appropriate area. The observer will not interrupt your class. He/she may be taking notes either on paper or on a laptop as you deliver your session.

After your class he/she will give you some immediate feedback. Part 2 of the Observation of Teaching Report is completed by the observer. As you will see, this part of the form has many similar sections to the teaching plan. The observer will highlight your strengths and also your areas of development.

Within a fortnight of your observation your observer will send to you, as an email attachment, the form completed to the end of Part 2. For the first observation this form is not sent anywhere else. Your Sector Manager/Subject Leader will be advised that you have completed your observations only.

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In the unlikely event it becomes evident that further professional development is required, your observer will discuss with you the way in which this could be achieved. Further observation may be negotiated at this stage.

Personal and Professional Evaluation of Observed Session

On return of your form, you are encouraged to complete the Personal and Professional Evaluation section, Part 3 of the Observation of Teaching Report form.

To complete this part of the module assessment you need to add your personal and professional evaluation of the session using these criteria:

- Evaluate the quality of your own teaching and the educational experience of the learners. Identify examples of where, through planned activities or naturally-occurring opportunities, you were able to develop skills for learning, life and employment.
- Discuss your strategies for improving any 'areas for development' which were identified.
- Reflect on your own evaluation, comments from the observer and feedback from your learners, and the implications for the enhancement of your future practice, and the progression of the learners.

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Observation of Teaching Form

Participant:	Date:
Curriculum Area:	Class:
Observer:	Number of Learners:

Part 1: Teaching Plan
Overview of learners (class; subject; level; context) and special considerations:
Opening (state your aims for the session, consider previous learning and learning direction):
Specific learning outcomes/lesson objectives:
Strategies you will use to promote learning, progress and achievement:
Method/approach you will use:
Timing and sequence of the lesson activities:

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Outline of the teaching/learning resources to be used by yourself and the learners during the session:
Description of the learning environment (physical, social and emotional):
Ways in which you will meet the diverse individual and collective needs of your learners:
How have you implemented any of the 12 Learning and Teaching Enhancement Values?
Assessment (outline your design and use of formative and, as appropriate, summative assessment instruments):
Conclusion (how the session will end, what your indicators of success will be, and the next steps):

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Contingency plans:

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General comments:

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Part 2: Observer's Report		
Date:	Class:	Number of Learners:
	Met ✓	Comment (optional)
Planning and Preparation Coherent plan of teaching and learning activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Opening Aims of the session communicated effectively, links made with previous learning, and clear information on what was expected of the learners.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Strategies A range of strategies implemented to motivate the learners, promote active participation and develop independence in learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Resources A range of teaching/learning resources used which were accessible to all learners.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Learning Environment Development of a safe, interactive and supportive learning environment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
12 Learning and Teaching Enhancement Values Understanding and use of appropriate values.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Inclusion The diverse individual and collective needs of learners met and supported.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Assessment The design and use of a range of formative assessments which checked for understanding, provided feedback on progress and endorsed achievement. Links made to summative assessment as appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Conclusion Session drawn to a satisfactory conclusion with key learning points summarised. Opportunities for the students to ask questions and effective links made to previous and future learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Particular Strengths:	Areas for Development:	

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Part 3: Personal and Professional Evaluation

Evaluate the quality of your own teaching and the educational experience of the learners. Identify examples of where, through planned activities or naturally-occurring opportunities, you were able to develop skills for learning, life and employment.

Discuss your strategies for improving any 'areas for development' which were identified.

Reflect on your own evaluation, comments from the observer and feedback from your learners, and the implications for the enhancement of your future practice and progression of the learners.

Signature of Participant _____ **Date:** _____

Signature of Observer: _____ **Date:** _____

Materials adapted with permission from: University of Dundee (Teaching Qualification) 2009

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Successes to Date

Please list areas in which the employee has performed well.

Development Areas

Please provide details of areas where further development is required including support to be offered. Update 'Development Needs' section of Ciphre Net.

Summary

Please provide summary of employee's performance to date in the role.

Date agreed for final probationary review _____ at _____ am/pm

(Should take place at least 2 weeks prior to the 6 month anniversary employee commenced employment.)

I hereby agree this represents an accurate reflection of the key discussion points of the second probationary review meeting.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
(Employee)

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
(Manager)

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Appendix 4

Week 24

Probationary Review Meeting – Final Assessment

Name	
Job Title	
Department	
Manager	
Date Commenced	
Date of Meeting	

Achievement/Non Achievement of Job/Developmental Objective

Please specify below the performance of the employee against the probationary action plans, including completion of mandatory trainings.

Performance/Non Performance of Duties as Specified in Job Description

Please detail the performance of the employee against the job description for the role. For Lecturers, managers must refer to teaching observation/review.

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Training/Development Requirements

Please specify any training and development requirements the employee may require in the next 6 month period and update 'Development Needs' section of Ciphr Net.

Probationary Period Outcome

Employee performed role to required standard:

Employee has not reached the required standard for the job:

Signed:
(Manager)

Date: _____

Please return form to the HR Department. Please provide employee with a copy and retain a copy for your reference.

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