

Probationary Period Guidelines & Paperwork

1. Introduction

We recognise the importance of providing new colleagues with a framework that provides them with support when they start their employment journey at UWS.

New colleagues will have a period of induction that will enable them to become familiar with the University, policies and procedures of their role. Where possible, they will be assigned a 'buddy' by their line manager to support their integration into the department/school and UWS.

New employees are required to complete a probationary period and line managers should follow the guidelines outlined in this document and complete the paperwork.

This involves agreeing initial short-term objectives and development plan for all new employees and this should be done within the My Contribution paperwork. Short-term objectives will ensure there is clarity of expectations and the identification of development needs early on will ensure that we provide the right level of support based on individual requirements to ensure that the new employee is fully equipped to deliver the agreed objectives.

These guidelines set out our approach to the probation of new colleagues, providing a consistent framework that ensures clear expectations are established for both the new employee and the University at the earliest opportunity.

2. Aims of the Probationary Period Guidelines & Paperwork

- To ensure that the probationary process is applied fairly, consistently to all new employees;
- To ensure that the new employee is fully supported on the commencement of their employment with UWS through the identification of specific objectives as well as any tailored learning and development interventions that support individual development needs;
- To strengthen the link between probation, induction and My Contribution and emphasise the need for all to underpin the support and development of all new employees;
- To provide the University with the opportunity to assess the skills, conduct, capability of employee;
- To provide the employee the opportunity to assess if the University is the right employer for them.

3. Roles & Responsibilities

3.1 Employee

- Discussing with their line manager any learning, development or support which they believe to be necessary in order for them to fulfil the requirements of the role and the objectives set
- Demonstrating their suitability for the role
- Committing to achieving their agreed objectives
- Discussing with their line manager at the earliest opportunity any difficulties/challenges they are experiencing

3.2 The Line Manager

- Identifying and discussing with the employee the expected standards of performance in line with the job description and school/department priorities
- Ensuring the new employee is inducted effectively into the University, the school/department and their role
- Holding regular one-to-one meetings with the employee in order to ensure a good working relationship is established and provide feedback on the employee's progress
- Providing support, learning and development opportunities and guidance as necessary
- Monitoring the performance of the employee

- Arranging and conducting formal probation review meetings at the intervals prescribed in the probation procedure
- Timely conduct and documentation of probation reviews
- Advising HR Business Partner of the outcome of the probation period
- Confirming verbally whether or not the employee has completed their probationary period successfully at the final review meeting.

3.3 People & OD

- Providing advice and guidance on the probation period for both line managers and the employee
- Advising on cases of unsatisfactory performance/progress and, where appropriate, supporting line managers during formal meetings to address serious cases.
- Providing advice and guidance to the employee where they raise concerns/issues in respect of cases where the line manager has not provided the agreed level of support.
- Confirming in writing the outcome of the probation period

4. Length of Probationary Period

The length of the probationary period will normally be:

- Grade 1 – 2: 3 months
- Grade 3 -7: 6 months
- Grade 8 and above: 12 months
- Academic colleagues: minimum of 12 months and a maximum of 2 years.

It will not normally be appropriate to apply probation to those colleagues who already have employment status with the University and who are moving into a different role.

5. Probationary Review Process

The probationary process will work in conjunction with the induction and My Contribution process, to help create a positive and supportive working environment allowing the employee to embed themselves in the organisation and their role within a realistic timescale.

Clear, comprehensive and accurate records of probation review meetings must be maintained, including how standards are set, what methods are used for measuring them and what timescales are given for reaching them. As a guide, the following is recommended in terms of frequency of review meetings, however, this may be varied depending on individual circumstances:

- Grade 1 – 2: Review every 6 weeks (final review at week 12)
- Grade 3 – 7: Review every 2 months (final review at 6 months)
- Grade 8 and above: Review every 3 months (final review at month 12)
- All academic appointments: review every 3 months

These review meetings should also be supplemented by the on-going conversations the line manager would normally have through the My Contribution process.

A template Probationary Review Meeting Form is provided for this purpose and must be signed by the employee and his/her line manager at each review point to provide a formal record of the probationary period.

Where concerns arise during the probationary period, the line manager should raise these with the employee at the earliest opportunity. This should be done in a supportive manner and the employee should have the opportunity to respond to any concerns. Line managers should discuss and agree any actions that are required to support the employee in meeting the expectations as identified at the outset of the probation.

Following the successful completion of the probationary period and initial objectives, employees and their line manager should then set further objectives in line with My Contribution.

Employees have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or colleague at any formal meetings held to address serious performance issues that have arisen during probation and where dismissal is a possible outcome. This right will not apply in the case of informal discussions between the employee and line manager or at the normal review meetings.

Probationary Review: Insert Date

Use this as a template for all review meeting

To be completed by the Line Manager in discussion with the employee.

	Excellent Progress	Successful Progress	Good Progress	Did not meet
Progress in meeting the objectives set (in My Contribution paperwork)				
Competency in the role				
Work relationships (team work and interpersonal communication skills)				
Attendance and time keeping				
Line Managers Comments: <i>Summarise the employee's performance and progress over the period</i>				
Employees comments: <i>Summarise your experience and comment on line manager support</i>				
Where concerns have been identified, please summarise how these will be addressed during the remaining period of probation.				
Have the objectives identified for this period of the probation been met?	YES / NO	If NO, what further action is required?		Review Date
Have the training / development needs identified for this period of the probation been addressed?	YES / NO			
Employee name and signature:				
Manager name and signature:				
Date:				

Final review

To be completed by the Line Manager in discussion with the employee.

	Excellent Progress	Successful Progress	Good Progress	Did not meet
Progress in meeting the objectives set (in My contribution)				
Competency in the role				
Work relationships (team work and interpersonal communication skills)				
Attendance and time keeping				
Line Managers Comments: <i>Summarise the employee's performance and progress over the period</i>				
Employees comments: <i>Summarise your experience and comment on line manager support</i>				
Where concerns have been identified, please summarise how these will be addressed during the remaining period of probation.				
Have the objectives identified for this period of the probation been met?	YES / NO	If NO, what further action is required?		Review Date
Have the training / development needs identified for this period of the probation been addressed?	YES / NO			
Employee name and signature:				
Manager name and signature:				
Date:				

Conclusion of Probationary Review

Is the employee's appointment to be confirmed?	YES / NO
If NO, please provide reasons below and summarise what action has been taken to address any difficulties which have arisen during the probationary period.	
The employee may provide any comments about their experience of the probationary process here.	
Should the employee's probationary period be extended?	YES / NO
If YES, please provide reasons and, where appropriate, specify any areas of improvement required and how these will be monitored.	
Length of the extension (max 3 months):	
New Probation Period completion date:	
Employee name and signature:	
Manager name and signature:	
Date:	

Following the Final Review and the Conclusion of Probationary Review, the documentation should be completed and returned to the HR Business Partner