



The University of Greater Manchester

Probation Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the University's approach to probation for newly appointed staff. The probationary period offers a structured and supportive opportunity for new employees to settle into their roles, understand institutional expectations, and demonstrate their capability and suitability for long-term employment. It also allows the University to assess performance, conduct, and potential for further contribution in a fair and transparent manner.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all new academic and professional support employees across the University within their probationary period.

The standard probationary period is three months. All academic appointments should be made at the beginning of a teaching cycle or block teaching cycle, as appropriate, to ensure that teaching, research, and wider academic responsibilities can be properly assessed.

Probationary periods do not apply to internal appointments, including promotions, transfers, or reassignments within the University. Employees who have successfully completed an initial probationary period have already demonstrated their suitability for employment within the University. Accordingly, subsequent internal moves are considered a continuation of employment rather than the commencement of a new appointment. While no probationary period will be applied, Line Managers and employees are encouraged to establish clear objectives, provide appropriate support, and monitor performance to ensure a smooth transition into the new role.

Employees that have previously worked on a temporary supply basis or a VHT basis are required to undergo the probation process if appointed to a substantive role.

3. Principles

Probation at the University is underpinned by principles of fairness, consistency, and support. It is designed, not as a punitive measure, but as a developmental period in which new staff can become fully acquainted with their role, the culture of the University, and the expectations associated with their post.

Key to the process is clarity; new staff should have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and performance standards from the outset. Line managers play a central role in providing this clarity, as well as in offering guidance and support throughout the probationary period. Regular review meetings offer opportunities to reflect on progress, identify any areas for improvement, and agree on any further development needs.

Where concerns arise, they should be raised promptly by both the line manager and the employee and addressed constructively. The University encourages open communication and a problem-solving approach, ensuring both parties have the opportunity to address any issues and support the employee's success.

5. Probation Periods and Reviews.

All newly appointed staff will normally be subject to a three-month probationary period. During this period, there will be a minimum of three formal review meetings: at four weeks, eight weeks, and a final review at 11 weeks. Additional informal check-ins may be arranged where appropriate.

Each review meeting should be documented using the University's Probation Review Form and should include a discussion of performance against agreed objectives, any support or training undertaken, and any areas requiring further development.

5. Support and Development

New employees will be provided with a structured induction to support their integration into the University. Early in the probation period, specific objectives will be agreed that align with the core duties of the role and the strategic aims of the department.

Line managers are responsible for ensuring that staff are aware of the resources available to them, including access to training, and other forms of professional development. The University is committed to fostering an environment in which new employees are supported to meet expectations and thrive in their roles, however it is also the employee's responsibility to proactively engage with available resources, demonstrating initiative in their own development and taking accountability for their learning.

Reasonable training and development will be provided based on available resources and should be captured as part of regular employee-manager discussions and detailed as part of performance development/appraisal processes. The University recognises that there may be budget constraints, and in cases where formal training is unavailable, alternative forms of development, such as mentoring or peer learning may be offered to support the employee's growth.

Where additional support is required, for example; in cases of underperformance or difficulty in adapting to the aspects of the role, this will be discussed openly, and a plan for improvement will be agreed.

6. Outcome of Probation

If an employee is failing probation, this should not come as a surprise to them at the end of the probationary period, as a set of supportive improvements should have been actively discussed during probation, making it clear what improvements are required, the timescales, and any additional support. Towards the end of the probationary period the line manager will make a formal recommendation regarding the outcome. Where performance and conduct have been satisfactory, the employee will be confirmed in post and HR will notify them in writing.

Where an employee has experienced significant sickness or other approved leave the probation period may be extended for a period of no longer than 1 month. Review meetings, such as the mid-point or final reviews, may be rescheduled to ensure the employee has the sufficient opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities. Additionally, reasonable adjustments will be made for staff with disabilities to ensure they have a fair opportunity to meet their probation objectives.

Where performance or conduct falls significantly short of expectations, this could include but not limited to, failure to meet agreed objects, consistently poor performance, or inability to meet core job responsibilities despite support and developmental efforts, and there is

insufficient evidence that the necessary improvements can be made within a reasonable timeframe, the University may decide to end the employee's contract. This decision may be taken at any review point and, prior to the end of a probation period i.e. the probation period does not have to be completed if the performance or conduct fall significantly short of expectations and it is deemed that the necessary improvements cannot be made.

Failure of probation, is a dismissal, and as such if this is proposed, the line manager will present their case to a Designated Senior Post Holder or another nominated senior member of staff as part of a formal probation hearing. This hearing provides an opportunity for both the line manager and the employee to present any relevant information or comments regarding the employee's performance during the probationary period. The employee has the right to be accompanied at the hearing by a colleague or a recognised trade union representative.

Following the hearing, the Designated Senior Post Holder or nominated senior employee will consider the evidence presented to them and make a final decision as to the whether the employee's probation should be confirmed, extended or their employment terminated.

Most employees will remain employed by the University until the end date of their probationary period, however in some circumstances, the line manager may identify that the new employee is unsuitable for their role and will not reach the required standard with further support before the end of the probationary period. In these cases, the employee's contract can be terminated at any stage during the probation period.

7. Appeals

Staff whose employment is terminated at the conclusion of their probation may appeal the decision. Appeals must be submitted in writing within 10 working days of receiving the hearing outcome.

Following receipt of an appeal, an appeal hearing will be arranged. The employee will be notified in writing of the hearing arrangements and their right to be accompanied by a companion, who may be a Trade Union representative or work colleague.

Where possible, the appeal hearing will take place within 10 working days of the appeal being received. The outcome of the appeal will be communicated to the employee in writing as soon as possible following the hearing. The HR Business Partner will ensure that the appeal is considered by an independent manager, usually at the next level of authority. This individual will be referred to as the Appeal Officer.

The purpose of an appeal is not to re-hear the original probationary case, and the employee must explain clearly the basis on which they think the outcome is wrong or unfair. This may be where new information has come to light, or was not available when the original case was heard; or where the procedure has not been followed, which may have impacted on the outcome.

8. Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed as required to ensure compliance with current legislation and alignment with the University's operational needs.

9. Additional Support

For further guidance, employees are encouraged to contact the Human Resources Department.

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