



# Heythrop College Probation Policy and Procedure

## Introduction

All contracts of three months or more are subject to a period of probation. The College places significant value on the period of probation because it is a means through which the new employee's competence in a job is assessed. Probationary periods will also ensure that new recruits are given the initial support and guidance which they require to fulfill their role effectively.

Successful job applicants will be informed of the length of the probationary period when they are offered the post. This will be confirmed in the appointment letter.

The probationary period gives the new employee the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to effectively perform the duties he/she has been employed for. This period therefore forms a crucial part of the new employee's development while at the College. As part of the new employee's induction programme, objectives will be agreed between the employee and their line-manager, which the new employee will work towards during the probationary period; reviews of the objectives will then be carried out at various intervals during this period.

Apart from the formal meetings which will take place at specific times during the probationary period to discuss development and performance in the role, the new members of staff will also have informal discussions with their line-managers.

A probationary period will only be included in an initial contract and not in any subsequent contracts or extensions of contracts. In cases where an employee transfers to a comparable role within the College, a probationary period will not normally be required. However, it might be justified if there are new skills and attributes to be assessed in the new role.

Where an employee transfers to a new role which is not comparable to the one previously held at the College, a probationary period will apply. In such a situation, performance issues will be dealt with in accordance with the College Ordinance on Discipline for academic and certain academic-related staff, or the Disciplinary Procedure for Administrative Staff. It should therefore not be assumed that non-satisfactory completion of the probation period in this instance will lead to a termination of contract.

## Probationary Period

### Academic Staff

Appointments in the Lecturer role are normally probationary for three years in the first instance, with possible extension for a fourth year in any case of doubt about confirmation in post. In assessing the period of probationary service for a particular appointment, account shall be taken of equivalent service in previous appointments or at other higher education institutions; but, irrespective of such service, a minimum probationary period of one year may be attached to any new appointment to the Lecturer grade.

## **Support Staff**

The probationary period for support staff in Grades 1 to 7 is six months and one year for support staff in Grades 8 and above. This period may be extended, as appropriate, where there is doubt about confirmation of the post.

## **Temporary/Fixed-Term Appointments**

All temporary/fixed-term appointments of between three and 18 months will be subject to a probationary period of one third of the total period of the initial appointment; temporary/fixed-term contracts of more than 18 months will be subject to a probationary period that is appropriate to the Grade and role, and would not normally be longer than half of the length of the appointment

Appointments of less than three months will not be subject to a probationary period and may be terminated, subject to statutory notice, at any time.

## **Maternity Leave and Periods of Prolonged Sickness**

Any period of maternity leave will not count towards the completion of the probationary period. It may also be appropriate to suspend probation during long-term sickness periods.

## **Probationary Period: Monitoring Procedure**

### **General**

The line-manager will be responsible for setting objectives and carrying out reviews.

Within the first month of the new employee commencing employment, the line-manager will meet with the employee to agree objectives for the probationary period. The line-manager, will use form [PR1 Probation Plan \(attached as Appendix One\)](#), to record details of what has been agreed.

New employees will be given every reasonable opportunity to develop appropriate skills and to demonstrate their suitability and competence. Information about training and developmental opportunities as well as support mechanism which will be made available in the probation period will be stated in form PR1.

### **Notes Relating to Academic Staff**

The objectives set for academic staffs should be comprehensive and cover all aspects of work to be carried out by the new member of staff, such as, teaching, module/programme preparation, assessment, tutorial management, student support, administration, participation at meetings and so on.

After filling the Probation Plan form (PR1), the line-manager will send a copy to the Human Resources Manager so that the information can be placed in the employee's personnel file,

and so that review reminders can be sent out in due course. The line-manager will keep the original PR1 form while the new member of staff will keep a copy.

The line-manager will carry out reviews twice every year. These reviews will normally take place in December, and then in June, and will be recorded on form PR2 Probation Review (Appendix Two below). Copies of the PR2 will also be sent to the Human Resources Manager and given to the new employee while the line-manager will keep the original form. The Human Resources Manager will ensure that once the final review form is received, notification is sent to the probationer about the outcome of the probationary period.

Following the final review, which must take place before the end of the original probationary period, the employee on probation shall be informed whether confirmation in post is being recommended, or that the probationary period will be extended, or that the appointment will lapse at the end of the probationary period. In the latter case, the employee shall be informed of the reasons and shall have the right to appeal under the relevant appeals procedure in the Ordinances. In cases of gross misconduct, a probationary appointment may be terminated before the end of the period.

Where there is an extension in the probationary period, another review must take place before the end of the extension period, allowing for any termination notice periods, if necessary.

### **Notes Relating to Support Staff**

After filling the Probation Plan form (PR1), the line-manager will send a copy to the Human Resources Manager so that the information can be placed in the employee's personnel file, and so that review reminders can be sent out in due course. The original PR1 form will be kept by the line-manager while the new employee will keep a copy.

The first review will take place at the mid-point of the probationary period. The line-manager will use form [PR2 Probation Review \(Appendix Two\)](#) to record the new member of staff's progress towards achieving the objectives. A month before the end of the probationary period, the second review will take place. At this stage, the appointee will be informed that confirmation in post is being recommended, that the probationary period will be extended for another three months, or that the appointment will lapse, giving the appropriate contractual or statutory period of notice, where necessary.

Immediately after each review, copies of PR2 are sent to the Human Resources Manager so that the information can be placed in the personnel files and so that appropriate notification can be given to the employee (at the final review stage). Also, copies of the PR2 will be given to the new member of staff while the line-manager keeps the original forms.

## General Points to Note

### Setting SMART Objectives

It is important that SMART objectives are set. They therefore should be:

- Specific: a description of a precise behaviour or outcome which could be linked to rate, number, percentage or frequency;
- Measurable: there should be a system in place to measure progress towards the achievement of the objective;
- Attainable – the objective should be achievable, with reasonable amount of application and effort;
- Result-orientated – the objective measures outputs, accomplishments (not just activities) **OR**, relevant – the objective should relate to the work of the individual and should impact on the organisation/department in which the individual works; and
- Time-bound – dates for completion of specific tasks should be identified.

### Probationary Review

The reviews are of vital importance in the probationary period, as they help to identify, as an early stage, any obstacles to the successful completion of the probationary period. During reviews, training and development needs can be identified and addressed – this gives new employees the opportunity to improve performance in specific areas of work during the probationary period. Reviews also allow for managers to carry out a fully informed assessment of the probationers' competence in the posts.

### Notification to Extend Probationary Period

If the period of probation is to be extended due to unsatisfactory performance, the employee should be notified before the end of the original probationary period. It is therefore essential that the final review takes place before this date, giving enough time for the information to be copied to the Human Resources Manager and for the Human Resources Manager to write to the probationer before the end of the original period about this decision. A probationary cannot be extended once the original probationary term has been expired. A probationary period cannot be extended more than once in any contract.

### Notification to Terminate Employment

If the decision has been made to terminate employment due to unsatisfactory performance during the period of probation, the employee must be notified before the end of the original probationary period or before the end of the extended probationary period. It is important that the manager sends the information from the final review to the Human Resources Manager immediately after the review so that the Human Resources Manager can notify the employee in writing within the probationary period (or the extension), allowing for any notice period stated in the contract of employment. An employee has the right to appeal against the termination of their contract of employment



**PR1 Probation Plan**

This form should be completed by the line-manager within one month of a new employee starting work.

The plan should state objectives for the period of probation which relate specifically to the requirements of the post as set out in the job description and personnel specification.

Please refer to Probation Policy and Procedure document for further guidance on filling in this form.

Name of staff member of Probation	
Job Title	
Department	
Date of Appointment	
Length of Probation	
Objectives agreed with probationer:	
<i>(continue on another sheet if necessary)</i>	

Plans to help probationer achieve objectives, for instance, provision of guidance, developmental opportunities, monitoring and evaluating progress

Date of next review	
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**Declaration**

The details of this plan have been discussed and agreed:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Manager) Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Probationer) Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please send a copy of this form to the Human Resources Manager – thank you*



## Appendix Two

### PR2 Probation Review

To be filled in at appropriate stages of the probationary period by the line-manager.

Name of Probationer		
Job Title		
Department		
Date of Appointment		
Name of Reviewer (line-manager)		
Length of Probation		
Review Number		
Date of This Review		
Is this the Final Review?	Yes	No
Dates to which this review refers	From	To
With reference to the current job description and Probation Plan, state the main achievements over the period stated above, including any objectives met		
State any developmental and/or support activities undertaken in the period of the review		

State any training needs or support required during the next period of probation

**Final Review Only (Please tick appropriate box)**

	Appointment to be confirmed from (date) _____
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	Probationary period to be extended from (date) _____ Reason for extension of probationary period _____ _____ _____ _____
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	Appointment to terminated from (date) _____ Reason for termination _____ _____ _____
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**Declaration**

By the line-manager: I have filled in this form based on information relevant to the probationary period.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

By probationer: I do not / agree with the information above.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_