



Procedure and management of probation

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Reference to "School" in this Document relates to Academic Schools within Faculties, but also includes other units such as Departments within the Central Administration, Academic Services, Estates, Residential and Commercial Services etc.

1. Purpose of probation

- 1.1. Effective probation is vital both for career development and as a means of assessing an individual's competence to do the job to which they are appointed.
- 1.2. Probation must not be simply a paper exercise, but a continuing process. It gives the individual the opportunity to develop, with relevant guidance, the necessary skills to carry out the job effectively and to develop his/her career. At the same time, it enables the University to assess the contribution of a new member of staff and to ensure that he or she fulfils the requirements of the post. It can therefore be seen both as a period of training for the individual, with consequential benefits to the School and University, and as a safeguard for the University.
- 1.3. The outcomes of the probation process are to:
 - Set objectives in order to clarify what is expected from the individual and the School
 - Identify learning needs for the individual and how this feeds into the School's training plans
 - Assess the individual's contribution to ensure they are fulfilling the requirements of the role
 - Assess the individual's competence (this can provide a safety net for the individual and the School)
 - Identify who is involved in supporting these probation objectives
 - Provide a record of what training and support has been provided
 - Provide a link to the induction process
 - Set the scene for future review meetings i.e. objective setting and a development plan
- 1.4. Probation applies to all staff, regardless of category or type of contract¹. Staff will normally be required to serve a probationary period if they have not successfully completed a period of probation either at Leeds or another University in a post including the same range of responsibilities as those associated with the new post.
- 1.5. A decision to waive probation must be taken at the time of appointment and rests with the Head of School/Service. The Head of School/Service may wish to seek evidence of previous probation, where appropriate this may involve contacting the previous institution. Where it is not clear whether a further probationary period should be served, the Head of School/Service should seek advice from the Faculty/Service HR Manager. The role holder should be informed at the time of the appointment whether the appointment is subject to probation and the duration of the probationary period.
- 1.6. It is recognised there may be cases where the post holder has completed a probationary period previously and has been assessed on some but not all of the duties/responsibilities required in the new post. In such cases the probation objectives may be determined appropriately to reflect the need only to assess parts of the role not previously undertaken and assessed through probation.

¹ Special probationary arrangements apply for Research Staff appointed as University Research Fellows or on special Fellowships e.g. from the Royal Society, Wellcome Foundation etc.

- 1.7. The duration of probation for staff is shown below. The possible extension period given is the maximum period by which probation may be extended.
- **Support staff:** six months (may be extended to nine months)
 - **Academic and research staff:** two years (may be extended to three years)
 - **Academic related staff:** one year (may be extended to two years)
- 1.8. The standard probation periods stated above are those which will be set at the beginning of each probationary appointment.
- 1.9. It is, however, recognized that staff may demonstrate that they have fully met the probationary requirements of the post before the end of the standard period (depending, for example, on the complexity of the post and the individual's previous experience). In circumstances where those assessing progress are confident that the person fully meets the requirements of the post, a recommendation for early completion may be made at any time.
- 1.10. If a probationer's performance is giving cause for concern the member of staff should be told 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 secure the required improvement. It should be made clear at all informal meetings with the member of staff that failure to achieve an acceptable level of improvement is likely to result in a recommendation not to confirm the appointment. Providing all appropriate help has been given to assist the achievement of the standards required for the post, a recommendation not to confirm the appointment may be made at any time in accordance with Section 8 of this procedure.

2. Fixed-term appointments

In the case of staff appointed to a fixed-term contract of shorter duration than the normal probationary period for that staff group, the Probation procedure should be applied, with objectives agreed that are appropriate to the nature of the post and period of employment. If the appointment is extended before it has been possible to recommend completion of probation, the period of probation should also be extended to the maximum period for the post, (subject to early completion as appropriate)

3. Staff transfers to comparable posts within another School

It is not normally appropriate to apply probation to those members of staff who having satisfactorily completed a period of probation in one post transfer to another comparable post within a different School; unless the new role is completely different and requires a new range of skills and attributes.

4. Maternity leave/adoption leave/prolonged sick leave

Any period of maternity or adoption leave during a probationary period does not count towards completion of probation. It may also be appropriate to suspend probation during a lengthy period of sick leave.

5. Support for disabled staff

Disability Services are able to provide advice upon request in respect of equipment and personal assistance resources (through the Access to Work Fund) for disabled staff.

6. Procedure

Academic and academic-related staff

- 6.1. The Head of School (or a senior colleague nominated by the Head of School and operating under his/her authority) should monitor the application of the probation process and ensure that proposals to approve probation are made on an appropriate, considered basis and only where such a recommendation is justified.
- 6.2. The Head of School and any person nominated to make decisions on probation should receive training in the effective operation of the probation process.
- 6.3. The Head of School (or nominee) at the earliest opportunity (but not later than 6 weeks after the employee's start date) should nominate an adviser and ensure that a statement of the probation plan is submitted to Human Resources within 2 months of the employee's start date.
- 6.4. The plan should state clearly the objectives for the probationer and plans to help the probationer achieve their objectives (e.g. provision of guidance, developmental opportunities, monitoring and evaluating progress). An example of a probation plan is given at the end of this procedure.
- 6.5. Regular meetings must take place between the adviser and probationer and brief notes taken and retained by the adviser until satisfactory completion of probation.
- 6.6. At no later than the half way point in the process a review takes place whereby the adviser, probationer and head of School (or nominee) meet formally to record progress and agree measures to help the probationer meet the set objectives.
- 6.7. Human Resources will remind Schools when the probationary review is due and at this time there should be a formal meeting between the adviser and probationer, and Head of School (or nominee) to record progress and agree measures to ensure that the set objectives are met (Section 2).
- 6.8. If performance is deemed to be satisfactory towards the expiry of the probationary period (or earlier if appropriate) a recommendation for completion of probation (Section 3) should be completed and forwarded to Human Resources together with copies of probationary progress reports.
- 6.9. If a member of staff applies for and is awarded promotion this does not automatically result in completion of probation, although it will be appropriate to consider this option. In circumstances where it is judged that competence in some elements of a job role have not yet been fully demonstrated, the probation period will continue until this point is reached, or the period of probation reaches its natural end, whichever is the sooner.
- 6.10. At the end of the probation process, discussions should be held with staff about their objectives and personal development plan that will form the basis for continuing development and future participation in the Staff Review and Development Scheme (Section 3).
- 6.11. The criteria for confirmation of probationary appointments to lectureships are as follows:
 - 6.11.1. Teaching, course preparation and assessment

- All academic staff on probation are expected to undertake teaching duties and account is taken of the member's skill as a teacher and facilitator of student learning and progress. There must be evidence (from peer review, student feedback, etc.) of proven ability to teach well in both specialist and more general and elementary areas as well as in varying circumstances. The following factors are also taken into account: the development:
 - design and preparation of courses and/or course components;
 - any experience of assessing for undergraduate, postgraduate and research degrees;
 - any supervision of research students;
 - any other teaching - for example, continuing education, teaching candidates for professional qualifications awarded by outside bodies validation work, any personal tutoring or other student support roles undertaken.

6.11.2. Research, scholarship and professional standing

- Staff must have demonstrated the ability not only to undertake research but to have made significant progress with some piece of work and to have produced positive evidence of research and scholarship. Research should normally be reflected in publications but other forms of output (working/discussion papers, commissions, project or technical reports, reviews, contributions to seminars, here or elsewhere, and to conferences etc.) are also taken into consideration, as are any applications made for research funding and their outcome. Publications achieved prior to the present appointment are considered along with subsequent publications, as long as there is evidence of sustained research effort. Relevant professional activity including, for those engaged in clinical practice, higher qualifications in the future and clinical expertise, are taken into account under this heading.

6.11.3. School, University and other management or administrative responsibilities

- Opportunities for participating in administrative work vary between Schools and, in the early years of his/her career, a lecturer may well concentrate on research and teaching. Account is however, taken of any contribution to the general administrative work of the School and/or the University, of any responsibilities of a managerial nature (for example, directing the work of other staff, managing resources) and of any relevant external or professional administrative duties.

Research staff on a fixed term contract

6.12. It is the responsibility of the Head of School (or nominee) to nominate the probationary adviser. The probationary adviser will usually be the same person as the Mentor who has responsibility for encouraging and supporting the member of staff's career development during and beyond the duration of the current fixed term contract. (The role of mentor is not intended to replace, or substitute for the role of the Principal Investigator/research supervisor, but rather to provide an objective appraisal of the researcher's progress and to help shape the acquisition of skills/knowledge/attributes that will directly enhance the researcher's performance on the project in progress and, more broadly, promote his/her career prospects.)

6.13. It is the normal expectation that the person listing the probation objectives and signing Section 1 of the probation form would be the Mentor (in consultation, as appropriate,

with the member of staff's Principal Investigator). The Mentor would also be responsible for the midpoint review.

- 6.14. At the end of the probation period (or earlier if appropriate) the Head of School (or nominee) must review whether or not the identified Probation Mentor continues to be appropriate in the light of the member of staff's progress and career aspirations. The Probation Mentor, or, if appropriate, a newly designated Mentor, will then continue to support and advise on career progression through the Staff Review process for as long as the member of staff remains on a fixed term contract.

Support Staff

6.15. The procedure is the same as for academic and related staff except that

- the period of probation is considerably shorter;
- the probation plan and midpoint review (Sections 1 and 2) are retained in the School until a recommendation for completion is made and then sent to Human Resources;
- Human Resources will remind Schools when the final review is due (but not at the midpoint review stage).

Operational staff

6.16. It is important to note that the arrangements detailed above for support staff also apply to all supervisory staff. It is permissible for simpler local arrangements to apply for staff in University of Leeds Grades 1 to 3 (inclusive) e.g. cleaning, portering, catering. Local arrangements should, however, be based on the main principles of probation i.e. formulation of a brief plan, regular meetings and at least one formal review at which notes are taken.

7. Responsibilities of the Head of School (or nominee)

7.1. The main responsibilities of the Head of School (or nominee) in advising and helping a probationary member of staff are as follows:

- Ensuring that the procedure detailed above is strictly adhered to in a timely and fair way.
- Provision of appropriate School training facilities and encouragement to participate in University and other training and development events.
- Ensuring that Human Resources and, where appropriate, the Pro-Dean for Research or Teaching are informed at the earliest possible opportunity should any problems be identified. (It may be appropriate to involve the Pro-Deans in any case where the concern arises from the member of staff's teaching and/or research ability. This may include, for example, Academic Staff, Research Staff or Other Related Staff with teaching responsibilities).
- Taking any action necessary to ensure equality of opportunity including identification of practical and/or personal support.

8. Responsibilities of the adviser

8.1. For academic and related staff the adviser should be a senior member of the School (i.e. of associate professor/senior lecturer level or a long-standing lecturer or, for academic related staff, someone of equivalent seniority and/or experience) or the

Head of School him/herself. Some Schools may wish to nominate more than one adviser if appropriate.

- 8.2. In respect of support staff the adviser should be a senior member of staff responsible for their day to day management e.g. senior technician/clerk or administrator.
- 8.3. The main responsibilities of the adviser, in both helping and assessing the probationary member of staff, are as follows:
 - Regular discussions with the probationer about all aspects of performance and progress. For academic and related staff at least two discussions per year should be formal meetings at which notes must be taken.
 - Completion of section 2b prior to the formal probationary review meeting.
 - Provision of guidance and advice that specifically relates to the areas/targets detailed in the probation plan including support in acquiring professional qualifications where appropriate.

9. Training opportunities

Newly appointed members of staff should expect to receive appropriate training including any health and safety training relating to any risk identified in relation to the nature of their roles and responsibilities, taking into account previous experience. The University's Staff and Departmental Development Unit offer a wide range of training and development opportunities. Information about such opportunities is sent to all members of staff.

10. Confirmation of appointments

- 10.1. Following the final probationary review meeting and consultation with appropriate senior colleagues, the Head of School should forward a recommendation for completion to Human Resources using (Section 3). If performance is deemed to be satisfactory in all areas as specified in the probation plan this recommendation can be made at anytime during the probationary period.
- 10.2. All recommendations will be considered by the Director of Human Resources (or nominee). In the event of the Director of Human Resources or nominee having concerns about a recommendation for confirmation of appointment he/she will pass the recommendation to the Pro Vice Chancellor for staff for further consideration.
- 10.3. All staff will be informed by Human Resources in writing of the successful completion of their probation.

Confirmation of appointment for staff on fixed-term or rolling contracts.

- 10.4. Staff employed on fixed-term or rolling contracts may be deemed to have satisfactorily completed probation without conferring the right to a permanent post. Once completed such staff will not be required to undergo further probation in the event of any subsequent appointment to a permanent post of a similar nature.

11. Recommendation for the extension of a probationary period

It is open to the Head of School (or nominee) to recommend that the probationary appointment of a member of staff should be extended on the understanding that the total period of the probationary appointment, (excluding any prolonged absence such as maternity leave, adoption leave, prolonged illness etc.), will not exceed the maximum

allowable. Recommendations should be forwarded to Human Resources for consideration by the Director of Human Resources or nominee. Normal annual increments will be payable unless the Head of School in consultation with the HR Director decides otherwise.

12. Recommendation not to confirm the appointment

- 12.1. The University will adopt a professional and thorough approach to any problems that arise in relation to the probation period.
- 12.2. When a Head of School (or nominee) wishes to recommend that an appointment be not confirmed, the member of staff should be advised that such a recommendation is to be made and the reasons for the recommendation. Consideration should be given to the person being allowed not to report for work until the recommendation has been considered. (The individual would continue on full pay during such absence.) Any such recommendation should normally be made at least 3 months before the end of probation for to allow time for the procedure and notice period to be completed before the probation end date. (Academic and Academic-Related Staff appointed up to 31st May 2005 are subject to three months' notice during probation. Staff appointed on, or after 1st June 2005 are subject to one month's notice during probation).
- 12.3. A report should be submitted via Human Resources (Section 4), to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Staff in the case of Academic and related staff and to the Director of Human Resources in respect of Support Staff. The report should include the following information:
- A copy of the probation plan and subsequent probationary report form.
 - A record of the oral and written advice and guidance given to the member of staff concerned. If appropriate this may include copies of current informal/formal warnings with recommendations for improvement.
 - Full details of the duties of the member of staff during the probationary period, with an assessment of how they performed against the set objectives detailed in the probation plan at the start of their appointment, together with any evidence of constraints, unforeseen difficulties or changes of emphasis which have affected the achievement of any of the objectives.
 - The names of the senior members of staff who have been consulted about the recommendation and who concur with it.
 - Any other information thought to be relevant.

13. Formal consideration of a recommendation not to confirm probation

Academic and related (professional and managerial) staff

- 13.1. If the recommendation from the Head of School (or nominee) is supported by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Staff:
- 13.1.1. The Human Resources Office will inform the member of staff and will send him/her a copy of the recommendation, together with all other papers considered by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Staff. The letter will ask him/her whether he/she wishes to have an opportunity of stating his/her case before an ad hoc Group which will consist of:
- A Pro-Vice-Chancellor
 - A member of the Council
 - A member of the Senate

- A nominee of the Joint Committee of the University and the AUT
- 13.1.2. The member of staff has the right to be accompanied by a workplace colleague or Union representative in stating his/her case and may submit a written rejoinder to the Head of School's recommendation.
 - 13.1.3. The Group will investigate and review the circumstances of the case. A meeting will be held at which the Head of School or nominee, probationer and his/her representative will be permitted to state their case fully, ask questions and respond to any written statements (including those from other persons).
 - 13.1.4. The Group has the right to decide to interview any additional persons if they so wish.
 - 13.1.5. Following the investigatory process the Group will meet privately to evaluate the evidence and reach a decision on the matter.
 - 13.1.6. The decision of the Group will be conveyed to the member of staff. If a member of staff believes that he or she has a grievance following determination by the Group of an appeal against the recommendation of the Head of School/Pro-Vice-Chancellor, he or she may apply in writing to the Vice-Chancellor for redress of the grievance under clause 7 of Ordinance XXVII, made under Statute VII.
 - 13.1.7. The authority for terminating an appointment ultimately lies with the Council. The Pro-Chancellor, as Chairman of Council, may act on its behalf in such matters.
 - 13.1.8. In the event of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (and, where applicable, the ad hoc Group) supporting a recommendation from a Head of School that a member of staff on a fixed-term or rolling contract be deemed not to have completed satisfactorily the relevant period of probation, and in the event of there remaining a period before the specified end-date of the contract of more than three months/(one month for staff appointed on or after 1st June 2005), the member of staff will be given three months'/one month's notice of termination of the appointment. The letters of appointment for such staff, constituting the contract of employment, will therefore, where appropriate, state explicitly that the term of appointment offered is subject to successful completion of any specified period of probation.

Support Staff

- 13.2. When a Head of School (or nominee) wishes to recommend that an appointment be not confirmed, the member of staff should be advised that such a recommendation is to be made and the reasons for the recommendation and consideration should be given to the person being asked not to report to work until the recommendation has been considered. (The individual would continue on full pay during such absence.)
- 13.3. It is advised that this is done between 6-8 weeks before the probation is due to expire to allow time for the recommendation to be considered and the appropriate period of notice to be given.
- 13.4. Human Resources will proceed as follows:
 - write to the member of staff confirming that the recommendation has been made;

- offer him/her the opportunity to talk to a Human Resources Manager, accompanied if so wished by a work colleague or Union representative with a view to making any points which he/she wishes the Director of Human Resources (or nominee) to take into account when considering the recommendation.
- arrange for the case to be considered by the Director of Human Resources (or nominee).

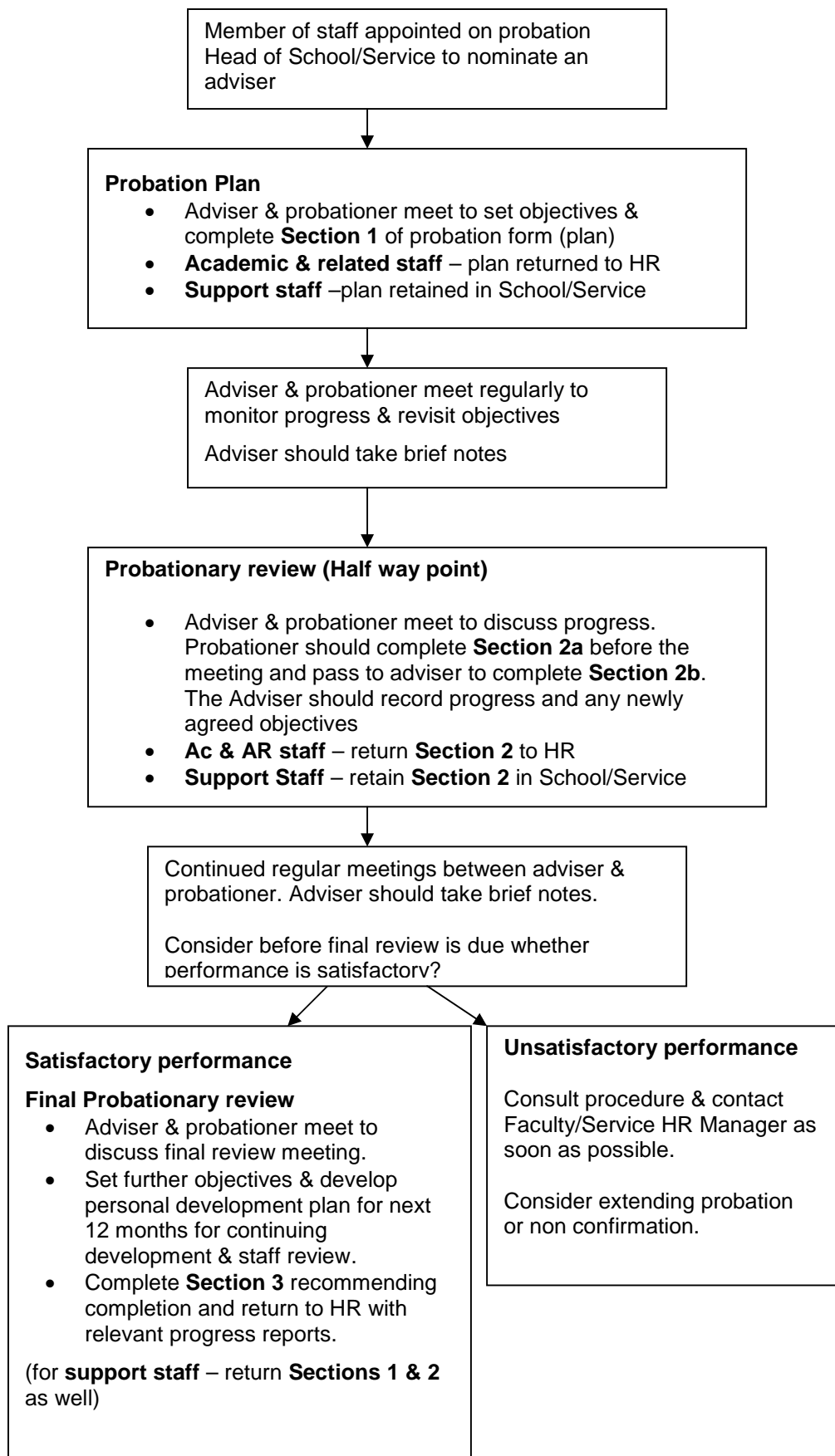
13.5. The decision of the Director of Human Resources (or nominee) is final and will be conveyed in writing to the member of staff. If the Head of School's recommendation is supported appropriate notice will be given to the member of staff.

14. Legal implications

After two year's service an employee has legal employment rights. It is, therefore, essential that:

- at the time of the appointment, the individual is made fully aware of what is expected of him/her in order to pass probation successfully (i.e. the objectives are specific and clear);
- the procedure for regular review of progress is carried out;
- the problems of the unsatisfactory individual have been unequivocally addressed with him/her (i.e. that he/she could not claim to be unaware of any problems);
- it can be shown that appropriate guidance and training to meet objectives has been given;
- the probationer has been evaluated at the end of the probationary period against known and objective criteria.

15. Flowchart of probationary procedure



16. Probation record

Name of Probationer:		
Probationers e:mail address:		Phone Ext:
School:		
Date of Appointment:		
Position:		
Name of Adviser:		
Advisers e-mail address:		Phone Ext:
Length of Probation:	Months/years	

Notes:

Section 1 to be completed by the Adviser within two months of the member of staff commencing employment. Please ensure the probationer has a signed copy of this document after each stage has been completed and keep the electronic copy safe as you will need it to monitor progress in meeting the objectives and to return to Human Resources on completion of the probationary period.

Staff should complete sections 1 (plan), 2 (mid point review) and 3 (confirmation of successful completion of probation).

For information on probation please refer to the Human Resources website at <http://hr.leeds.ac.uk/policies> or call your Human Resources contact.

Section 1: OBJECTIVES

List the objectives set for the probationer that relate specifically to the requirements of the post as set out in the job description, person specification and the strategic objectives of the School. Please indicate the timescale for the completion of each objective.

Development plan

List details and expected completion dates of your plans to help the probationer achieve the objectives e.g.: provision of guidance, training and development opportunities, monitoring and evaluating progress.

Signature of Probationer:

Date:

Signature of Adviser:

Date:

Section 2: Mid point review

Section 2a: to be completed by the probationer then passed to the adviser to complete Section 2b before the review meeting. With reference to Section 1 and the deadlines indicated, please state:

Have your first set of targeted objectives been met?

YES/ NO

Have you undertaken the training or other self-development initiatives indicated?

YES/ NO

What in relation to the objectives set do you think are your main achievements over the past 6/12 months?

Do you require any additional training not mentioned in Section 1?

YES/ NO

If yes, please indicate the areas you would like this to cover.

Are there any other comments you wish to make?

Section 2b: to be completed by the adviser after the probationer has completed Section 2a. With reference to the objectives set in Section 1:	
Please comment on the probationer's performance and progress;	
Are there any areas of particular concern where progress is not being made?	YES/ NO
If yes, please give specific details.	
Please attach a brief plan of advice, guidance and training to be provided by the School, which will address these concerns and permit progress to be judged as satisfactory at the end of the probationary period.	
Please give details separately of any newly agreed objectives and the School's plans and timescale for providing guidance and developmental opportunities for these objectives.	
Do you have any other comments?	
Signature of Probationer:	Date:
Signature of Adviser:	Date:

Early completion of probation
 Recommendations for early completion of probation are encouraged, where appropriate, at any time during the appointment. Please complete Section 3 and send the completed and signed report to Human Resources. (Please note that for Academic staff early completion cannot be recommended within the final 3 months of the probation period.)

Section 3: recommendation for completion (Please complete and return to Human Resources)	
Has the probationer's performance and progress achieved a satisfactory standard?	YES / NO
Have all the objectives stated in Section 1 (and Section 2 if relevant) been met?	YES / NO
Do you wish to recommend <u>early</u> completion of probation?	YES / NO
Date from which completion of Probation should take effect:	___/___/_____

We confirm that the above is a true and accurate record and that probation should now be officially confirmed as having been completed.

Work Objectives for the next 12/24months

--

Areas for skills and ability development including ways in which this can be achieved

--

Consider wider career aspirations

--

Probationer	Print Name:	Signature:	Date:
Adviser	Print Name:	Signature:	Date:
Head of School	Print Name:	Signature:	Date:

Section 4 – Non Confirmation of Appointment

Please contact Human Resources as soon as possible and prepare a detailed statement giving reasons for recommending non-confirmation of probation.

17. Writing a probation plan

When completing a plan for probation, reference ought to be made to the requirements of the post as set out in the job description, person specification and relevant strategic objectives of the School.

Example – Academic/Academic-Related	
State Objectives	These should be developmental and examples of possible areas / targets are given below:
Teaching	Completion of Teaching and Learning Certificate if appropriate
	Development of a satisfactory teaching profile
	Expected research student supervision and management
	Expected number of student assessments
	Involvement in methods of design, curriculum change, evaluation of teaching
Research	Expected number of publications and contribution to RAE – state timescale
	Expected level of grant funding – state timescale
	Any specific School research activities
	Expected competency level in relation to research methodologies, data and experimental design
	Project management
Administrative	Organisational role within the School
	Expected managerial role (where appropriate) in relation to staff, finance and other resources
	Level of input; School strategic planning, administration and committee participation
Other areas	Information Technology / Projects / Subject specific initiatives
Plans to help probationer achieve objectives:	
Training	Formal - required attendance on external and internal courses
	Informal - mentoring, 'on job'; peer observation
Guidance	Regular meetings with advisor, assistance available from other colleagues within the School and collaboration with colleagues from other Schools
Developmental Opportunities	Special project assignments / initiatives to develop specific skills e.g. management, leadership, teaching and research
Maintaining and evaluating progress	Regular meetings with advisor and / or Head of School (or nominee)