PROBATION PROCESS FOR ALL STAFF IN GRADES 1-6

Scope and Purpose
This policy is designed to provide a clear and simple process to assist managers in managing new employees and to ensure equality of opportunity for all employees.

This process applies to all staff in grades 1 to 6 with the exception of Research (1B) staff.

A formal probation procedure helps to ensure that:

- The performance, conduct, attendance, timekeeping and training/support needs of all new employees to the University is assessed fairly, consistently and equally across the organisation.
- Managers provide new employees with the appropriate support, guidance, training, encouragement and feedback.
- Both managers and new employees understand the purpose of the probation.

Introduction
All staff, including those on part-time and fixed term contracts who are new to the University of Kent, undergo a probationary period during which they will be introduced to the main duties and responsibilities of their post, the performance standards expected of them, the colleagues with whom they will be working most closely and the context of their work, within the department, faculty or University as a whole.

During the probationary period the onus is on the manager to provide the necessary information and training that will equip the individual to undertake all aspects of their role at Kent and on the individual, to demonstrate their suitability for the post. Managers must ensure systems are in place to support and monitor the new employee’s work throughout the probationary period in order that she/he receives such assistance as is reasonable to fulfil the duties and responsibilities of the post.

Probationary periods at Kent are 3 months or 6 months depending on the nature of the role.

Staff in Grades 1 to 3 will be subject to a 3-month probationary period.

Staff in grades 4 to 6 will be subject to a 6-month probationary period as the roles are more complex so performance at this level takes longer to assess.

Existing members of staff who are promoted, re-graded or transferred within the University will not normally be subject to a probation period unless their initial probation period is not yet completed. In this case, the probation period will be carried over to the new contract and the appointment will not be confirmed until the original period has been successfully completed.
Induction
It is the manager's responsibility to ensure that staff new to the University (and staff who have moved within Kent and are commencing a new role) are furnished with the information necessary to enable them to commence work and that they are given a copy of, and briefed on, all relevant employment policies and procedures and any other departmental, faculty or Kent procedures relevant to their work. As part of the induction process, the manager should discuss the individual's training needs with them and book them onto any appropriate training courses, including Staff Development's Induction courses. See appendix A for an induction checklist.

Probation Procedure
A job description must be issued and explained to the new employee and must make clear any service standards relating to the work of the department or area within which the employee works and the performance standards related to their particular post in terms of:

- quality and quantity of output
- skills that must be acquired
- protocols that must be learnt
- deadlines which must be met and how any changes to deadlines will be communicated
- working relationships that must be developed with other staff and students etc.

The manager must also make clear how these standards will be monitored throughout the probation period and the frequency with which they will be formally reviewed.

The manager will be required to complete an informal review with the new employee during the first week, then more formal reviews of progress after 1 month and 3 months, in a 3 month probation period; and after 1 month, 3 months and 6 months, in a 6 month probation period. Review Forms are available on the Intranet. In the case of fixed term staff with a contract shorter than the length of the relevant probation period, the probation process will be followed for the period during which the individual is employed with Kent.

At the first review the manager will formally discuss the new employee's performance with them and summarise their discussion on the relevant form. The employee will add their comments to the written assessment.

Following the second review, where performance is satisfactory, the manager sends the form to Human Resources requesting that the new employee be confirmed in their post on completion of their probation period. Human Resources will write to the individual (copied to the manager) to confirm this.

If the first review is not satisfactory in any way the manager must discuss with the new employee the aspects of performance which need improvement and should set clear objectives and timescales within which they will be reviewed. The employee should be asked if they consider that any further assistance and/or training is necessary to enable them to complete tasks to the standards expected of them. The new employee should sign the review form and receive a copy of it to confirm that they have been made aware of the improvements required.
If at the second review stage, insufficient improvement has taken place, the manager must arrange a further meeting; the employee should be given adequate notice of the meeting and informed, in writing, of the right to be accompanied, the reasons for the meeting and the possible outcomes. It is advisable to ensure that a senior manager is present at the meeting, in addition to the line manager who conducted the previous reviews. If termination of the appointment is likely, advice should be sought from Human Resources prior to the meeting, to ascertain whether a HR Manager should be present. At this meeting a full review of progress should be held and a decision made to either extend the probationary period, or alternatively, to terminate the appointment at the end of the probationary period. Any decision as a result of such meeting should be confirmed in writing to the individual within 5 days (in consultation with Human Resources).

Extension of Probationary Period

It may be appropriate to extend the probationary period if:

- Through the new employee's sickness or other authorised absence, it has not been possible to assess performance.
- The new employee has not performed satisfactorily but the manager has evidence to suggest that performance is likely to improve with a further period of probation.

In all cases where probation is extended the following must be discussed between the manager and the new employee and confirmed in writing:

- The reasons for the extension.
- Any assistance/training that will be given in the extension period.
- The period of the extension, the performance standards expected and the way in which performance will be monitored.
- That if performance still fails to meet expectations at the end of the period of extension, employment will be terminated.

Probationary periods should not normally be extended by more than two months.

New employee’s will have the right to appeal against a decision to terminate their employment for failure to satisfactorily complete their probation period. An appeal must be lodged in writing with the appropriate HR Manager within 5 working days of receipt of confirmation of termination. The appeal will normally be heard by a senior manager not previously involved with the case. At such an appeal the employee has the right to be accompanied.

Probation Period and Discipline and Capability

University of Kent’s full Disciplinary and full Grievance Procedures only apply to staff who have successfully completed their probationary period. For staff on probation this policy on Probation applies in relation to under-performance. In circumstances involving alleged

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1 In advance should be read as providing sufficient time for all involved parties to adequately prepare. The time scale may vary from case-to-case, depending upon the needs of the individuals involved and the nature of the case.

2 The employee will be advised of his/her right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or University colleague, as per the ACAS Code of Good Practice 1 - [http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=917](http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=917)
misconduct, following an appropriate investigation, the new employee will receive adequate written notice of a disciplinary interview which will set out the details of the alleged misconduct. The employee will have the right to be accompanied and will have the opportunity to state their case before any decision is taken. Any case of misconduct during the probationary period may lead to dismissal and gross misconduct may lead to summary dismissal without notice. The employee will be informed of their right to appeal against a decision to dismiss them on the basis of misconduct and any appeal would be considered by the manager's line manager.

Notice Periods During the Probationary Period
During the probationary period, the following notice periods will apply:

Staff on grades 1-6 may terminate the employment by giving one week's notice. The University of Kent will also give one week's notice to terminate the appointment.
Induction Checklist
Appendix A

SECTION A

On the first day a new member of staff should be provided with information on the following:

- Instructions regarding the emergency evacuation arrangements for the building(s) in which they will be based.
- Health and safety policy of the department, names and locations of first aiders and the procedure for reporting accidents and hazards.
- Details of working hours (including any flexibility and cover arrangements) and local arrangements regarding lunch and other breaks.
- Arrangements for obtaining passes, identity and entry cards, library card, computer access codes etc.
- Arrangements for contacting the authorised departmental contact in the event of unforeseen absence, sickness etc.
- An up to date copy of the job description for reference throughout the probation period, together with an explanation of the work of the department from the manager.
- Details of how and when salary/wages will be paid
- Where to find facilities such as toilets, kitchen, refectory etc.
- Rules regarding personal use of computing facilities and telephones
- Security arrangements of the building(s) in which they work

SECTION B

Within the first week

- An explanation of the key aspects of the job including important contacts, an explanation of how the job fits within the rest of Kent and copies of all relevant policy and procedure notes either departmental, faculty, Kent wide and from other relevant partner organisations e.g. NHS Trusts.
- Details of key Kent wide policies and where to find them on the intranet.
- Arrangements for booking annual leave - including any restrictions on planning leave etc.
- Be booked onto the corporate Kent induction course and Safety induction course and where appropriate receive a departmental induction to computing systems and contents of the intranet etc.
- Explicit discussion of performance standards and any objectives to be achieved within the probationary period.
• Information on how performance will be monitored and when it will be reviewed informally and formally.

• An explanation of the Kent facilities available - catering outlets, sports facilities, shops, library etc.

SECTION C

Within the first month

• discussion of training needs and identification/booking of relevant courses

• review of initial induction period and early feedback on performance

• Information provided on appraisal arrangements and name of appraiser

SECTION D

Within the first three months

• Attendance at University corporate induction