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Probation arrangements

1. All appointments to the staff of the University are subject to a probationary period.
2. The length of the period varies according to the nature of the role and the skills/abilities/experience of the appointee. The attached table shows the normal time periods and the standard conditions.
3. It is important for the new member of staff to receive appropriate induction to the University, the institute/department and the post. University-wide induction programmes are arranged and new staff are required to attend. Local induction is provided within institutes/departments; guidance and checklists are available from the Personnel Department website.
4. The new member of staff will be advised of the name of the person who will take on the role of their mentor for the probation period. Guidelines about the mentoring process are available from the Personnel Department.
5. The Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education course (PGCLTHE), which has been accredited by the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA), and the Higher Education Academy, is normally a requirement for those joining the University who have less than three years experience of teaching in higher education.
6. The requirement to complete the PGCLTHE will be determined at interview and will be clearly specified in the letter of appointment and the employee's contract of employment.
7. Participation in the PGCLTHE will be considered when discussing and agreeing a balanced workload for an individual, also taking into account their previous experience and the other development activities to be undertaken during the probationary period.
8. Heads of Institutes/Departments will ensure that staff registered for the course are effectively supported through release for scheduled PGCLTHE taught blocks and workshops and the allocation of a subject based mentor, with, wherever possible, experience of the PGCLTHE course or qualification
9. Satisfactory completion of the PGCLTHE will be a requirement for the ending of probation; if not completed it will be a reason for an extended period of probationary service.
10. The above requirements apply to all full-time and part-time academic staff on at least 0.5fte contracts. Academic staff who are employed on contracts that are less than 0.5fte and learning support staff for whom support of student learning is an important part of their role, will be required to undertake the first module of the PGCLTHE MEDD4144, which is accredited against level one of the UK professional standards for teaching and support of learning in HE. Hourly paid academic and learning support staff will be encouraged to register for the PGCLTHE or MEDD4144. Course/module fees will be waived in such cases.
11. The progress and performance of employees will be kept constantly under review throughout the probationary period by the immediate line manager who will provide any necessary support, encouragement and advice. During the probationary period new employees are expected to establish their suitability in the post in relation to the job description and the terms of the employment as set out in the contract of employment with the University; this will include timekeeping, attendance and sickness absence record.

12. Heads of Institutes/Departments must arrange for a short review meeting with a new employee to take place every four weeks during the first 3 months of employment. The purpose of this meeting is for feedback from and to the employee, and for early identification of any concerns. The procedure for dealing with concerns/poor performance is described below.
13. Formal reports of progress will be sought from Heads of Institutes/Departments at regular intervals by the Personnel Department; the table shows these intervals. The form of the report is a checklist which seeks comments about progress on the activities within the job description, plus others. It is recommended that this form be completed after one of the review meetings and a copy given to the employee, in order to make the process transparent.
14. During the probationary period it is advisable to set out a programme of activities and expectations for each element of the job description for the new employee to undertake and to provide the person with a copy. Some elements will have a higher priority than others and some may not occur until later in the probationary period but it is expected that the final report will include a comment on every aspect of the job description.
15. It may be appropriate to set targets for the person to meet during the probationary period and these should be put in writing and a copy given to the person. The probationary reports should make reference to these targets, if they have been set.
16. Poor performance during the probationary period will be addressed through advice and support of the person by the immediate line manager with the intention of helping the probationer to improve his/her performance. A record of any such advice and support should be kept. It may be helpful to set or revise targets of performance behaviour: these should be recorded and a copy given to the person. Any training needs should be identified and met.
17. If the formal written reports reveal difficulties expressed by the immediate line manager, a Personnel Officer will arrange to discuss the issues with the employee and the immediate line manager and seek to find a resolution. The aspects of the employee's performance or conduct that are unsatisfactory will be identified and the steps considered necessary to rectify the situation will be specified and agreed with all parties. Throughout the process, the views of the employee will be taken into account in determining the most appropriate action.
18. Six weeks before the end of the probationary period, the Head of Institute/Department will be asked by the Personnel Department to make a recommendation regarding the completion of the probationary period. Options open to the Head are:
 - a) that the probationer be confirmed in his/her appointment.
 - b) that the probationary period be extended.
 - c) that the appointment be terminated.
19. The Head of Institute/Department's recommendation must be returned to the Personnel Department at least four weeks before the probationary period is due to expire and the Head of Institute/Department will have informed the employee of his/her recommendation beforehand.
20. If the recommendation is to terminate or extend an appointment within the probationary period the following procedure will apply;
 - a) The employee will be informed in writing of the reasons for the recommendation and invited to a meeting to discuss these. A Personnel Adviser will make these arrangements.
 - b) A meeting will be held with the person and their chosen representative; they will be notified of the decision, and given the right of appeal if the decision is that the employment should be terminated. This meeting will be chaired by a manager with no previous involvement in the matter, and attended by the Head of Institute/Department or a nominee and a Personnel Adviser. The Head of Institute/Department/nominee will present the case.
 - c) If the decision is to extend the probationary period, the employee will be notified of the period of the extension, the performance standards/expectations required to be met and the review arrangements. There is no right of appeal against a decision to extend a probationary period.
 - d) If the recommendation is that the employment be terminated, the right of appeal will be provided and an appeal meeting held, if requested. The appeal will be heard by a manager with no previous involvement in the matter. The employee and their representative will attend, with a Personnel Adviser present. The Head of Institute/Department will attend to explain the basis of the initial recommendation.

Probationary periods

Staff group	Length of probation	Conditions to be met during probation	Formal reports requested
Professional support staff Bands 1 - 4	26 weeks	May be determined by the role	Interim after 12 weeks; final after 24 weeks;
Professional support staff Band 5 & 6	52 weeks	May be determined by the role	Interims after 12 weeks and 26 weeks; final after 48 weeks;
Professional support staff Band 7 and above	104 weeks	May be determined by the role	Interim after 26 weeks; midpoint report after 52 weeks; second interim at 78 weeks; final report at 100 weeks
Learning support staff with less than 3 years experience of learning and teaching in HE and/or no relevant teaching qualification	104 weeks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To have completed module MEDD4144 Supporting Student Learning To have been observed by an experienced member of staff conducting a learning and teaching session 	Interim after 12 weeks; midpoint after 52 weeks; second interim at 78 weeks; final report at 100 weeks to include report of completion of MEDD144 and report of teaching observation; extension may be required if MEDD4144 not completed due to time of year
Academic staff with less than 3 years experience of learning and teaching in HE and/or no relevant teaching qualification.	104 weeks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To have completed the PGCLTHE To have been observed by an experienced member of staff conducting a learning and teaching session. 	Interim after 12 weeks; midpoint after 52 weeks; second interim at 78 weeks; final report at 100 weeks to include report of completion of PGCLTHE and report of teaching observation; extension may be required if PGCLTHE not completed due to time of year.
Academic staff with more than three years experience of learning and teaching in HE, but with no relevant teaching qualification for HE or registered practitioner status with the HE Academy.	104 weeks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To have been observed by an experienced member of staff conducting a learning and teaching session To have sought and been awarded registered practitioner status with the HE Academy, or to have completed the PGCLTHE if specified in the selection process. 	Interim after 26 weeks; midpoint report after 52 weeks; second interim at 78 weeks; final report at 100 weeks (if specified, to include report of completion of PGCLTHE and report of teaching observation; extension may be required if PGCLTHE not completed due to time of year)
Academic staff who possess more than three years experience of learning and teaching in HE, and an accredited qualification or registered practitioner status with the HE Academy.	104 weeks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To have been observed by an experienced academic conducting a learning and teaching session. Other conditions may be determined by the role e.g. completion of higher degree 	Interim after 26 weeks; midpoint report after 52 weeks; second interim at 78 weeks; final report at 100 weeks to include report of teaching observation.