

## Guidance Notes - Probation for academic and teaching staff

All academic and teaching staff appointments are subject to a one year probationary period.

The expectation is that staff are confirmed in post following their 12 month probation. The University has introduced a new thorough and robust approach to academic recruitment; we intend that this will, in the vast majority of cases, ensure that our new appointments are of a high calibre and that they will, therefore, meet the high expectations the University has of them.

We expect the number of staff who experience difficulties in meeting the performance levels expected of them to be very low. Such cases will be the exception.

### HoD responsibility

- Within the first month of the appointment you should meet with the individual to discuss what is expected within the probationary period in terms of research (or scholarly activity), teaching and citizenship/leadership.
- The job description issued at the time of appointment should provide a basis for this discussion.
- The individual should be informed, as appropriate, that some of the following indicators may be used to assess whether or not they have made appropriate and satisfactory progress.
- A note of the meeting should be provided to the member of staff, and copied to the Faculty PVC and HR Business Partner, to confirm the member of staff is clear about expectations.

### Research expectations

*Examples may include internal peer review of outputs – eg papers, grants applications submitted.*

*DoR review of research performance/grant submissions/research impact activity in relation to opportunities available and success rates, compared to other peers at same career stage.*

### Teaching expectations

*Examples may include internal peer review of teaching, internal peer review of contribution of teaching to module/programme development/success (e.g. teaching away day).*

*DoT review of overall contribution to teaching, review of metrics in relation to the context of the teaching being undertaken, and extent to which there is visible improvement/responsiveness to feedback from students and peer review.*

*Demonstrable progress towards obtaining HEA fellowship. .*

### Citizenship and Leadership – example indicators

*Examples may include collegial behaviour towards colleagues, regular presence in the department, willingness to engage with administrative duties such as open days etc. Active*

*involvement in Colleges such as becoming a member of SCRs, acting as College Tutor (where workload and other commitments to delivering on departmental and University priorities permits.)*

- The Head of Department, or nominee, should meet with the member of staff at regular intervals throughout their probationary period to check on progress and to highlight any potential concerns.
- Following each meeting, a note of the main points covered and details of any action points agreed should be put in writing to the individual.
- The Head of Department should provide the Faculty PVC with an update on progress for each probationary member of staff at the 6 month stage, copying in the HR Business Partner, to enable an interim assessment of progress to be made.
- At any stage that the HoD has concerns regarding the progress of the individual against the content of the job description and any appropriate indicators, as listed above, they should contact their HR Business Partner immediately. They should not wait until the 6 month stage or until the end of the 12 month period.
- If the individual takes/is due to take a period of sickness absence or maternity/paternity/adoption leave during the probation period, please contact your HR Business Partner as early as practicable to discuss any potential impact on the probationary period.
- At the end of the probationary period the HoD should complete the attached probation form, obtain the signature of the Faculty PVC and return to your HR Business Partner, before the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> month after the individual commenced in post.

**If you are able to confirm that satisfactory progress, in all areas, has been made:**

The HoD should sign the form, obtain the signature of the Faculty PVC, and return to your HR Business Partner, to indicate that this is the case. The individual will then receive confirmation from HR that they have passed probation and are confirmed in post.

**If you feel unable to confirm the appointment:**

Alternatively, the HoD will summarise the reasons they feel that the individual should not be confirmed in post and outline any action taken so far. The form should then be signed by the Faculty PVC and returned to the HR Business Partner.

- A review of the case by HR and the HoD, (in liaison with the Faculty PVC), will then take place to determine the appropriate course of action.
- If minor improvements are required it may be appropriate to extend the probationary period.
- If the concerns are more serious this may result in the individual's employment not being confirmed beyond the end of the probationary period.

### **Member of probationary staff responsibility**

- The individual should ensure that they are clear, within one month of their commencement in post, that they understand the performance expectations during their probationary period. If this is not clear, they should request clarity from their HoD or their mentor without delay.
- The individual should ensure that they raise any concerns regarding their progress at any point during their probationary period with their HoD or mentor as soon as these become apparent.
- The individual should alert the HoD or mentor if they believe their performance during their probationary period has been impacted by external factors.

### **HR responsibility**

- Your HR Business Partner will ask the HoD for updates on all probationary staff at regular intervals throughout the 12 month period. This will happen routinely at HRBP/HoD monthly catch ups.
- Any concerns should be raised with HR as soon as they arise and so that timely advice is given and appropriate action taken. It should not be the case that concerns are raised on the probation report form that have not been discussed with HR at an earlier stage.

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