



UNIVERSITY OF  
LINCOLN

# Academic Probation Policy

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## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to make explicit the University's commitment to the fair, equal and consistent treatment of academic staff with regard to probationary period. The policy should be read and used in conjunction with the academic probation guidelines, which provide a flexible framework in order to promote good employment practices.

## 2. Scope

**2.1** This policy applies to all FE and HE academic staff newly appointed to the University.

**2.2** Existing members of academic staff who are promoted or take up another role within the University will not be subject to a new probationary period unless the initial probation period has not been completed.

**2.3** Confirmation of employment is subject to satisfactory completion of a probationary period, which is normally 12 months (FE and HE).

**2.4** In exceptional circumstances, the probationary period may be reduced or extended. The exceptional circumstances are defined as when:

- The new employee is an experienced and / or established academic, who has completed a similar period of probation at another university
- The employee's performance significantly exceeds expectations
- The new employee has not performed to the required standards, but there is evidence that the performance is likely to improve given additional time
- Due to the new employee's sickness or other authorised absence, it has not been possible to adequately assess the employee's performance

Extensions to the probationary period should be reasonable, for example they should be broadly in line with the period of sickness absence.

**2.5** If there are any performance shortcomings identified during the first 12 months of the appointment, an individual's employment may be terminated. During the 12-month period, any performance problems will be progressed using the relevant University procedures.

### **3. Aims**

**3.1** The policy provides the employee with a fair opportunity to accustom themselves to the working practices of the University and understand the standards of performance required.

**3.2** For the University, probation provides a framework to make a realistic assessment of the employee's overall performance, determine and ensure their competence in the new post; it also gives guidance and support to employees to enable them to be effective in their new roles.

**3.3** Academic probation helps line managers to identify the employee's development needs and enable them to provide the employee with the necessary support.

### **4. Principles**

**4.1** The probation process must be conducted in accordance with the University policies and procedures and must be free from any acts of inequality and / or discrimination.

**4.2** Academic probation should work alongside the induction process to help the new employee successfully settle into the University and to support the employee's progress in the new role within reasonable time.

**4.3** The probationary period involves regular meetings between the employee, the Line Manager and occasionally a probation mentor at which the initial and ongoing objectives will be set, discussed and reviewed.

**4.4** The outcomes from the probationary meetings should be documented and approved by both parties after each meeting using the relevant academic probation form.

**4.5** Department of People, Performance and Culture (PPC) representatives are available to provide advice, guidance and support throughout the probationary period.

**4.6** If at any time during the probation process the employee feels that the appropriate procedure has not been fairly and reasonably implemented, it is important to raise this informally with the Line Manager in the first instance. If this is not appropriate for any reason, the employee may raise the issue with their PPC Representative.

**4.7** If any performance gaps are identified, the Line Manager should raise these immediately with the employee and seek advice from the relevant PPC Representative (please refer to Probation Procedure - Academic).

**4.8** Appropriate workload adjustment should be agreed between the Line Manager and the new employee during the introductory meeting to provide the employee with a fair opportunity to settle into a new role, establish momentum in their research work, and gain the required teaching qualification and / or professional recognition.

## **5. Responsibilities**

### **5.1 Employee responsibilities**

To demonstrate their suitability for the post and to fulfil the requirements of the role as stated in the job description and person specification.

To discuss any training / development or support needs with their Line Manager and/or Probation Mentor at the earliest opportunity and ensure that any training / development is undertaken to the agreed timescales.

To attend the University's, 'The Lincoln Welcome' event, at the earliest opportunity and to complete relevant mandatory training.

To complete the paperwork after each interim review meeting, which then needs to be signed by both parties.

To agree interim objectives during the final review meeting for the period up to the next appraisal cycle begins.

### **5.2 Line Manager responsibilities:**

To manage the probationary period of the newly appointed employee.

To communicate to the employee the key aspects of their role and also the structure of the College / School and to explain how these fit within the University structure.

To ensure that the probationer has been invited to the University's 'The Lincoln Welcome' event and that they attend at the earliest opportunity.

To ensure the employee has completed the relevant mandatory training within the probation period.

To meet with the employee and where applicable, the probation mentor on a regular basis to monitor the employee's progress and identify any development needs required to improve their performance.

To provide the employee with the University, College and School objectives and to discuss these with the employee to ensure they understand them. These objectives should relate to the employee's individual objectives.

To discuss with the employee their individual objectives in the context of University / College / School objectives, which shall be relevant and realistic, and to provide appropriate support / guidance (referring to the Staff Organisational Development Programme where appropriate) to help them achieve these objectives.

To complete the probation form after each review meeting, which then needs to be signed by both parties.

To agree interim objectives during the final review meeting for the period up to the next appraisal cycle begins.

On the completion of the 12 months probationary period, to send the completed probation form to the Department of People, Performance and Culture and advise whether the appointment should be confirmed.

To ensure that during the probation period the employee has been given the opportunity to obtain a relevant teaching qualification or appropriate professional recognition.

### **5.3 Responsibilities of the Probation Mentor**

The Probation Mentor will be an experienced colleague nominated by the Line Manager to support the employee and act as the main point of contact for any queries and / or concerns the probationer may have during the probationary period.

The Probation Mentor will meet with the Line Manager and employee on a regular basis to review the employee's objectives and offer relevant support and guidance.

### **5.4 Responsibility of the Department of People, Performance and Culture**

To signpost the relevant probation documents to the Line Manager and the employee.

To organise the University's 'The Lincoln Welcome' event and invite new starters.

When required, to provide advice, guidance and support throughout the implementation of the probationary procedure to both the Line Manager and the employee.

In the event of any underperformance issues, to be responsible for advising the Line Manager on what actions should be introduced and, when required, to support the Line Manager during any formal meetings held to address these issues.

To confirm in writing the outcome of the probationary period and advising on any further actions (if and when required).

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