



Probation Policy

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose:

The Probationary Review Process is in place, as a mechanism to provide new employees with the direction, clarity, learning, support and guidance required, upon joining the organisation. This is with a view to develop a comprehensive understanding of the job role, set expectations in relation to key duties and responsibilities and to outline the required skills, knowledge and competencies, for success.

The Probationary Review period gives both the employee and the line manager regular opportunities, to review progress and performance, against the objectives that are set. This will help ensure that the required skills, knowledge and competencies are developed to the desired level, in order to deliver an exceptional learning experience for our students. Regular support and supervision meetings are also crucial, to aid these discussions and identify any ongoing areas for development or enhancement.

1. It is the policy of Capital City College Group that all new employees will serve a probationary period. The probationary period is six months for all staff except non-qualified teachers and lecturers, for whom it will be twelve months.
2. HR monitors the application of the online probationary review process across the Group to ensure it is carried out in a fair and consistent way.
3. Line managers are to ensure that the new employee receives a full induction. They will be required to monitor and record a new employee's progress and work performance, in order to complete a comprehensive assessment within the probationary period. The line manager and employee are both required to follow the online probationary review process, through iTrent, undertaking objective setting, reflecting and summarising progress following the scheduled review meetings. This will ensure that the probationer has a clear understanding of what is expected of them, to ensure support is given where necessary and will identify those employees who do not meet the required standards.
 - New members of staff who are serving a probationary period will be subject to the notice period set out in the contract of employment until confirmed in post, at which time the appropriate contractual notice period will apply;
 - All probationers have the right of appeal if their probation is not successful;
 - The timescales and dates of probation meetings set out in the Probationary Review Procedure will be adhered to unless varied by agreement of the parties in each individual case. The suggested dates for these review meetings are built into the online probationary review system.

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- The Group's Probation Procedure will run in parallel with the 6th Form non-qualified teachers' (NQT) statutory induction period. The DfE's Induction Guidance will be referred to where an NQT is not making satisfactory progress.
- Any serious misconduct during the probationary period will be dealt with under the Group's Disciplinary Procedure.
- Sickness absence will be monitored throughout the probationary period and form part of the overall assessment of performance. Managers will refer to the Sickness Policy as a guide. Disability related sickness will be exempt.

HOURLY PAID LECTURERS / HOURLY PAID SUPPORT

4. HPL and HPS staff who are on a permanent variable hour contract will also serve a probationary period irrespective of the working hours per week. The probationary period for HPLs will be six months unless they are a non-qualified lecturer in which case it will be twelve months. The probationary period for HPS staff is six months.

FIXED TERM CONTRACT STAFF

5. Fixed term contract (FTC) staff will also serve a probationary period but the length will be determined by the length of the fixed term contract. For those staff on a fixed term contract of more than one year, the probationary period will be six months. For staff on a fixed term contract of less than one year, the probationary period will be a minimum of 3 months with the exact period being determined at the start of the contract. For example: a 6 month FTC, will have one probationary review meeting at month 3. A 9 month FTC, will have two probationary review meetings, at month 3 and 6. These dates will be pre-set on iTrent, and tracked/monitored by HR.

6. For staff on fixed term contracts of less than one year, where it may not be possible to carry out the required full induction and probation process due to the length of the fixed term contract with the exact period being determined at the start of the contract, line managers are requested to focus on setting the key targets and objectives of the job for monitoring and assessment.

INTERNAL PROMOTION OR TRANSFER

7. Where an established/permanent staff member has previously successfully completed a probationary period with no break in service and has been transferred or promoted into a new position, they are required to undergo an induction process that covers the areas of the role which are new. This may include new duties, line management responsibilities and also the required training, in line with the required skills, knowledge and competencies.

8. The line manager will identify those areas which are new and will follow a structured support and supervision process for a period of up to six months, as a way of supporting the

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staff member in their new role. This should incorporate a progress review meeting every month, holding regular support and supervision meetings and identifying and putting in place any training. However, it should be noted that this is not a formal probationary review period, and any underperformance issues identified should be dealt with in line with the relevant performance management policy.

9. This process will also apply to HPLs, on a permanent variable hour contract where they have completed their six month probation period.

10. Where teaching staff are appointed to roles which carry remission, these staff members will also receive clarity on how this remission will work, and any associated or relevant objectives linked to this remission time. The additional role performed during remission, will also fall within the overall probationary process.

CASUAL STAFF MEMBERS

11. If an agency worker, casual staff member or non-payroll worker is appointed to an established or permanent role following a period of casual employment, the probation process will apply. This probationary period will be for a period of six months (twelve for NQT), from the date the new role has commenced.

REVIEW OF JOB PERFORMANCE

12. The probationary review period will consist of regular scheduled meetings between the line manager, or a nominated supervisor, and the probationer.

13 The Capital City College Group recognises the importance of induction and developing mutual understanding of an employee's learning, training and development needs. The Group and individual Colleges will seek to promote good practice during probation by:

- Regular reviews of progress and feedback;
- Setting and informing the probationer of performance standards to be met, efficiency and workload requirements, and the requirements for meeting deadlines;
- Keeping online records (via iTrent) to help with monitoring progress throughout;
- Encouraging self-assessment and reflect.

14. Probationers will be encouraged to raise any areas of concern, training needs and/or personal issues at the earliest possible opportunity with their line manager. Probationers are advised to contact an appropriate senior manager or HR if their concerns are in relation to their line manager.

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15. Line managers will raise any areas of concern such as poor performance and/or conduct, failure to meet agreed standards or levels of performance required, at the earliest possible opportunity with the probationer.

16 Probationers can expect the following to be scheduled during their probationary review period:

INITIAL INDUCTION MEETING

17. An initial meeting will be arranged between the probationer and their line manager during the first two weeks of joining the organisation or being appointed into the new role.

- At this meeting objectives will be discussed and agreed, with a schedule of regular review meetings agreed, following the online probationary review process, as per the guidance issued by HR.
- Objectives should be set in line with the job description, linked to the specific requirements of the department and provided to the new employee to ensure that expectations regarding work performance, conduct, and attendance are made clear.
- The line manager will go through the job description, setting 'SMART' targets to agree key tasks, goals and objectives, and agree and plan the necessary training so that probation and induction can be monitored and reviewed periodically.
- The line manager and employee are to follow the online probationary review process, to complete the required online review forms in sequence, as outlined in the procedural guidelines issued by HR. These are available on the HR intranet, within the Probations homepage.

PROBATION REVIEW MEETINGS

18. The line manager should also explain the length of the probation period and schedule the dates for probation review meetings, and for the regular support and supervision meetings within each review period. The line manager is also required to ensure that the (Day 1 and Week 1) induction checklists are completed with their new employee.

19. The line manager should complete the necessary online review forms through iTrent (Manager Self-Service), and once this is fully completed both the employee and line manager can download a copy of the online probationary, if required. Upon successful completion, the online probationary review system will trigger an email notification to HR, and HR will then review the completed documentation and issue a confirmation in post letter to the employee via email. Appropriate guidance is also available to support both employees and the line manager via the Probation homepage, via the HR intranet.

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20. It is the responsibility of the line managers to carry out the probation meetings in a timely manner, ensuring that these fall within the prescribed timescales (6 months or 12 months). If any support or additional guidance is required, the line manager should contact HR via learning@capitalccg.ac.uk.

FIRST PROBATIONARY REVIEW

21. The first probation review will take place between the probationer and the line manager two months from the start of employment for those staff on a six month probationary term and three months for those on a twelve month probationary term. This review will focus on tasks and performance against the standards and objectives set at the initial induction meeting. The review will provide an opportunity to identify any further areas for development and specific training needs. These will then need to be added to the online progress review form (Review Period 1), as appropriate and documented locally where required.

SECOND PROBATIONARY REVIEW

22. The second probationary review will take place in month four, for those on a six month probationary term and months six and nine, for those on a twelve month probationary term. This review will follow the same format as outlined at paragraph 21 above. The employee is required to add reflective commentary and progress updates online (via Employee Self-Service) and the line manager is required to summarise progress online, following the review meeting (Review Period 2).

However, if there is a possibility that the probationer will not pass his/her probationary period, the manager must discuss this at the review meeting with the probationer and follow-up in writing (via the online review form) and highlight the areas for improvement.

Line managers are also able to seek guidance from their respective HR Business Partner, if required.

FINAL PROBATIONARY REVIEW

23. At the beginning of the sixth month or twelfth month a final probationary review will take place between the probationer and the line manager. The line manager will then consider whether:

- The probationer has successfully passed their probationary period; or
- The probation is to be extended (by up to a maximum of six working weeks); or

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- Further to consultation and appropriate guidance from the HR Business Partner, the manager will inform the employee that they will recommend that the employee's contract is not confirmed.

SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF PROBATION

24 A probationer who reaches and maintains the required standard during the probationary period will be confirmed in post. HR will write to the new employee (on behalf of Capital City College Group) confirming that their probation period was successfully completed. New objectives should then be set, following on from the probationary period, leading up to the next annual Professional Development Review cycle. For further information, please visit the Group HR intranet.

EXTENSION OF PROBATION

25 Where the line manager is unable to recommend confirmation of appointment at the end of six or twelve months, the probation period may be extended. An extension can be made in the following circumstances:

- If the performance and/or conduct only just falls short of the required standard.
- Due to absence through any reason, during the first six months or twelve months of probation, which impacts on the line manager's ability to make a fair assessment.
- Where issues or concerns in relation to progress or performance only became apparent late into the probationary period and therefore the review period has not been completed.

26 Any extension would be the discretion of the line manager after a discussion with HR and the respective Director and/or Head of School. This period of extension should not exceed six working weeks. A line manager may choose a shorter period for the extension, if this is appropriate. Any extension to probation should be confirmed to the employee in writing, using the appropriate extension documentation supplied via HR.

ACCESS REQUIREMENTS

27 If either the employee or line manager has any specific access requirements, whereby they may need assistance in using the online probationary review system, or given a disability they are unable to complete the process via the online system, please contact your HR Business Partner for further guidance, in relation to support or alternative means by which to update and/or submit the probationary review forms.

NON-CONFIRMATION IN POST

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28 If at the end of the probationary procedure or after an extension of the probation period the line manager is still unable to recommend that the probationer passes their probationary period, he/she must write instructing the probationer to attend a formal hearing to review their position.

The letter shall:

- Give a minimum of five working days' notice, detailing the date, time and place for the hearing, unless an earlier date has been mutually agreed.
- Name the Senior Manager/Director who will conduct the hearing
- State the matter(s) to be considered at the hearing and whether any witnesses are going to be called by the College or Group
- Inform the probationer that a trade union representative or colleague may attend and will be permitted to speak on their behalf.
- Inform the probationer that they may produce relevant documents and call relevant witnesses to the hearing.
- Any documents should be provided to the manager at least two working days before the hearing, along with notification of any witnesses that the probationer intends to call.
- Provide a copy of the procedure to be followed at the hearing.

FORMAL PROBATION REVIEW HEARING

29 The Senior Manager/Director conducting the formal Probationary Review Hearing may decide to take one of the following two actions in the case of probationers failing to meet and maintain the standard during the probationary period.

- A final extension, with any notice of required improvements and appropriate warning for failing to meet these improvements. The probation period combined with a further and final extension must not exceed an additional three months.
- Withdrawal of the offer of employment with statutory notice or without notice for Gross Misconduct.

30 The Senior Manager/Director must put in writing to the probationer the decision and the reasons reached at the formal hearing and inform them of the right of appeal within five working days.

PROCEDURE

The procedure for the Hearing will be:

- Line Manager explains why confirmation in post cannot be recommended;
- Questions of clarification are put to the line manager;

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- Probationer or their representative gives their reasons why they should be confirmed in post;
- Questions to the probationer;
- Summing up;
- Senior Manager/Director makes decision.

APPEAL

31 Probationers have the right to appeal to the Principal/Vice Principal or Service Director against the decision made at the formal hearing to withdraw the offer of employment. Probationers must write to the Group Director of HR & OD within ten working days of the date of the decision, outlining the reasons/grounds for the appeal.

32 The probationer will be invited to attend an appeal hearing against the decision and has the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague.

APPEAL PROCEDURE

- Probationer explains why the decision not to confirm the appointment is wrong;
- Questions to the Probationer;
- The Senior Manager/Director who made the decision gives reasons for that decision;
- Questions to the Senior Manager/Director;
- Principal/Senior Manager makes decision.

The Principal/ Senior Manager's decision is final.

PROBATIONARY REVIEW PROCEDURE FLOWCHART

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