



Polasaí agus Nósanna Imeachta/Policies and Procedures

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Policy Owner	Director of Human Resources
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Approved By	University Management Team

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1. Policy Statement

It is the policy of University of Galway to ensure that all newly appointed employees are supported and assisted to settle into their new role within the University.

The University of Galway is committed to ensuring that the Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions Regulations 2022 are recognised in the University Probation Policy. The probationary process is expected to be a collaborative process between an employee and their line manager, with support and training being available for all new employees to ensure they are supported to be able to discharge their duties appropriately.

2. Policy Purpose

The purpose of the University of Galway probation policy is to provide guidance to employees and managers on the application of probationary periods for new employees of the University.

Joining a new organisation presents opportunities as well as challenges for new employees. Therefore, effort is needed to support new employees in learning the essential duties required of the role and adapting to the University environment. For this reason, all permanent and temporary (fixed term and specific purpose) employees will be subject to an initial period of probation when they join the University. Each employee's probationary period will be set out in their contract of employment.

The probation process is intended to be a collaborative process which provides an opportunity to allow:

- The newly appointed employee to integrate into the role and the University;
- A fair opportunity for the University to assess the employee's performance, behaviour, and overall suitability to the role;
- A fair opportunity for the employee to assess the University Culture and Values and overall suitability to their expectations; and
- A recommendation in relation to the employee's suitability for continued employment to be made by the Line Manager, Head of School, Head of Unit, or Executive Dean.

Probationary periods allow the parties to the employment relationship time to ensure, as far as they can, that the employee and the role for which they were employed are compatible.

3. Policy Scope and Status

All new employees will be subject to a probationary period which will be set out in their contract of employment. This includes academic, research, support, and technical employees.

This policy sets out the approach that the University intends to take in relation to employees' probationary periods. This policy forms part of employees' contracts of employment and the University may amend, abridge, or depart from the procedures set out in this policy at its' discretion where it considers it necessary or appropriate to do so.



4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Line Managers e.g., Head of Unit, Heads of School, Executive Deans are responsible for:

- 4.1.1 Ensuring that all employees are aware of this policy;
- 4.1.2 Ensuring that a local induction programme for the relevant University Unit is in place and all new employees attend;
- 4.1.3 Ensuring that the review meetings take place within the appropriate timeframes as outlined in this policy;
- 4.1.4 Communicating the objective of their particular role to all new employees.

4.2 Newly Appointed Employees should:

Ensure that they are familiar with and understand this probation policy;

- 4.2.2 Ensure that they adhere to the terms of this policy, where relevant;
Highlight any concerns they may have settling into a role or performing their role during their probation period to their line manager/Head of School as soon as possible;
- 4.2.4 Ensure that they attend all arranged meetings, for example review meetings, inductions, and training during their probation period.

5. Duration of Probationary Period

The duration of an employee’s probation period will be set out in their contract of employment.

For Permanent employees will usually have an initial probationary period of up to 11 months from the date of commencement of their employment with the University. This timeframe is considered reasonable to give sufficient opportunity for:

- the University to carry out an initial assessment of the suitability of an employee based on their performance in a role; and
- the employee to fully understand the role and the accompanying responsibilities and expectations associated with that role.

For temporary employees (i.e., employees on fixed-term or specified purpose contracts), the length of such probationary period shall be proportionate to the expected duration of their contract of employment and the nature of the work. However, this period should not be more than 11 months.

The University will review an employee’s performance and suitability for continued performance during their probationary period. The following are the time frame for review meetings that the University will typically hold for a permanent employee with the 11-month probationary period. However, these do not preclude regular informal meeting being held to review progress. For employees with shorter initial probationary periods (for example, employees on fixed term or specified purpose contracts where the duration of the contract and the nature of the work warrant a shorter probationary period), monthly review meetings will be held, and the last monthly review meeting will serve as the final review meeting.

Time Frame for 11-month probation	Task
Induction meeting to set out what is expected of the post holder	Formal Meeting (Probation Assessment form to be Completed to set out what the expectations are).
Four Month Review	Formal Review Meeting (Probation Assessment form to be Completed).
Ten-month review	Final Review meeting (Probation Assessment form to be Completed).



Time Frame for shorter probation	Task
Monthly Review	Formal Review Meeting (Probation Assessment form to be Completed).
Last-monthly review	Final Review meeting (Probation Assessment form to be Completed).

The probation assessment form should provide a true and accurate reflection of what was discussed, including any performance issues.

6. Policy Procedure

1. General Process

During the probation period, the Line Manager and employee will meet at the specified monthly intervals to evaluate the employee's performance and overall capability with the School/Unit objectives and the role and responsibilities for the post the employee was appointed to. The Line Manager will provide feedback on the employee's performance and their progress will be discussed; the employee will also be able to provide feedback on any difficulties they are experiencing that is affecting their performance. The employee and their Line Manager will have an opportunity to identify any support and/or training needs they feel are required and these will put in place where reasonably practicable.

Existing employees who are promoted or transferred within the University, or who have contracts which have been extended or renewed, and have not completed their initial probation period, will be required to complete the remainder of the original probation under the new contract.

Employment during the probation period may be terminated by either party in accordance with the notice periods provided for in an employee's contract. Should the University terminate employment, the employee will be informed of the decision and the reasons for the decision in writing.

2. Induction Meeting

The probation period provides an employee's Line Manager/Head of School with the opportunity to evaluate the new employee's performance and compatibility for their role. It is important that when a new employee commences employment, that the Line Manager/Head of School and the new employee undertake the following:

1. Discuss the job description provided to the employee to ensure the employee understands their role;
2. Set clear objectives for the employee;
3. Identify any potential training needs and provide reasonable appropriate support;
4. Ensure adequate induction to the School/Unit has been organised/implemented;
5. Identify the assessment criteria to be used at the probation period meetings; and
6. Ensure the employee is aware of their obligation to attend the University Induction training.

The Line Manager will organise a local Induction to the unit or school, introducing the new employee to the key people in the Schools/Units with whom they will be working. This should be completed within the first two weeks of the appointment.



3. Review Meetings

Both informal and formal communications are essential to the probation process. Formal review meetings between the Line Manager/Head of School and employee are set out in the above tables.

The purpose of these meetings is to assess the new employee's performance and progress in the role. The Line Manager/Head of School will complete the Probation Assessment form with the employee at the review meeting. The Line Manager/Head of School with the employee will identify any issues and agree on the next steps as required. The line Manager/Head of School and the employee will sign the Probation Assessment form.

The Line Manager/Head of School will submit a copy of the form to the Human Resource Office to retain on the employee's personnel file. The employee should also receive a copy.

Where serious performance difficulties or development needs are identified, the Line Manager/Head of School should highlight the areas of concern to the employee, either during the formal review meeting (and documented in the Probation Assessment Form) or, if the issues arise outside the formal review process, a meeting should be arranged, and a Performance Improvement Plan should be generated. The Line Manager/Head of School should identify the areas of concern, clearly outline the actions that are required, the time frame and the consequences if no satisfactory improvement which could include the termination of employment should be provided in writing to the employee.

4. Extending Probation

Where an employee is absent from work on Statutory leave (for example, maternity leave, paternity leave, adoptive leave, carer's leave, parent's leave, or statutory sick leave) their probationary period will be extended by the duration of their absence.

5. Final Review Meeting

A final review meeting will be held before the end of an employee's probationary period. A final probation Assessment form should be completed by the Line Manager who should then forward a copy of the completed Record of Meeting Form to HR (Human Resources) Office/HRBP and Senior Managers or HRD and provide a copy to the employee.

The final report will record any actions decided upon by the University arising from the final review meeting. There are two possible outcomes from a final review meeting:

- The employee's appointment may be confirmed, in which case they will be informed that they have passed probation; or
- The employee's appointment may be terminated by giving such notice as is provided for in their contract of employment.

On receipt of the Record of the Final Review Meeting from the Line Manager/Head of School the Director of HR will notify the employee of the outcome by way of a letter, which shall reflect the recommendation of the Line Manager/Head of School.

A copy of the letter from the Director of HR will also be put in the employees file and CORE will be updated to show outcome of final review meeting which will be that probation has been successful completed or not.



7. Responsibilities

Name	Responsibility
Director of Human Resources	Policy Owner
UMT Member	Responsible for disseminating the policy in their area
Head of School/Unit	Local Induction and Probation review meetings
HRBP, Employee Relations Manager, Senior HR Manager	Provide advice and support regarding the policy
Human Resources Office	On receipt of a copy of the completed Record of Meeting Form, update CORE and ask HRD to issue letter of confirmation.