

HUMAN RESOURCES

9. The probationer, Probationary Mentor and Head of Department are responsible for ensuring that they are familiar with the procedures set out in this document and that they comply with its requirements.

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETING THE PROBATIONARY PERIOD

10. In reaching a recommendation, the Committee will consider the probationer against the criteria contained in the Career Map set out at **Annex A**. Probationers should note in particular the Staff Development and Training requirements set out in **Annex C**.

THE PROBATIONARY MENTOR: APPOINTMENT AND ROLE

11. The Dean of Faculty is responsible for appointing an experienced academic member of the School to be the probationer's designated Probationary Mentor for the period of his/her academic probation, and informing HR of the identity of the Probationary Mentor within 15 days of the probationer's appointment. In making the appointment, the Dean of Faculty should ensure that the Probationary Mentor is not absent from the School during the first three months of the probationer's appointment, e.g. on study leave.
12. Normally, but not exclusively, the Probationary Mentor will be the line manager.
13. If the Probationary Mentor leaves the School or is absent on leave for three months or more, the Head of Department shall request the Dean of Faculty to appoint a new or temporary Probationary Mentor and advise HR of the change.
14. Probationers who experience difficulties in the mentoring relationship are advised to discuss the situation with their Head of Department (or Dean of Faculty where the Head of Department is the Probationary Mentor) in the first instance, to explore whether a change of Probationary Mentor is necessary.
15. Guidance on the role of the Probationary Mentor is given at **Annex B**.

PROGRESS DURING THE PROBATIONARY PERIOD

16. During the probationary period, the Probationary Mentor will be responsible for meeting with the probationer to assess his/her progress. Formal meetings should be held at 9, 18 and 27 months after the start of the appointment. A reminder to set up the meeting will be sent out one month in advance by email from HR. Normally, these meetings will obviate the requirement for a formal annual appraisal, unless the probationer requests otherwise.
17. It will be the Probationary Mentor's responsibility to arrange the formal meetings, and to arrange for the probationer to submit a brief report on their progress before the meeting. The Probationary Mentor may wish to consult with other staff beforehand as necessary, and in particular with the PGCILT Course Director where applicable.
18. At the meetings, the Probationary Mentor should discuss progress, give feedback on the probation requirements, consider strengths and weaknesses, and arrange for appropriate support and development to be put into place where necessary. Any potential performance issues should be highlighted as early as possible, and an appropriate action plan agreed and implemented to address any problems.
19. A record of the discussion should be prepared by the Probationary Mentor, and passed to the probationer for comment, following which both parties should sign the document and the Probationary Mentor should forward a copy to Department and HR.

The Head of Department may bring the document to the attention of the Dean of Faculty where this is considered necessary.

OUTCOMES OF THE PROBATIONARY REVIEW

28. Where the probationer is to be confirmed in post, HR will write to her/him within 10 working days of the Committee's meeting, to confirm that they have completed their academic probation period satisfactorily, and to confirm them in post.
29. Where the probationer has not completed his/her probation satisfactorily, HR will write to her/him within 10 working days of the Committee's meeting, indicating one of two courses of action, as determined by the Committee:
 - (i) academic probation is extended for up to one year. The letter will request that meeting be convened with the probationer, his/her Probationary Mentor, the Dean of Faculty and/or the Head of Department to discuss and develop an agreed action plan (with timescales) to facilitate an improvement in the probationer's performance against the relevant criteria. The action plan must be agreed by the Deputy Director, with progress reviewed at regular intervals by the Probationary Mentor and the Head of Department. Following a further report from the Dean of Faculty and others as set out above, the matter will be reconsidered by the Staff Review Committee after one year, or
 - (ii) the probationer will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the issues and to put forward his/her views and any evidence to support that he/she is meeting the criteria effectively. The meeting will be convened by HR, and the Deputy Director or her nominee, the Dean of Faculty and/or the Head of Department and the probationer will be present at the meeting. A member of HR staff will be in attendance. The probationer will be given the opportunity to be accompanied at the meeting by a trade union representative or a School colleague of his/her choice.

Following the meeting, the Deputy Director (or her nominee) will make a decision as to the appropriate action to take based on the evidence heard from the probationer. Within 3 working days of the meeting, the probationer will be informed of one of the following outcomes:

- (i) the probationer will be given 3 months' notice of his/her dismissal, or
- (ii) the probationary period will be extended for up to one year. The Deputy Director (or her nominee) will request that a meeting is convened with the probationer, the Probationary Mentor and the Dean of Faculty and/or the Head of Department to discuss and develop an agreed action plan (with timescales) to facilitate an improvement in the probationer's performance against the relevant criteria. The action plan must be agreed by the Deputy Director, with progress reviewed at regular intervals by the Probationary Mentor and the Head of Department. Following a further report from the Dean of Faculty and others as set out above, the matter will be reconsidered by the Staff Review Committee after one year,
- (iii) the appointment is confirmed.

APPEALS

30. A probationer who has been given notice that confirmation of appointment has not been recommended, or given notice of dismissal may appeal in writing to HR within 28 days from the date on the letter confirming the decision.
31. The Appeal Panel shall consist of three persons, nominated by the Deputy Director (or her nominee), none of whom shall previously have had any involvement with the case. Normally, the panel should comprise a Dean of Faculty, a Head of Department

and a member of the Staff Review Committee. The Deputy Director or /her nominee shall decide which member of the panel should act as its Chair.

32. The Appeal Panel shall hear the appellant (who may, if he/she wishes, be accompanied by a School colleague of his/her choice or a trade union representative) in person.
33. The Appeal Panel shall be free to call relevant witnesses and to see relevant documentation and take other such action as deemed appropriate by the Chair of the Panel.
34. The probationer will be informed of the decision of the Appeal Panel within 10 days of the Panel meeting.
35. The decision of the Appeal Panel is final and will be reported to the Staff Review Committee.

POSTPONEMENT OF THE PROBATIONARY REVIEW

36. The probationary review may be postponed in appropriate cases. The following are examples of circumstances in which postponement may be agreed. This list is not intended to be exhaustive:
 - Staff working part-time;
 - Family-related absence (e.g. maternity leave, adoption leave etc.);
 - Extended sickness absence;
 - Personal circumstances which have disrupted the probationer's duties;
 - Change to hours of work (e.g. a temporary period of part-time working);

 - Interruption of employment for funding reasons.
37. There is no presumption that a probationer would necessarily wish to request deferral in any of the circumstances outlined above. A request for deferral is a matter for the probationer to decide in the first instance, in consultation with the Probationary Mentor and other staff as applicable. A formal request should be sent to the Dean of Faculty, who will consult with HR. The Dean of Faculty's decision will be conveyed to the probationer by HR in writing, together with a revised timetable for the review.
38. Any request for deferral and the corresponding decision will not be regarded as reflecting unfavourably on a probationer's standing.

REQUIREMENTS FOR STAFF BASED OVERSEAS

39. Brief guidelines on the management of the probationary requirements for staff based overseas are given in **Annex C** paras. 8-11.