

## **Probationary Procedure and Guidance notes for Professional Services Employees**

### **1. Probation**

A probationary period will apply to all new appointments, including change of appointments.

### **2. The purpose of probation is:**

1. To enable the probationer to achieve the high standards expected of a employee at Brunel University London and
2. To ensure that a probationer is given the appropriate assistance and training to achieve those high standards.

### **3. Probationary Period – Professional Administrative employees**

The probationary period will be determined by the appointments panel for a period up to 18 months and this will be confirmed to the appointee in the letter of appointment.

### **4. Probationary Period – S5 grade and above, including Research**

Employees appointed at S5 grade and above are subject to a probationary period of 12 months.

Other professional services employees (S1 grade to S4 Grade inclusive) are subject to a probationary period of 6 months.

Change of appointments where a probationary period has been completed for a similar role should be discussed with your HR contact to ensure the timeframe fits with the requirements of the role.

### **5. Probation timeframes and review periods**

- 6 month probation – reviews at 3 months & 5 months  
(First report and Final report)
- 12 month probation – reviews at 5 months & 10 months  
(First report and Final report)
- 15 month probation – reviews at 5 months, 10 months & 13 months  
(First report, Second report and Final report)
- 18 month probation – reviews at 5 months, 12 months & 16 months  
(First report, Second report and Final report)

## 6. The role of the Head of Department / Line Manager

The Head of Department / Line Manager, as identified in the letter of appointment, has overall responsibility for the probationer and shall be responsible for ensuring that:-

1. The probationer is appropriately supervised throughout their probationary period
2. The probationer receives the appropriate induction information regarding his/her role, the operation of the department, and information about the University more generally and all relevant health & safety guidance.
3. Personal and continuing professional development needs are discussed early in the probationary period and appropriate action is taken to address these needs.

This will include accreditation requirements for professional bodies, as appropriate.

## 7. Probationary Reviews

The Human Resources Department adds the probationary review dates to CHIME, which enables the notifications to be sent to the line manager at the appropriate time.

The notification is automatically sent from CHIME, to the line manager 28 days before the due date. This ensures the line manager has sufficient time to set up the meeting before the probationary review date.

The email to the line manager includes the link to CHIME which for the first probation review is where the Probation forms are located.

For the Second or Final probation review, the review form will be sent to the line manager as a task a minimum of 7 calendar days before it is due, (please note CHIME will send a reminder every day until this task is completed).

At the probationary review(s) the probationer's performance, under each of the headings on the probation form, will be discussed.

The form is completed on CHIME by the line manager either as part of the meeting or after the meeting has taken place.

### ***The final probationary review will result in one of three possible outcomes:***

1. To confirm that the period of probation has been satisfactorily completed. *Human Resources will write to the probationer confirming that their probation is confirmed.*
2. To extend the period of probation. \*This option may be chosen where the probationer has had time off on sickness, maternity absence or not quite achieved the expected standard, but, in the opinion of the Assessor, it is likely that that standard will be achieved within a defined period.

*Where an extension of the probation is required due to sickness, maternity etc. This should be detailed on the completed form so Human Resources can write to the probationer outlining details of the extension dates and any specific areas where improvement etc. is required.*

## 8. Not Meeting Requirements

*\*If at any stage within the probationary period, there are concerns with the probationer's performance, or the probationer's performance is considered to be unsatisfactory, the assessor / line manager should discuss the reasons of concern with the probationer and **agree specific targets with timeframes**. It is important for managers to review and consider what support is required, i.e. is there any training etc. that needs to be given to the employee to assist them in meeting their targets.*

- *Details of the specific targets and timeframes **must** be followed up in writing to the employee. The line manager is therefore required to advise HR as soon as possible so this can be drafted and sent to the employee.*
- *Regular meetings should take place between the line manager and probationer to both monitor and review progress against those targets.*

The line manager will also ensure that appropriate arrangements are made to assist the probationer to overcome their difficulties i.e. more support or training, courses, etc.

*The employee should also be advised that if following an extension, additional support and / or training there is insufficient improvement shown there is the possibility that the probation may not be confirmed and the appointment terminated. This would require a separate meeting.*

***\*Please document what is discussed both at the initial meeting and the review meetings as you may need to demonstrate what conversations have taken place,***

*The line manager **must** arrange regular (weekly/monthly) reviews to discuss progress and arrange any further necessary training.*

If the line manager decides that the probation cannot be confirmed the probationer would be invited to attend a further meeting and would have the opportunity to be accompanied either by a union representative or work colleague. The meeting would be chaired by the Head of Department/Dean and a representative from HR would be present. The probationer would be given notice and the appointment would cease at the end of the notice period. The University may at its discretion pay notice in lieu.

The Head of Department/Dean/Supervisor shall not terminate a probationary appointment unless they are satisfied that the staff member has been advised in writing of their shortcomings and given the necessary support, training and guidance in good time to ensure that efforts have been made to help the probationer to overcome his/her difficulties.

The probationer will be informed in writing of the Head of Department / Dean's decision that the appointment will not be confirmed. At least four weeks' notice will be given to the probationer the University reserves the right to pay notice in lieu.

## 9. Appeals

Probationers have the right to appeal against the decision to terminate their employment. This can be done by submitting the basis for the appeal in writing to the Director of Human Resources within 5 working days of confirmation of the decision to terminate their contract.

Where a probationary appointment has been terminated by the Vice Chancellor there will be no right of appeal.

## HR Operations Process for Professional Services Probations – 2020

1. The welcome email is sent to the new employee copied to the line manager with a copy of the induction booklet
2. The HR Operations team add the probation dates to CHIME as below
  - a. 6 months – 3 months and 5 months from start date
  - b. 12 months - 5 months and 10 months from start date
  - c. 15 months – 5 months; 10 months and 13 months
  - d. 18 months – 5 months; 10 months and 16 months
3. CHIME triggers an alert to the line manager 28 days prior to the probation review date
4. First probation review - the line manager meets with the probationer and completes a new probation form in CHIME (CHIME Forms) either as part of the meeting in the presence of the probationer or immediately following the meeting
5. Second, third or final probation review, where the first review form has been completed and submitted on CHIME - a task notification will be sent to the line managers, with the form attached, a minimum of 7 calendar days before the probation review is due, (*a reminder task will be sent every day after this until the form is completed and submitted on CHIME*).
6. The probation form is completed on CHIME (*a new form if the first probation review or using the form attached to the task*) and then submitted by pressing 'Task Complete'
7. The form workflows to the probationer to review and add comments. They should also tick the box to confirm their agreement to the content. The probationer then submits the form by pressing 'Task Complete'
8. The form workflows back to the line manager for final review. - The line manager reviews the form and then presses Task complete. This then workflows to HR who review the content and approve or reject the form.
9. If approved, HR Op's update the probation date fields in CHIME approve the form. The form sits in 'hold' in CHIME until the next review is due at which stage the process starts again.
10. If rejected the form is returned to the line manager, a comment should be added to advise why the form is being returned i.e. mandatory compliance training not completed. Changes should be made and the form re-submitted.
11. If the probation is to be confirmed HR Ops enter the date and successful into CHIME. This activates the email to the probationer to congratulate them on successfully completing their probation.
12. If the probation period is to be extended the HRBP will work with the line manager to set targets and an action/support plan is put in place
13. HR Ops extends the probation dates on CHIME and adds the reason for the extension
14. The line manager can view the probation fields so the reasons for the extensions should be added, but they must be factual)
15. HR Ops write to the probationer outlining the probation extension
16. Steps 5 to 11 are then repeated.

## Flowchart - Professional Services Probations Process for HR Operations

