

1 Policy Summary

The Probation period applies to all new permanent and temporary employees joining the university. It ensures that there is ample opportunity for:

- The university to assess the performance of the employee in the job and
- The employee to fully understand the role, their responsibilities and the expectations of them in the job.

2 Purpose of Policy & Definitions

The first few months in a new organisation can be a critical time for a new employee. A great deal of effort is needed to help that individual learn essential tasks and adapt to the University environment.

For this reason, a probationary period exists for all new permanent & temporary employees. In most cases this will be one year from date of joining the University, although it may vary depending upon the nature of the job.

3 Policy & Procedures

3.1 General Process

During the probationary period, the Head of School/Unit (or the nominated manager), and the employee will meet at three monthly intervals to discuss the requirements of the role. These meetings can also be used to evaluate the employee's overall compatibility with the School/Unit's objectives.

Either party may terminate the employment during, or at the end of, the probationary period. The employee is required to give notice as set out in their conditions of service. If the University is terminating the employment, then the employee will be aware of the reasons for this having had an in-depth discussion with the Head of School/Unit.

Where the contract is for a fixed period of less than 12 months, probation reviews should still be completed with the employee. If contracts are subsequently extended or renewed, or the employee finds an alternative role in the University upon the end of their current contract, all employment service at that grade will count towards the 12 month probationary period i.e. all contracts, even short-term contract(s) will contribute to the completion of the probation period. As such it is the responsibility of the Head of School/Unit (or the nominated manager), to complete the appropriate probation review meeting with the employee prior to the end of their current contract.

At the end of the Probationary Period a meeting will be held between the Head of School/Unit (or their nominated manager), and the employee to confirm the appointment and to agree specific objectives for the year ahead.

The Head of School/Unit will then complete the Probationary Period Confirmation of Outcome Form and forward to UCD HR, and provide a copy to the employee.

If however it is necessary to extend the Probationary Period, this may be done with an associated Performance Improvement Plan being put in place. The relevant HR Partner for the area should be informed of the intention to extend and consulted for specific advice on managing the Performance Improvement Plan.

3.2 Guidelines for Heads of School / Unit (or nominated manager) in Managing Probationary Periods

The Probationary Period offers an opportunity to assess the performance and compatibility of a new employee for a post. In order to make the probationary period effective it is important at the very beginning to sit down with the employee and to:

1. Go through the job description and ensure the employee understands the tasks and responsibilities of the job;
2. Set out the employee's objectives clearly;
3. Identify any initial training needs and provide necessary internal or external support;
4. Organise an induction programme which introduces them to the key people/ Schools/Units they will be dealing with.
5. Set out the questions you will be asking when consulting with the School/Unit and other Schools/Units prior to the formal meetings which will be held every three months.

3.3 Review Meeting held during the probationary Period

It is important that, at least each month, the Head of School/Unit, or their nominee, meets with the new employee to assess how they are progressing and to discuss any issues which may have arisen.

It is also important for more formal review meetings to be held between the employee and Head of School/Unit, (or the nominated manager). Meetings should be held at the end of:

Three months
Six months
Nine months
Eleven months.

The final assessment meeting will be followed by confirmation in post unless there are problems in terms of performance or compatibility.

3.4 Exemption from the Probation Period

Exemption from the probation period will only occur in exceptional circumstances, with the determination being made by the College Principal/Vice President.

4 Useful Documents

1. The probation form for recording the formal meetings during the Probationary Period.
2. Probationary Period Guidelines for employees
3. Head of School/Unit Guidelines for Managing Probationary Period Meetings.

All available from: <http://www.ucd.ie/hr/a-z/probationperiods/>

4. Managing for Success [Toolkit](#)

5 Policy Revision History

Version	Date	Description	Author
3.0	25/09/2009	Policy Versioning Implemented	UCD HR
4.0	12/09/2013	1- Head of School/Unit references updated to include nominated Line Manager 2 - Clarification that all service (even less than 12 months duration) will contribute to probationary period 3 - Reference to Managing for Success Toolkit inserted 4 - New 'Confirmation of Outcome' Process and Form which are completed by the Head of School/Unit 5 - New Probationary Period Record of Meeting Form which includes a new section for input from staff member on page 2, and references to Training & Development courses and Managing for Success Toolkit	UCD HR
5.0	24/06/2015	New clause inserted to allow for exemption from probation in exceptional	President / UCD HR
6.0	08/10/2016	Clause 3.4 updated to correct typo.	UCD HR
7.0	9/8/2018	Update 'staff' to 'employee' in order to cover for both staff and faculty members	UCD HR