<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Title: PROBATION - PROCEDURE FOR MANAGING ACADEMIC STAFF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Version control: V2/2015/ HR002A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Owner: HR Strategy – Human Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval Process:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved by VC: July 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved by Promotions Committee: July 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality Impact Assessed: EIA by HR – November 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation date: November 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updated: September 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 The University aims to create a positive environment where everyone is enabled to work, fulfil their responsibilities, develop to their full potential and perform to the best of their ability to meet the needs of the University.

1.2 The aim of this procedure is to set a clear framework for Heads of Department on how to manage the performance and conduct of new employees during their probationary period (described as “probationers” in this document) so that they can be successful in their new roles.

1.3 The use of the probationary period is:

- To give the probationer the opportunity to develop the necessary skills to carry out the job effectively and to develop his/her career;
- To enable the University to assess the contribution of a new employee and to ensure that he/she fulfils the requirements of their post.

1.4 The probationary period should allow both the probationer and their Head of Department to assess objectively whether or not the probationer is suitable for the role. The University believes a probationary period increases the likelihood that new staff will perform effectively in their employment.

2.0 SCOPE

2.1 This procedure applies to all new academic members of the University staff within their probationary period.

2.2 Probation periods are normally 3 years for Lecturers and 1 year for Senior Lecturers, Readers and Professors. However, these periods may be extended or reduced in appropriate circumstances. Any variations or exemptions from the probationary arrangements outlined in this section must be approved by the Faculty Dean, and agreed with the Vice-Chancellor or Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

2.3 The discretion to apply a 5 year probation period for ‘Practitioners’ new to academia lies with the Faculty Dean in agreement with the Vice-Chancellor or Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

2.4 For those employees on probation for 3 or more years, the probationary agreement and supporting guidelines must be used.

---

1 A separate process exists for assessing the confirmation of the probation of Senior Lecturers, Readers and Professors.
3.0 PROBATIONARY AGREEMENT

3.1 The aim of the Probationary Agreement is to provide the probationer with the support to develop a suitable standard of teaching, a research portfolio that meets the discipline profile of the department and a range of service duties.

3.2 A Probationary Agreement must be drawn up, within 1 month of commencement of employment and agreed between the Head of Department and probationer. The completed Probationary Agreement must be signed off by the Dean and a copy sent to Human Resources for uploading to the Core MyHR portal.

3.3 The standard Probationary Agreement template must be used for all Probationary Agreements for probation periods of 3 years or more. Guidelines on the completion of the Probationary Agreement can be found here.

3.4 The Probationary Agreement must reflect the standards outlined in the departmental discipline profile.

3.5 It is recognised that differences in new entrants' backgrounds and experience, and in the requirements of the department and the discipline, may generate variation between the agreements for individual employees.

3.6 Consideration will be made for reasonable adjustments to the probationary agreement for probationers who have a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010 (advice should be sought from the HR Partner). This should be reviewed during the probation period.

4.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Head of Department:

- Meet at regular intervals with the probationer to provide feedback on performance and conduct in a constructive and supportive manner;
- Alert any probationer who is not on track to pass probation in a timely manner and identify appropriate remedial action;
- Alert the Faculty Dean of any probationer who is not on track to pass probation in a timely manner;
- Complete reviews at 6 and 12 months and thereafter annually with the probationer, submitting the relevant section of the probationary agreement to HR and the probationer.
- In the final year of probation (or earlier, if this is considered appropriate), recommend to the APC whether or not progress against probationary criteria has been satisfactory. Notification will be made by:
The completion of the Probationary Agreement form which outlines all objectives and evidence of what has been achieved during the probationary period;
- A current CV prepared by the probationer (to the standard format expected for promotion cases).

4.2 Probationer:

- Engage fully in their probation assessment, including the setting of their objectives and standards, and develop their skills and knowledge to carry out their role to the highest possible standard;
- Seek clarification of expectations, standards, tasks, objectives and behaviours with their Head of Department if they are unclear;
- Bring all relevant issues, which may affect their work and performance to the attention of their Head of Department or mentor.

4.3 Mentor:

4.3.1 The mentor draws on his/her own experience as an academic colleague to provide a source of advice, feedback and encouragement. The role of the mentor is not a line management one. Responsibilities include:

- Meet the probationer on a regular basis to discuss progress, review achievements and offer advice. This will normally take place on a monthly basis in the first year and by agreement after this, but no less than termly;
- Help the probationer to understand the structure of the department/faculty/university and finding links to relevant resources;
- Assist the probationer in maximising the opportunities for development;
- Provide advice and support in developing an active research profile and about relations with industry where appropriate;
- Provide advice and support in developing teaching and in dealing with departmental administration;
- Encourage the probationer to raise with the HoD any difficulties that they are experiencing which is having an impact on them meeting the terms of the probationary agreement.

4.4 Dean responsibilities include:

4.4.1 The Dean has the responsibility to agree and sign off all Probationary Agreements in order to ensure that plans in the various departments are consistent with the aims of the individual’s career development and the department discipline profile.

4.4.2 The Dean has the responsibility to quality assure and sign off end-of-probation review paperwork before forwarding it on to Human Resources. Paperwork that is not to the required standard is to be returned for revision.
4.5 Academic Promotions Sub-Committee (APC) responsibilities include:

- To review recommendations from the Head of Department at the end of the probationary period and make decisions on passing, extending or failing probation as appropriate.
- To periodically review initial Probationary Agreements or annual reviews to ensure that they are fit for purpose and align with the overall aims and objectives of the university.

4.6 Human Resources

- To provide advice and support on the development of Probationary Agreements for new probationers
- To provide advice on dealing with issues of performance or misconduct
- To provide advice and guidance on implementing reasonable adjustments
- To collate information from the annual reviews on probationary standards and metrics.

5.0 MANAGEMENT OF THE PROBATION PERIOD

5.1 Probationers are expected to achieve all of the required standards and objectives of performance for their role outlined in the Probationary Agreement by the end of their probation period.

5.2 The objectives set within the Probationary Agreement should be reviewed in meetings between the Head of Department and the probationer 6 and 12 months after commencement and then at least annually. The meetings, using the University PDR procedure for the annual reviews, should be constructive and positive processes to give the probationer the opportunity to understand how they have met, or failed to achieve the objectives and to set new standards where required. The outcomes should be monitored and recorded on the relevant section of the probation agreement form. A copy should be provided to the probationer.

5.3 At any time during the probation period where the Head of Department identifies performance or conduct, which is below required standards, this should be brought to attention of the probationer in order to establish:

- the cause of the problem;
- the actions necessary to improve performance or conduct of the probationer;
- any support and/or training required;
- the improvement required and appropriate timescales.

This information should be recorded on the Probationary Agreement form and a copy provided to the probationer.
5.4 Where objectives are not being met and this is due solely to an absence from work of 3 or more months, the Head of Department may consider extending the probation period to support the probationer to meet their objectives. Reasons may include:

- Maternity leave, statutory adoption leave & additional paternity leave;
- Disability;
- Ill health or injury;
- Mental health conditions;
- Constraints relating to pregnancy, maternity, breastfeeding, adoption, paternity or childcare;
- Other caring responsibilities;
- Gender reassignment.

6.0 PROBATION REVIEW

6.1 No later than 3 months before the end of the probation period the Head of Department will meet with the probationer to review the whole probation period and then make a recommendation to the APC on the suitability of the probationer to pass, extend or fail their probation. Such a recommendation will normally be made in the final year of probation but may be made earlier, at the Head of Department’s discretion, where there is evidence to support an early recommendation.

6.2 The APC will review each case and make the decision on passing, extending or failing probation as follows:

6.2.1 Pass - If it is considered that the performance of the probationer has met the required standards and met the objectives outlined in their Probationary Agreement, they will be informed in writing that they have passed probation.

6.2.2 Extend - If the APC concludes that performance is not yet to the required standard, and that a reasonable extension of the review date would be likely to result in the probationer meeting the required standard of performance, then they will be informed in writing of the following:

- An extended review date of no more than 12 months;
- What is required of them to pass extended probation;
- The support which will be provided where required;
- The consequence that their employment may be terminated if they do not meet the required standard at the end of the extended probation period;

6.2.3 Fail - If it is considered by the APC that there is sufficient evidence of performance being below the required standards, a meeting will be convened with the probationer, in line with the University Capability Procedure section 8.3, at which they may be dismissed on the grounds of capability, with the appropriate notice.
6.3 If the recommendation to the APC is that the probationer should fail their probation, such a recommendation should only be made where the Head of Department is satisfied, having regard both to the nature of the performance or conduct issues identified and the steps that have been taken to address those issue to date through the probationary process (and having taken advice from HR) that there:

- may be grounds on which the APC recommend that consideration be given to the probationer’s dismissal under section 8.3 of the University’s Capability Procedure, and
- are no grounds on which to recommend the extension of the probationary period probationary period including those listed under section 5.4 of this procedure.

6.4 It will normally only be appropriate for the Head of Department to make a recommendation for fail before the final year of the probationary period where he/she:

- has previously made the probationer aware of the capability or misconduct issues identified and has taken all reasonable steps to try to address those issues with the probationer, over an appropriate period and with appropriate support, but no (or insufficient) improvement has been demonstrated or is unlikely to be met within the defined period of probation; or
- a one off capability or misconduct issue has been identified that is so serious (for example, where it is believed to constitute gross negligence/misconduct) that it may justify consideration of the probationer’s dismissal under section 8.3 of the Capability Procedure. In such cases, an investigation will be carried out to establish all of the facts.

7.0 APPEAL

7.1 Where a member of staff has been dismissed in accordance with the University Capability Procedure, they will be allowed a right of appeal in line with the appeals procedure at section 10 of the University Capability Procedure.

8.0 REVIEW

8.1 This procedure will be kept under regular review and may be amended or withdrawn to reflect changes in legislation or University requirements.

9.0 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

- Probation Review Form
- Probation Guidelines
- Probation Process Flowchart