



Probationary Procedure

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** These guidelines are intended to support the Union's probation process. They are designed to provide a clear and simple process to assist line managers with inducting new employees and to ensure equality of opportunity for all employees.
- 1.2** The guidelines have been designed to maximise flexibility to meet the needs of all stakeholders and any significant variations should be discussed with the Finance & Resources Manager to minimise risk to the Union.
- 1.3** The Finance & Resources Manager is able to provide advice and support at all stages of the process.
- 1.4** A formal probation procedure helps to ensure that:
- The performance, conduct, attendance, timekeeping and training/support needs of all new employees to the Union is assessed fairly, consistently and equally across the organisation through continuous two-way communication with the Line Manager.
 - Line Managers provide new employees with the appropriate support, guidance, training, encouragement and feedback.
 - Both managers and probationers understand the purpose of the probation.
- 1.5** Employees have the right to be accompanied by another person at any formal review. The other person shall either be a work colleague or a trade union representative.
- 1.6** Any difficulties should be addressed as early as possible, it is not necessary to wait for the next formal review and Line Managers should seek advice from the Finance & Resources Manager whenever an employee's performance/conduct gives cause for concern. If appropriate, the Finance & Resources Manager may be present at formal reviews.

2.0 Induction of new employees

- 2.1** All new employees are required to attend the overall Union Induction, details of which will be given to the new employee when they start.
- 2.2** The Line Manager is responsible for ensuring that the new employee is inducted within the department and given the relevant information necessary to enable him/her to commence work.
- 2.3** The Line Manager should arrange an appointment with the new employee during their first week (but ideally on their first day) of employment. During this meeting,

the Line Manager should clarify the duties and responsibilities of the new employee, in line with the job description as well as the following:

- Policy and procedures (e.g. absence reporting) that must be followed. Key aspects of role, structure of the department and how it fits within the Union structure
- Skills/competences to be attained
- Standard of work expected (quality and quantity)
- Deadlines to be met
- Behaviour/conduct (including timekeeping and attendance)
- Working relationships
- Working environment
- Training needs including any 'on the job' training
- Identifying a mentor
- Any other issues specific to the role/grade.

2.4 The Line Manager should set objectives of what should be achieved in the role during the probationary period, which should be clear, specific to the role and measurable.

2.5 The Line Manager shall give the employee the appropriate support/guidance (including training) necessary to help them achieve the set objectives.

3.0 Probationary Period.

3.1 The probationary period is for a 6-month duration, as outlined in the employee's employment contract. Existing members of staff who are promoted, re-graded or transferred within the Union will not normally be subject to a probationary period unless their initial probation period is not yet completed. In this case the probation period will be carried over to the new contract and the appointment will not be confirmed until the original period has been successfully completed.

4.0 Probationary Review

4.1 During the probationary period, four formal meetings will be held with new employees and their Line Manager for the purpose of discussing progress and any areas of deficiency in order to achieve improvements. These will happen at:

- Week 1 - initial meeting
- Followed by 3 meetings at 2 monthly intervals (Week 25 final meeting)

4.2 The Line Manager shall confirm the final agreed dates and times with the employee so that both parties have time to prepare for them and to ensure that meetings remain free of interruptions.

4.3 During the formal reviews, Line Managers should cover the following:

- Praise good performance/achievements so far
- Review timekeeping/attendance, including sickness absence
- Discuss the employee's performance to date against the objectives set at induction

- Review/agree training/development needs
 - Identify aspects of performance/conduct that need improving through constructive feedback
 - Explore any problems the employee has encountered in their role
 - Provide guidance/support as appropriate
 - Introduce/agree any changes to the objectives set
 - Confirm the next review meeting
- 4.4 Notes of these meetings (including agreed objectives and set review dates) will be recorded on the appropriate probationary review form, signed by the employee and Line Manager and returned to the Finance & Resources Manager after completion. These will be kept on the employee's personal file.
- 4.5 Any difficulties should be addressed as early as possible, it is not necessary to wait for the next formal review and Line Managers should seek advice from the Finance & Resources Manager whenever an employee's performance/conduct gives cause for concern. If appropriate, the Finance & Resources Manager may be present at formal reviews.
- 4.6 During the final review, discussions should be held between the employee and their Line Manager about setting objectives and an individual development plan be reviewed at their first staff development and review meeting.

5.0 Confirmation of appointment

- 5.1 If, at the final probationary meeting (week 25) the employee's performance, conduct, timekeeping and attendance have been satisfactory and fully meet the Union's expected standards and if all other new starter paperwork is returned and completed to the Line Manager's satisfaction, the appointment should be confirmed. The Finance & Resources Manager will provide Line Managers with a letter confirming the employee's successful completion of their probationary period which will be presented to the employee following the final probation review.

6. Dealing with unsatisfactory performance

- 6.1 If an employee has problems meeting the required performance standards, appropriate training and support for improvement will be provided. The Line Manager should meet with the employee as soon as possible to:
- discuss any problems identified
 - explain what aspect of the work is not considered satisfactory
 - explain which objectives/standards are not being met as well as the shortfall between standards and timescales expected of the employee
 - offer remedial guidance and training as appropriate
 - give clear early warnings of what may happen if required standards are not met (e.g. extension of probationary period, and/or appointment may not be confirmed)
 - clearly explain any necessary improvements
 - agree an action plan for improvements and timescales

- record the outcome of the meeting in writing and give a copy to the employee

7.0 Extending the probationary period

- 7.1 If at the final probationary meeting (week 25), if there are performance and/or attendance concerns and there is evidence that the employee is likely to improve given extra time, the Line Manager may extend the probationary period.
- 7.2 If attendance is a concern the probationary period will not normally be extended unless the absences relate to a disability or maternity leave.
- 7.3 Initially the probationary period may be extended for one month or more to allow a reasonable amount of time to achieve the actions and standards agreed, however further extensions may be appropriate depending on the circumstances. The probationary period should never be extended for more than a total of three months.
- 7.4 Where the probation period is being extended, the following must be discussed between the Line Manager and employee:
- reasons for the extension
 - length of the extension period
 - identify any assistance/training to be given during the period of extension
 - areas for improvement and indication of how these will be monitored and measured
 - appointment will be terminated at the end of extension period if the employee fails to meet standards of performance expected for their grade/post
- 7.5 At the end of the extended period, the Line Manager and employee should meet to review progress. If progress, performance and/or attendance are satisfactory, the Line Manager will recommend that the appointment should be confirmed and will inform the Finance & Resources Manager who will then provide the Line Manager with a letter confirming the employee's successful completion of their probationary period which will be presented to the employee following the final probation review.
- 7.6 If at the end of the extended period progress is still considered unsatisfactory, the Line Manager will inform the employee and make a recommendation that the appointment be terminated.

8.0 Terminating the appointment

- 8.1 Where an employee fails to achieve the expected standards of performance for their grade/post, agreed attendance levels, or receives bad references, this shall result in the appointment being terminated, subject to notice. A decision to terminate the appointment shall be made by the Line Manager with guidance from the Finance & Resources Manager.
- 8.2 A decision to dismiss would not normally be expected unless problems had been previously identified and highlighted to the employee and the opportunity for appropriate formal corrective action taken at that time.

- 8.3 Reasons for such a decision must be clearly explained to the employee and put in writing before the end of the probationary period (or extended period) by the Finance & Resources Manager who will liaise with the Line Manager on the matter.
- 8.4 Employees will be advised in writing that the appointment shall be terminated and inform them of their last date of service.

Approved by: Board of Trustees Date: 15th June 2012

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