



Probation Policy

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Purpose	To set out the University's policy on probation for employees.
Scope	All new employees, permanent, specific purpose and fixed term, and existing employees taking up a new role in the University, are required to complete a probationary period as a standard condition of their employment.
Rationale for Probation Periods 	A probationary period is the initial stage of employment during which an employee's performance and suitability are assessed. The probation period provides the opportunity for both the University and the employee to assess capability for the role, and the ability to maintain expected standards of behaviour. There are typically three formal touchpoints during the probation period – initial goal/objective setting, first probation review and final review.

Probation Principles



Managing probation is underpinned by the following principles:

1. Expectations are set and evaluated in a clear, fair and transparent way

The probation process provides a framework for setting clear performance expectations, regular feedback conversations, and identifying and providing developmental support where needed.

2. Feedback conversations are two-way and continuous

There are no surprises as there is the opportunity for frequent honest conversations that generate a shared understanding about what needs to be done; to what standard; by what means; and why it is important.

3. Shared responsibility between manager and employee

Ensuring conversations effectively create a clear sense of ownership and accountability for work outcomes and quality is a shared responsibility of both the manager and the employee.

The Probation Process

The probation process and review form are available in this link <https://www.tcd.ie/hr/spr/probations/>

Details of Probation Period



The duration of the probation period is detailed in the employees' contract. Employees should familiarise themselves with their contract terms.

Timing of Probation Reviews



It is the manager's responsibility to ensure that the probation review takes place on time and that the form, signed by the manager and employee is submitted to probations@tcd.ie.

The timing of formal probation reviews for employees on permanent, fixed term and specific purpose contracts is detailed in the employee's contract but is normally dependent on the contract type. Details can be found in the table below:

Contract Status	Probation Period Duration	1st Probation Review	2nd Probation Review
Permanent* Fixed Term Contract longer than 12 months* Specific Purpose contract expected duration & nature of work longer than 12 months*	9 months	Month 4	At Month 8
5-year FTC with view to permanency (Tenure Track)	9 months	1 Review at Month 8	
Fixed Term Contract 12 months or less Specific Purpose contract expected duration 12 months or less	4 months	1 Review at Month 4	

*Please note for employees in academic grades i.e. Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor In and Professor Of hired on permanent contracts, fixed term contracts longer than twelve months and specific purpose contract expected duration & nature of work longer than twelve months there is one formal probation review at month eight. The initial objective setting meeting and interim review occur locally without requirement to submit to HR for noting.

Protected Leave

Where a period of protective leave occurs during the probationary period, the probationary period may be paused for the period of the employee's absence and recommenced on their return from protected leave.

Protected leave for the purposes of this policy refers to maternity leave, adoptive leave, parental leave, carer's leave, paternity leave, parent's leave and force majeure leave or any other statutory protective leave.

Reasonable accommodations

The Line Manager should ensure that where an employee has an agreed reasonable accommodation(s) or workplace adjustment(s) in place, they are appropriately considered throughout the probation process.

Where a disability-related circumstances become apparent or are disclosed throughout the probation process, the Line Manager should encourage an employee who may require reasonable accommodation(s) or workplace adjustment(s) to engage with the appropriate University support services, including the Disability Service <https://www.tcd.ie/disability/staff-with-a-disability/> (through contact with the Staff Disability Liaison Officer), so that appropriate supports can be identified and implemented where necessary.

Other Exceptional Circumstances

In other exceptional circumstances the probationary period may be extended to a maximum of 12 months, where it is in the interest of the employee. Any such extension needs to consider notice period required.

Probation outcome



The outcome of probation reviews is decided by the manager and communicated to the employee before the end of the probation period. The possible outcomes are as follows:

First Probation Review

- (1) Passed – expectations are met. The probation period continues until the next probation review.
- (2) Area(s) apparent in the performance of the employee that require further development support as recorded in the comment section of the probation form. The probation period continues until the next probation review. An additional probation review may be required.
- (3) Failed – despite the line manager having provided additional supports and feedback provided leading up to the first probation review, as recorded in the comment section of the probation review form, and the employee continues to not meet the expectations and the employment in the current appointment terminates.

Additional Probation Review(s)

- (1) Passed – expectations are met. The probation period continues until the next scheduled review.
- (2) Area(s) apparent in the performance of the employee that require further development, support as recorded in the comment section of the probation review form. The probation period continues until the next probation review.
- (3) Failed – despite the line manager having provided additional supports and feedback provided as recorded in the comment section of the probation form, does not meet expectations and the employment in the current appointment terminates.

Final Probation Review

- (1) Passed - expectations are met and the employee continues in their employment. The probation period is confirmed passed.
- (2) Failed – despite the line manager having provided additional supports and feedback provided as recorded in the comment section of the probation review form, does not meet expectations and the employment in the current appointment terminates.

	(3) Extended – there are exceptional circumstances warranting the extension of the probation period to the maximum of 12 months. At the end of the extension period the outcome will be that the employee has passed or failed probation. Termination of the employment within the probationary period is at the discretion of the University and in the event of a termination the employee will receive notice from their manager as per their contract of employment. Disciplinary Procedures do not apply to employees, in the assessment of their general suitability in respect of performance during probation. Allegations of misconduct not linked to performance, will be investigated in line with the University’s Disciplinary Policy or other relevant policy, as appropriate.
Appeal 	Appeal of probation review outcome where the decision is to terminate the employment An employee may appeal the outcome of a probation review outcome where that decision is to terminate the employment. How to appeal The appeal by the employee must be lodged with the appropriate department head in writing within five working days from the issuing of the probation decision by the employee’s Line Manager where that decision is to terminate the employment and clearly setting out the ground(s) for appeal. Ground(s) for appeal The only ground(s) for appeal shall be an alleged breach of the terms of the Probation Policy. The appeal process will be coordinated by Human Resources. The Line Manager will be advised of the appeal. An appeal is not a reassessment of the probationer’s performance; it addresses the ground(s) of appeal submitted by the employee. Conduct of appeal The appeal, will be conducted by an authorised person of the University, usually more senior to the employee’s Line Manager who carried out the probation review. The employee may be accompanied at an appeal meeting by an authorised, Trade Union Representative or a workplace colleague. The person conducting the appeal should always conclude the appeal process in good time before the end of the probationer’s probationary period.

	Timeline of appeal and decision The person conducting the appeal will normally conclude their deliberations and inform the employee and the employee's Line Manager of their decision in writing within ten working days. This decision will be implemented within one working day of the date of the appeal outcome being communicated to the employee. Decision following appeal process Following the appeal process, the person conducting the appeal makes one of the following final decisions: • Appeal unsuccessful - this is a decision not to uphold the appeal, resulting in termination of employment. • Appeal successful - this is a decision to uphold the appeal resulting in one of the below options applying: • Continue/Extend the employee's probation (if the probation period has not concluded) in accordance with the terms of the Probation Policy - or • Pass the employee's probation, where the probationary period has been completed or substantially completed.
Policy Review	This Policy will be reviewed after three years in operation and/or when there are legislative updates affecting this policy.
Policy Ownership	This Policy is owned by the Director of Human Resources.
Relevant Legislation	European Union (Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions) Regulations 2022. Specifically, Amendments to the Terms of Employment (Information) Act 1994.
Related Documents	Probation Review Form for All Staff
Document Control	Approved by: Board Date policy approved: 8 July 2026 Date of next review: This policy will be reviewed after three years in operation and/or when there are legislative updates affecting this policy.

End policy

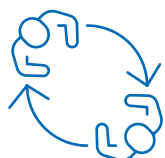


Probation Review Process

Transition into a new role benefits from a supportive on-boarding process

A supportive onboarding process greatly enhances the transition into a new role. The probation review process is an important aspect of the onboarding process to ensure that there is clear performance expectations, regular feedback and developmental supports identified. [Your HR - induction-manager-led-checklist.pdf - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Continual Review Process



The timing of probation reviews may vary depending on contract type. Details can be found in the table on [Timing of Probation Reviews, page 2](#) of the Probation Policy.

There are typically three formal touchpoints during the probation period arranged by the manager:

1. Initial goal/objective setting to be completed within two weeks of contract start date or as soon as is practical thereafter.
2. First probation review
3. Final review

While two probation review meetings are typically required this should not be the only forum in which goals/objectives and performance is discussed. Continuous expectation and feedback conversations should provide an employee with clarity on both their strengths and area(s) for development. These discussions may be scheduled as separate meetings or included in the regular one-on-one sessions between the manager and employee.

For academic employees, the Head of School sets goals/objectives normally within the first month of appointment around research and scholarship, teaching and contribution to College, Discipline and Society.

Purpose of a probation review meeting

A probation review meeting typically assesses progress against goals/objectives, identifies what's going well and if any support or clarification is required. The review meeting is also an opportunity for the employee to discuss how they feel they are performing in their role, to ask questions and/or to request more training/development /support.

Roles and Responsibilities

Manager



All line management roles¹ have responsibility for evaluating the employee's suitability for continued employment having regard for their standard of work, attendance, conduct and behaviour.

The process steps Managers are responsible for are as follows:

- (1) providing a local induction to be normally completed within one week of contract start date
- (2) setting goals/objectives for employees at the start of their contract to be normally completed within two weeks of contract start date
- (3) filling in the required probation review form and issuing to the employee should normally receive the probation review form at least 5 days in advance of the probation review meeting for their comments,
- (4) conducting the probation review meeting,
- (5) making the decision to pass or fail an employee's probation and completing the form,
- (6) Sending a copy of the completed form to HR Probations at probations@tcd.ie
- (7) providing feedback and support where difficulties arise with their performance
- (8) notifying to Human Resources long absences and leaves
- (9) notifying an employee of the successful completion of probation
- (10) notifying an employee of termination of employment due to their unsuccessful probation review. The manager confirms this in writing in consultation with their Faculty/Division Human Resources Partner.

Employee



Employees are responsible for:

- (1) fully engaging in the probation review process in a timely manner
- (2) ensuring they are clear about what is expected of them
- (3) attending scheduled review meetings
- (4) reviewing, commenting and signing the review forms as requested.

¹ Heads of School have overall responsibility for the completion and return of probation reviews in their School. In certain instances, the completion of the probation review process may be delegated to a Head of Discipline or appropriate senior person.

Probation Review Process (continued)

Human Resources and Faculty/Division HR Partner	Managers receive an automatic notification to advise when probation reviews are due from HR. The probation policy, probation review form and guidance on how to conduct a probation review can be found here https://www.tcd.ie/hr/spr/probations/. Managers may seek advice and support from their Faculty/Division Human Resources Partner and HR Probations if needed.
Record of process 	The manager should complete the probation review form and give a copy to the employee should normally receive the probation review form at least 5 days before sending a copy of the completed review form to Human Resources at probations@tcd.ie Clarification for Academic employees: For academic staff, the Head of School and/or Discipline or appropriate senior person reviews the staff member's self-assessment of the objectives agreed with the Head of School at the start of their appointment in the Goals/Objectives Setting and Review Form and the completed RSS My Application Form in MyRSS.
Guidelines to prepare for the probation review meetings	Quick Guide on Probations for all employees: ▶ Quick Guide on Probations
Supporting performance challenges during probation 	Where performance is below the expected standard, or there are other issues of concern (e.g. behaviour), employees will be advised by their manager at the earliest possible stage. Specific examples of standard of work, attendance, conduct and behaviour illustrating the manager's concerns should be provided to the employee, as recorded in the comment section of the probation form. The employee should be in no doubt that, if their performance and/or conduct does not improve, it will result in them failing their probation. If appropriate the manager should schedule additional probation review(s) and notify Human Resources. The manager will provide ongoing feedback and support to help the employee reach the expected standard of performance. Managers are advised to contact their Division/Faculty HR Partner to discuss any concerns at the earliest possible stage and to receive the appropriate guidance and support.

Probation Review Process (continued)

Outcomes following probation review



Following the probation review meetings, the manager makes the final decision on the performance rating and records this decision and any actions on the probation review form.

Following the first probation review meeting the manager will confirm that the employee:

- ▶ passed the first probation review. The probation continues until the next probation review.
- ▶ has area(s) apparent in their performance that requires further development support. The probation continues until the next probation review. An additional probation review may be required.
- ▶ failed probation despite additional supports and feedback provided, as recorded in the comment section of the probation review form, and the employment in their current appointment will terminate.

Following the final probation review meeting the manager will confirm that the employee:

- ▶ passed probation and will continue in their current appointment. Their probation will be confirmed as passed.
- ▶ failed probation despite additional supports and feedback provided, as recorded in the comment section of the probation review form, and their employment in their current appointment will terminate.
- ▶ extend the probation period where exceptional circumstances have occurred to warrant the extension of the probation period in the interest of the employee. At the end of the extension period the outcome will be passed or failed probation.

End Probation Process

Date: 8 July 2026

Probation Review Form

[Link to probation review form](#)