Non-academic Probation Procedure	
Enabling Policy Statement; Executive Owner; Approval Route:	Our Colleagues – Chief Operating Officer – Operations Committee
Is the Procedure for internal use only (Non-disclosable)?	Disclosable
Associated Policy Statements:	N/A
Authorised Owner:	HR Director
Authorised Co-ordinator:	Associate Director (People Services)
Effective date:	08 July 2025
Due date for full review:	08 July 2028
Sub documentation:	Probation Assessment Form (non-academic) – Professional/Technical/Operational Services and Research Staff

Approval History

Version	Reason for review	Approval Route	Date
1.0	Migration to the POPP Structure	Operations Committee (Chair's Action)	08 July 2025

1. Purpose

The appointment of all new employees will be based on the demonstration of capability and suitability for the post through the recruitment process. At the start of their employment new employees joining the University of Surrey will have a probation period. Normally the formal probationary period will extend over a six month period.

The probation assessment is designed for the review of performance and the confirmation of suitability for the post to which they have been appointed. During this period the University will ensure that employees are equipped with the appropriate knowledge and support mechanisms to enable them to perform to the standards required.

This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment. It may be amended from time to time with appropriate consultation with recognised trade union representatives.

A formal probation procedure helps to ensure that:

- The University is provided with an opportunity to assess the performance, conduct and attendance of each new employee in a fair and consistent manner.
- All new employees receive appropriate supervision, guidance, training and support during this initial period of employment.
- The probation process should work alongside the induction process to help create a positive and supportive working environment, allowing new staff to settle into the University and learn the key elements of the job within a reasonable and realistic timescale.
- The new employee and the line manager understand the purpose of probation and the performance objectives of the role.
- New employees are able to demonstrate their capability within the post they are appointed to, and a mechanism for regular review of that capability by their supervisor/manager is provided.
- There is an opportunity to proactively deal with concerns over a new employee's performance, set targets for improvement and provide the most appropriate support to enable an employee to improve and pass their probation.
- A mechanism is provided for the fair dismissal of employees who demonstrate continued unsatisfactory performance, after support, training and guidance have been given during the period of probation.
- There is a seamless transition into the Annual Appraisal process. (Staff on probation will not participate in the appraisal process until their probation period is successfully completed).

2. Scope and Exceptions to the Procedure

This procedure applies to all newly appointed employees to the University of Surrey and its subsidiaries (unless the subsidiary has its own internal procedure on this matter) whose terms and conditions of employment state that their appointment is subject to a probationary period.

This procedure does not apply to:

- Academic Staff within the Research and Teaching job family, who have separate probation arrangements in place.

- Agency staff or other workers.

- Employees who have had an initial period of probation at Surrey and are subsequently internally promoted or seconded within the organisation. (Promotion is used to describe the appointment of existing employees to a new position of a higher grade than their substantive post.)

- Employees who have been redeployed to another role within the University. The statutory trial period will be a more appropriate method of ensuring that the redeployment is satisfactory to both the individual and the department.

2.1 Probation and Appraisal

Probation should be viewed as the beginning of the appraisal process. The two processes are very closely linked. When probation is successfully completed the line manager should continue the process of performance review by setting objectives for the remaining period of the appraisal year, using the appropriate appraisal form.

3. Definitions and Terminology

N/A

4. Procedural Principles

4.1 Setting and Reviewing Probation Standards and Objectives

The line manager should ensure that an induction programme is in place ready for the new employee. This will include a local induction and attending the Welcome to Surrey University wide induction event , and completing specific compliance led mandatory e-learning modules

Completion of this compliance led e-learning is required as a condition of successfully passing the probationary period in all roles and should be completed within the first 3 months of employmentDetails of compliance led mandatory induction training for new employees is set out on Surreynet via the following link: Mandatory eLearning | Surreynet

Performance standards and objectives should be set and discussed with the new employee to ensure that expectations regarding standards of work performance, conduct and attendance are clear to them and that the appropriate support, training and guidance is in place. At an initial meeting using the following structure may be useful:

- Clarify the duties and responsibilities of the new employee in line with their terms and conditions of employment and their job purpose/role profile, such as;

    - key aspects of the role
    - policies and procedures that must be followed
    - deadlines which need to be adhered to
    - relationships with other employees within the team, department, University
    - working hours
    - working environment
    - health, safety and fire arrangements
    - security arrangements
    - training and development needs, including essential e-learning

- Identify and put in place objectives to be achieved during the probationary period explaining how they will be monitored and measured, the timescales and what support will be given in order to

achieve them. These objectives should be determined by and developed from the job purpose/role profile and person specification.

- Identify and put in place ways to address any training and development requirements designed to support the passing of probation or that were addressed as essential development at the recruitment stage.
- Explain fully the probation process to be followed.
- Regular one-to-one meetings should be held to review performance and to ensure the new employee is kept informed of their progress against the required standards; advised of any concerns and how these can be addressed; to ensure they are able to raise any questions they may have about their work performance or expected training requirements.
- It is recommended that a summary of each one-to-one meeting where probation progress against objectives is discussed should be given to the employee. This can be done using the formal probation form, or by email, or using a separate supplementary document, as appropriate.
- There are no formal stages during the probation period although the line manager may find it helpful to establish formal review periods. Formal reviews should be set up in advance so that both parties have time to prepare for the meeting.

4.2 Confirmation in Post

Towards the end of the probation period (ideally three-four weeks before), the manager should arrange a formal meeting with the employee to finally review standards of work performance, conduct and attendance against the probation targets and to identify any further support, training or guidance which is still required.

If the employee's overall performance is judged to be satisfactory and evidence is provided that all the mandatory compliance led modules have been completed the manager will confirm their appointment as an employee of the University of Surrey.

A probationary assessment form should be completed and forwarded to HR who will then provide written confirmation of the appointment to the employee. Non-reporting by line managers at the end of the probation period will result in the assumption that an employee's probation period is confirmed, and a letter being issued.

Following confirmation in post the line manager should meet with the employee and agree the objectives for the remaining part of the appraisal year, reviewable as part of their annual staff Appraisal.

4.3 Performance Issues in Probation

Where performance issues arise during the probation period the manager should meet with the employee to:

- Clarify what the performance issues are in detail – specifying where and how the performance or conduct are falling below what is acceptable.

- Provide evidence/examples which illustrate the issues.

- Allow the member of staff an opportunity to raise and respond to any concerns.

- Agree actions required and timescales for improvement.

- Identify any training and development needs and any other support which may need to be met in order to achieve the targets set and an explanation of how the University will support the employee in achieving this improvement.

- Explain what the consequences may be if the performance issue continues –that ultimately it could result in the employee not being confirmed in post.

A summary of the meeting should be produced and given to the employee. This may be done on the probation form, on email, or on a supplementary document, as appropriate.

The line manager should then monitor the employee's performance using relevant documentation such as the job purpose where appropriate and review their progress at the agreed date. If an employee's performance does not improve, the above process may be followed again in the review meeting. Consideration to extending probation may also be applicable (see section 4.4)

If at any stage the employee's performance is judged to be unacceptable after taking all reasonable steps to improve, the manager must discuss the situation with their senior manager and HR representative.

Following advice from HR, the employee will be advised by their manager that it is possible that the employment contract might be terminated. There is no requirement for the full period of probation (or extension period) to be worked before non- confirmation is considered, so long as the employee has been given an appropriate time to improve.

4.4 Extending Probation

Where it is felt that an employee has not yet achieved the required performance standards, but may do so given more time, the probation period may be extended. Any extension should be for a period up to five months (giving a maximum of eleven months' probation in total).

Any extension in probation should be done after seeking advice with the HR Department, who will formally confirm the extension in writing.

Where the probation period is extended, it should be discussed between the manager and the employee, ensuring that this extension ties into the discussions and improvement plan outlined under Section 4.3.

Probation may also be extended where due to sickness absence or other authorised absence it has not been possible to assess an employee's performance.

4.5 Non-Confirmation of Appointment

Where evidence from the probation assessment review clearly indicates performance has not improved to a satisfactory standard by the required date, the line manager can recommend non-confirmation in post and should explain this decision to the employee at their final probation review meeting.

The employee will be invited by letter to a formal meeting to consider this recommendation, with a minimum of 10 calendar days' notice of the hearing date (unless both parties agree to a shorter period). The letter will outline the recommendation made by the line manager and inform them that dismissal could be an outcome of the meeting. The individual will also be notified of their right to be accompanied by either a work colleague or a recognised trade union representative at

the hearing.

The purpose of the meeting is to allow a senior manager to assess the evidence collected by the line manager and provide the opportunity for the employee to respond to the evidence presented.

The panel should normally comprise:

- As Chair, a senior manager;
- An HR representative;
- If designated by the Chair, a third panel member. All panel members should be independent from the case.

The line manager may also be in attendance to present a copy of the report.

A note taker should be present to record the hearing, and these notes will be circulated to attendees.

The employee will be provided with a copy of the line manager's report and any other evidence that will be presented at the meeting, at the same time that they are invited to attend the hearing.

The employee will be invited to submit evidence and / or a written statement which should be received by HR at least 2 calendar days before the meeting.

4.6 Conduct of the meeting

The Chair will introduce those present and explain the process that will be undertaken:

- The line manager will present the evidence and answer questions from the investigation.
- The employee or their representative will be able to ask questions to the line manager about the evidence.
- The employee or their representative will respond to the evidence, present their case and answer questions.
- The line manager will be able to ask questions of the employee about their response.
- The line manager will sum up.
- The employee or their representative will sum up.
- Reasonable requests for adjournments made by any party will be allowed by the Chair.
- The members of the panel will be able to question all those involved at any stage.

Before a decision is taken an adjournment should occur to allow the panel proper consideration of the available evidence and facts of the case. After hearing the presented evidence, the Chair of the panel may decide to ask further questions or clarify evidence in order to aid the decision-making process. It may be necessary to further adjourn the meeting so that this can take place.

The panel will then consider the evidence and decide whether the employment will be terminated or whether the probation period should be extended further. If possible, the outcome of the meeting will be given verbally. In all cases it will be confirmed in writing to the employee within 7 working days of it being reached.

If the decision is made to terminate the employee's employment, they will be given the reasons for the termination in writing and will receive a payment in lieu of contractual notice. The length of notice required by either party during probationary period is specified in the Staff Handbook. They will also be informed of their right to appeal.

If the decision is made to extend the probation period further, guidelines will be set for a further period of supplementary assessment.

4.7 Dismissal of Probationary Employees for Misconduct

The Disciplinary Procedure and Capability Procedure do not normally apply to staff within their probationary period.

However, the Disciplinary Procedure will be used if an employee is alleged to have committed gross misconduct. If an employee is deemed to have committed gross misconduct, which results in dismissal, the dismissal will be summary without pay in lieu of notice. In exceptional cases where dismissal does not take place, the employee may be confirmed in post and issued with an appropriate written warning depending on the seriousness of the issue in question.

4.8 Appeal Against Non-Confirmation of Appointment

If the employee wishes to appeal their non-confirmation in post they should appeal to the Director of HR in writing, within 10 working days of receiving the written decision, stating the grounds for appeal.

The employee must be specific about the grounds of appeal; these will effectively form the agenda for the hearing. Appeals may only be raised on the grounds of:

- **Procedure** - a failure to follow procedure had a material effect on the decision;
- **Decision** - the evidence did not support the conclusion reached or is inconsistent with other decisions within the University.
- **New evidence** - which has genuinely come to light since the first hearing. Where new evidence is raised, further investigations may need to be carried out which may require the Appeal Hearing to be delayed pending the outcome of these investigations and to give the employee an opportunity to consider any new information obtained.

The Director of HR, or their designated representative, will arrange a meeting of the Appeal Committee at the earliest convenient date. This should normally be within one month after the matter has been formally raised with the Director of HR. The employee will be given 10 calendar days' notice of the hearing.

The Appeals Committee should normally comprise:

- As Chair, a senior manager;
- One other senior manager;
- An HR representative

All panel members should be independent from the case.

A note taker should be present to record the hearing, and these notes will be circulated to attendees. Recording devices will not be permitted.

Senior managers are defined as staff at Grade level 6 or above.

The individual raising the appeal will be informed of the composition of the Appeal Committee.

Should they have any concerns these should be raised with the Director of HR who will consider the employee's concerns and may reconstitute an agreed panel.

The employee will be provided with a copy of any evidence that will be presented at the meeting in response to the employee's written appeal prior to the hearing.

The Appeals Committee will invite the employee in writing to attend an appeal meeting, informing the employee of the entitlement to be accompanied by a colleague or recognised trade union representative.

The decision of the Appeals Committee shall:

- confirm the original decision;
- revoke the original decision; or
- substitute a different decision.

The decision of the Appeal committee shall be final and there shall be no further right of appeal.

4.9 Rearranging Formal Meetings

If the employee or their representative cannot attend at the time specified for a formal meeting, the employee must inform their line manager and/or HR immediately and an alternative time will be arranged. The employee must make every effort to attend a meeting and failure to attend without good reason may be treated as misconduct. If the employee fails to attend without good reason, or persistently is unable to attend, the meeting may be heard in their absence on the available evidence.

4.10 Right to be Accompanied

The employee must tell their line manager who they have chosen to act as their representative in good time (normally two working days) before the formal meeting. The employee can be required to choose an alternative if the chosen representative is unavailable for the scheduled meeting and will not be available for more than five working days.

The representative may make representations and sum up the employee's case but is not allowed to answer questions on the employee's behalf.

There is no requirement for a work colleague to accept a request to accompany an employee.

5. Governance Requirements

5.1 Implementation: Communication Plan

The procedure was embedded when first published and is available on SurreyNet (HR Procedures Page) for all staff to access.

5.2 Implementation: Training Plan

The procedure was embedded when first published. Further support will be provided to colleagues implementing the procedure when required.

5.3 Review

This procedure will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner if required by a change in legislation or practice.

5.4 Legislative Context and Higher Education Sector Guidance or Requirements

5.4.1 Applicable Legislation

This procedure complies with the following legislation.

- Equality Act 2010
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Employment Relations Act 1999
- Employment Act 2002

5.5 Sustainability

This procedure is deemed to have little to no impact on sustainability.

6 Stakeholder Engagement and Equality Impact Assessment

6.3 An Equality Impact Assessment was completed on 11 February 2025 and is held by the Authorised Co-ordinator.

6.4 Stakeholder Consultation was completed, as follows:

Stakeholder	**Nature of Engagement**	**Request EB Approval (Y/N)**	**Date**	**Name of Contact**
Governance	Review of V1.0	N	13/02/25	Kelley Padley, Governance Officer
Sustainability	Review of V1.0	N	06/03/25	Martin Wiles, Head of Sustainability
Health & Safety	Review of V1.0	N	24/02/2025	Matt Purcell, Director of Health and Safety
Academic Freedom / Freedom of Speech	Review of V1.0	N	27/02/25	Abi Bradbeer AFFE Project Manager