# QUEEN’S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

Probation Regulation

(For Staff Grades 6/Ac1 and above, other than academic)

# (Regulation Governing Probationary Appointments Pursuant to Statute XIII Part V)

1. Statutory Instrument
   1. Part V of Statute XIII states that the Senate shall, by Regulation, prescribe a procedure under which staff on probation shall be reviewed. The Regulation shall also include provision for non-confirmation in post during or at the end of the probationary period if the performance/conduct of a member of staff is found to be deficient, or if for any other substantial reason or reasons they are judged unsuitable to be confirmed in post.
   2. This Regulation applies to Research, Academic Related, Senior Clerical, Technical and Operational staff (Grades 6 and above) and such other members of staff, or categories of staff of the University, as are brought within its scope by the Senate.
   3. The application and scope of this Regulation derives from that provided for in Statute XIII, and should give effect to, and be consistent with, the guiding principles set out in clauses 2(1) and 2(2) of that Statute.
   4. In all cases that are to be considered under Part V of Statute XIII and this Regulation, the University reserves the right to digress from them in so far as they may be inconsistent with its legal obligations as an employer and/or the legal rights of individual members of staff.
2. Principles
   1. The main function of probation is to provide a period of development for a member of staff appointed to the University, to enable them to gain appropriate experience, with advice and guidance from senior colleagues.
   2. For a newly-appointed member of Research, Academic-Related, Senior Clerical, Technical and Operational staff (Grades 6 and above) to the University, the period of probation specified in the letter of appointment will be 6 months.
3. Setting Objectives/Training and Development
   1. Following the appointment of the member of staff, the Head of School/Director/Senior Manager1 will select the supervisor/manager who will set the objectives for and monitor the progress of the probationer. This will normally be the member of staff’s line manager.

1 Senior Manager could be Assistant Director, Departmental Head, Head of Unit/Division as appropriate.

* 1. Whilst the line manager is responsible for ensuring that clear, measurable targets are communicated in writing to the probationer within one month of appointment and that his/her performance/conduct is reviewed at monthly intervals throughout the probationary period, the appropriate Head of School/Director/Senior Manager should also be involved in setting the standards for staff at Grades 6 and above. The onus is on the line manager to liaise accordingly with their Head of School/Director/Senior Manager, prior to meeting the probationer.
  2. Objectives should relate to the requirements of the post and the strategic objectives of the School/Directorate. Timescales for the completion of each objective should be specified. Appropriate induction, training and development should also be agreed with the probationer. The line manager should ensure that this information is documented and shared with the probationer accordingly.

1. Monthly Review Meetings
   1. The reviews should be conducted at monthly meetings between the probationer and the line manager to discuss their progress and performance with reference to the timescales and objectives that have been set. Particular areas of strength or achievement should be highlighted to the probationer. Feedback should also identify any deficiencies in performance and an adequate period of time should be given to improve. Where deficiencies have been discussed, the probationer should be advised of these in writing and of the potential outcome, ie: failure to successfully complete probation. The line manager should ensure that this information is documented and shared with the probationer accordingly.
2. Recommendation from Line Manager
   1. By the end of the probation period (or earlier if the probationer’s performance/conduct is unsatisfactory or if for any other substantial reason or reasons they are judged unsuitable to be confirmed in post), the line manager should complete the probationary report recommending that the probationer:
      1. pass probation and be confirmed in post or
      2. have his or her employment terminated or
      3. extend the period of probation once unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated.

5.2. Confirmation in Post : Recommended

Where confirmation in post is being recommended, the line manager should meet the probationer to discuss and sign off the report accordingly. The line manager should submit the report to his/her Head of School/Director/Senior Manager.

The Head of School/Director/Senior Manager should consider the report and recommendation submitted by the line manager and either uphold or amend the recommendation\*. A copy of the completed report is sent to the line manager who should forward a copy to the HR Hub for implementation.

\*Where a Head of School/Director/Senior Manager decides to amend the recommendation, Section 5.3 will be followed.

* 1. Confirmation in Post : Not Recommended

Where confirmation in post is not being recommended, the line manager should advise the probationer of this and arrange a meeting for him/her, the probationer and the Head of School/Director/Senior Manager to discuss the report and recommendation. At this meeting the probationer will be entitled to be accompanied by a representative of a recognised trade union or a University colleague. A HR Business Partner should also be present.

At the meeting:

* + - The line manager should clearly indicate the reasons for the recommendation.
    - The probationer or relevant officer should make their representation.
    - The Head of School/Director/Senior Manager shall consider all relevant information, question the line manager, and the probationer and/or relevant officer.

Within 5 working days of the meeting, the Head of School/Director/Senior Manager shall give a reasoned decision in writing to the probationer either upholding or amending the line manager’s recommendation.

A copy of the completed report and confirmation of the Head of School/Director/Senior Manager’s decision is sent to the line manager who should forward a copy to the HR Hub for implementation.

* 1. If, without good cause, the probationer does not attend the probationary meeting(s) to set/review objectives and/or sign the completed probationary report form, the process will proceed in the probationer’s absence.

1. Appeal Stage
   1. The probationer will have the right to appeal the decision either to have his/her probation extended or employment terminated. This appeal, outlining the grounds on which the appeal is based, should be submitted in writing to the People and Culture Director within 10 days from the date of the letter of notification.
   2. The People and Culture Director will constitute an Appeal Panel comprising\* for Research, Academic Related, Senior Clerical, Technical and Operational staff (Grades 6 and above):

* Dean of Faculty for that School/Director from a different Directorate.
* People and Culture Director (or nominee).
* Head of School/Senior Manager (from a different School/Directorate).

\* Other Senior Managers may be involved dependent upon the grade of the probationer.

* 1. The probationer (the appellant) has the right to attend the hearing of the appeal and is entitled to be accompanied by a representative of a recognised trade union or University colleague.
  2. The probationer should attend the hearing of the appeal, but the hearing may proceed in their absence where the Appeal Panel considers that such absence is unreasonable in the circumstances.
  3. The decision of the Appeal Panel shall be final and will be communicated in writing to the probationer.