

**ROYAL HOLLOWAY**  
**University of London**

**PROBATION GUIDELINES**

*(For non-academic members of staff in Grades 1 - 10)*

**1. Introduction**

Appointments are made with an initial period of probation. This dedicated period of time allows for training and support to be provided to the probationer to assist them in performing the new role to the required standard as quickly as possible.

Although the College has an appraisal system for all groups of staff, the period of probation remains necessary to ensure that the progress of a new member of staff is reviewed at regular intervals. It also ensures that any difficulties are discussed as soon as they arise and any training needs acted upon without awaiting an annual appraisal meeting.

**2. Period of Probation**

The period of probation will be stated in the letter of appointment but is usually as follows:

RHUL Grades 1 – 5	6 months
RHUL Grades 6 – 10	12 months

**3. Probation Review Meetings**

Probation should be regarded as a period of continuous review and it is recommended that line managers meet with the probationer at regular intervals to include:

RHUL Grades 1 - 5:           Review meetings after 1 and 3 months and a final review meeting at 5 months.

RHUL Grades 6 - 10:       Review meetings at 1 and 5 months and a final review meeting at 10 months.

Review meetings can be arranged for sooner than the intervals indicated above if the situation warrants it, and can be additional to, or in place of, the above scheduled meetings.

Notes should be taken by the line manager at the review meetings and agreed by both parties at the end of the meeting if possible.

Following the final review meeting, the line manager should complete the Probation Form (appendix a) and return this to the Human Resources Department to confirm whether the probationer:

- (1) should be confirmed in his/her appointment; or
- (2) is required to serve a further period of probation; or
- (3) should be invited to a formal meeting to discuss their probation and whether termination of employment is warranted.

#### **4. Problems with Performance**

If during the review meetings, it is felt that the probationer is not performing satisfactorily the line manager should set reasonable targets and deadlines for improvement and consider whether any additional support or training is needed. These targets should then be considered at the next review meeting, which could include the final review meeting. A representative from the Human Resources Department may attend a review meeting if required.

In some cases, a further period of probation may be required to allow additional time for improvements to be made and additional training to be undertaken. The line manager should discuss this with the probationer at the review meeting and liaise with the Human Resources Department who will write to the probationer to confirm the details of the extended period of probation. It is not expected that a period of extension would normally exceed 6 months and additional review meetings will be scheduled at regular intervals for the duration of the extended period.

Occasionally difficulties during a period of probation cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of either or both parties and in these situations the probationer's employment may be terminated. In such situations the Head of Department/Section, supported by Human Resources, will write to the probationer asking them to attend a meeting to discuss their probation, providing a minimum of 5 working days notice. The letter should include the following:

- a) the reason for the meeting, including details of the specific performance/conduct concerns;
- b) confirmation that the meeting is to discuss whether termination of employment is warranted and therefore may lead to their dismissal;
- c) the date, time and place of the meeting;
- d) the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative (including trade union solicitor) or a workplace colleague of their own choice;
- e) copies of any documentation or evidence which will be referred to at the meeting.

The probationer will be notified of the outcome of the meeting as soon as practically possible and not normally later than within 5 working days. If the outcome of the meeting is that the probationer's employment should be terminated the notification will confirm their right to appeal as outlined in section 5.

Should a probationer's employment be terminated, they will receive the notice, or pay in lieu of notice, in accordance with their terms and condition of employment. The only except to this would be in cases of summary dismissal for gross misconduct, where any employee, including those not on a period of probation, would not be entitled to notice.

#### **5. Right of Appeal**

A probationer whose employment has been terminated during their period of probation has the right of appeal. The grounds for the appeal should be submitted in writing to the Director of Human Resources within 5 working days of receipt of the letter detailing the termination of employment.

An appeal hearing is not a re-evaluation of the evidence but an assessment that procedures were followed correctly and that the judgement of the original manager was fair and appropriate. No new evidence should be submitted during the appeal hearing.

The Human Resources Department will arrange an appeal hearing for as soon as possible but normally within 20 working days and will notify the probationer and manager who sanctioned the dismissal of the appeal. The notification to attend the appeal will include:

- a) the date and time of the appeal hearing;
- b) the right of the probationer to be represented by a trade union representative (including trade union solicitor) or a work colleague of their own choice;
- c) copies of any supporting documentation which may affect the original judgement;
- d) the chair of the appeal panel and the Human Resources representative.

The appeal hearing will be heard by the next level of management above the manager who sanctioned the termination of the probationer's employment and a representative from the Human Resources Department.

In all cases the decision of the appeal panel is final and will be confirmed in writing to the probationer as soon as possible and normally within 5 working days of the hearing.

