



ST. HUGH'S COLLEGE, OXFORD

Probationary Period Policy

Date Policy Ratified by Governing Body: 17 June 2026

Committee Responsible: People Subcommittee

Date to be reviewed by: 17 June 2028

Probationary Period Policy

Purpose

- 1) The purpose of a probationary period is to provide a structured period during which both the College and the employee can assess suitability for the role.
- 2) During the probationary period the employee's:
 - performance
 - conduct
 - capability
 - attendance
 - overall suitability for the role

will be monitored and reviewed through regular meetings and feedback. The formal probation process should work alongside ordinary management practices, so that in addition to their probation meetings, the probationer should receive guidance and support in the same way as other members of their team.

In this procedure:

- “Line Manager” means the person who directly manages the member of staff.
- “Senior Manager or equivalent” is the Manager with overall responsibility for the area.

Scope

- 3) This policy applies to all new non-academic employees unless otherwise stated in their contract of employment.

Length of Probation

- 4) The standard probationary period for new employees is three months.
- 5) The purpose of this period is to allow managers to assess whether the employee demonstrates the required:
 - performance
 - capability
 - conduct
 - attendance
 - suitability for the role

Extension of Probation

- 6) In some circumstances it may not be possible to fully assess performance within the initial probationary period. This may occur where:
 - further time is required to assess performance
 - additional training or support is needed

- absence has prevented a full assessment
 - improvement has been identified but not yet sustained
- 7) In such cases, probation may be extended once.
- 8) The extension period will normally be no longer than two months, meaning the total probationary period should not normally exceed five months.
- 9) Any extension must:
- clearly explain the reasons for extension
 - set measurable objectives for improvement
 - specify the length of the extension
 - confirm the date of the final review
- 10) Extensions should be discussed with Human Resources before being confirmed.

Objectives of the Probationary Period

- 11) During the probationary period the line manager will:
- set clear expectations for the role
 - agree objectives and performance standards
 - provide appropriate training and support
 - monitor performance and conduct
 - provide regular feedback
 - address concerns at an early stage
- 12) The employee is expected to actively engage with feedback and take responsibility for developing the skills required for the role.

Review Meetings

- 13) Managers should hold structured probation review meetings during the probationary period.
- 14) These should normally take place as follows:

Initial objectives meeting

- Within the first two weeks of employment
- Role expectations and objectives are clarified

First review meeting

- Around the end of Month 1
- Early feedback and support

Second review meeting

- Around the end of Month 2

- Assessment of progress and identification of any concerns

Final probation review

- At or shortly before the end of Month 3
- Decision regarding confirmation, extension, or termination

15) If probation is extended, a final review meeting must take place before the end of the extension period.

16) Managers should document all review meetings using the Probation Review Form (Appendix 3).

Support during Probation

17) Where concerns arise during the probationary period, the manager should:

- explain the concerns clearly
- provide constructive feedback
- set clear improvement objectives
- provide appropriate training, support or supervision
- agree a reasonable timeframe for improvement

18) The aim during probation is to support the employee in reaching the required standard wherever possible.

19) It is crucial that managers contact Human Resources immediately if they start to have concerns about the ability of the employee to complete their probationary period successfully.

20) A written note should be kept of all discussions.

Outcomes of the Final Review

21) At the final probation review meeting one of the following outcomes will normally apply.

1. Confirmation in Post

22) Where the employee has demonstrated satisfactory performance, conduct and capability, they will be confirmed in post.

23) Written confirmation will be provided.

2. Extension of Probation

24) Where improvement is required but there is a reasonable expectation that the employee may reach the required standard, probation may be extended.

25) The extension letter should include:

- a) the length of the extension and the date on which the extended period of probation will end;
- b) the reason for the extension and, if the reason is unsatisfactory performance, details of how and why performance has fallen short of the required standards;
- c) the performance standards or objectives that the colleague is required to achieve by the end of the extended period of probation;
- d) any support, for example further training, that will be provided during the extended period of probation; and
- e) a statement that, if the colleague does not fully meet the required standards by the end of the extended period of probation, their employment will be terminated.

26) The total probationary period should not normally exceed five months.

3. Termination of Employment

27) Where performance, conduct and/or suitability remain unsatisfactory, employment may be terminated during or at the end of the probationary period.

28) Termination will be in accordance with the employee's contractual notice provisions.

29) During the probationary period, employees will be subject to all the terms and conditions of their contracts of employment except certain terms or benefits specified by the offer letter or contract as being subject to successful completion of probation.

30) During probation, either party may terminate the individual's contract of employment by giving one week's notice. Where an existing employee transfers or is promoted into another role within the College, the contractual notice period applicable to their role will apply.

31) The College may, at its discretion, choose to terminate the contract immediately and make a payment in lieu of the one week's notice together with any outstanding holiday pay. If the employee has been overpaid for holiday leave that they had not yet accrued, the College may recover the appropriate amount from salary or other payments due.

32) Once the probationary period has been completed, the notice periods will be as defined in the employee's contract of employment

33) If an employee's performance while on probation has been unsatisfactory despite support from their line manager, and it is thought unlikely that further training or support would lead to a satisfactory level of improvement, then their employment should be terminated at the end of the period of probation.

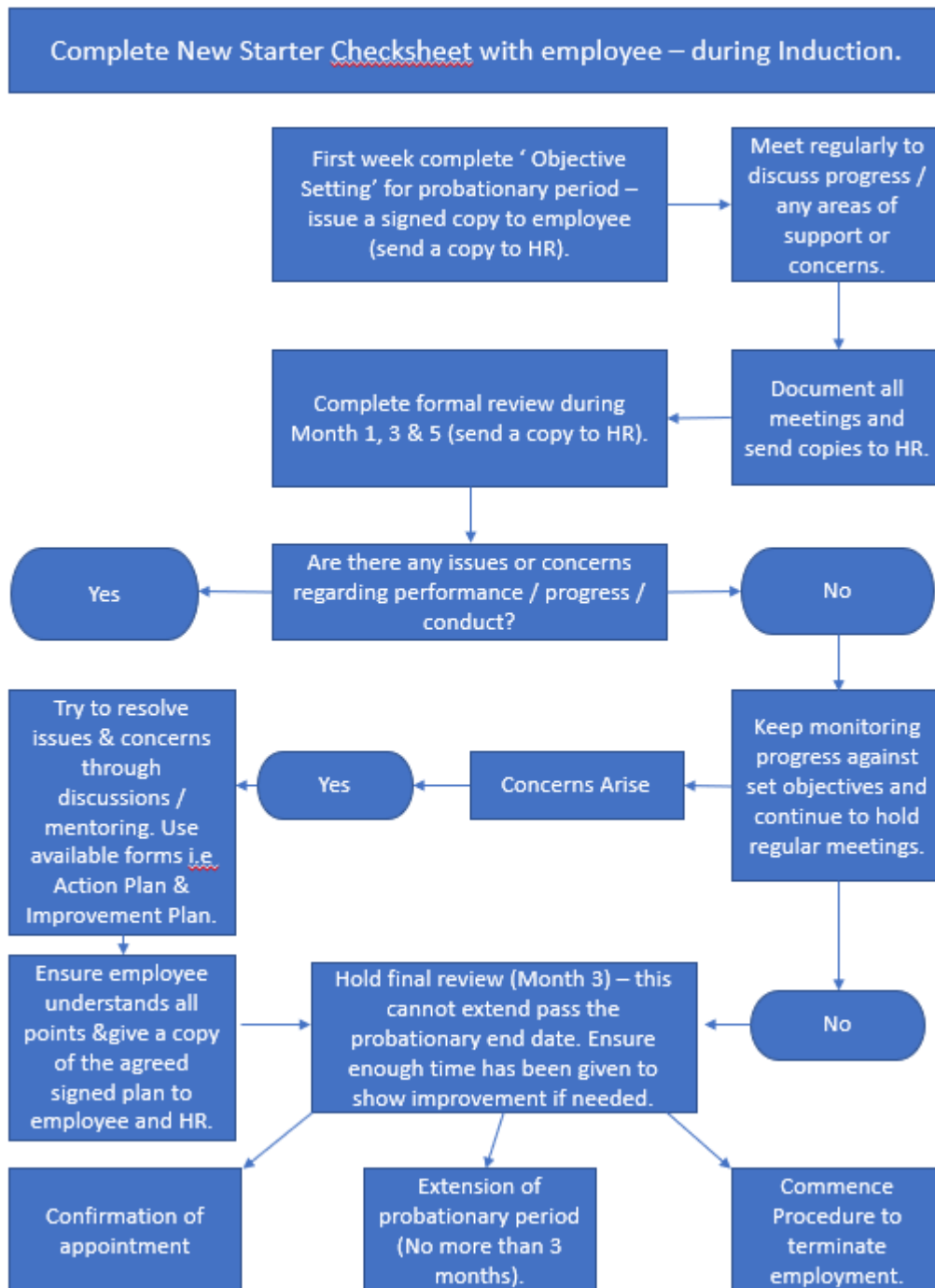
34) If, however, there is clear evidence prior to the end of the period of probation that suggests the employee is wholly unsuitable for the role, the line manager should consult with Human Resources with a view to terminating the employee's contract before the end of the probationary period.

- 35) In such circumstances, where the issues are sufficiently serious to necessitate a termination of employment before the end of the probationary period, the employee must be interviewed and informed of the reason for the termination. The employment contract will come to an end immediately and arrangements will be made to give the employee pay in lieu of notice. The College will confirm the termination and the reason for it in writing.
- 36) If an employee's employment is terminated after the expiry of the probationary period, or if they are an existing employee who has been transferred or promoted into a different role, the College's standard capability/disciplinary procedure must be followed in full.
- 37) Managers must consult Human Resources before making a decision to terminate employment during probation.

Documentation

- 38) Managers must keep records of probation review meetings using the Probation Review Form (Appendix 3).
- 39) Completed documentation should be submitted to Human Resources hr@st-hughs.ox.ac.uk and retained on the employee's personnel file.

Appendix 1 – Probationary Period Flowchart



Appendix 2 – File note – Notification of Probation

St Hugh's College
St Margaret's Road
Oxford, OX2 6LE



Tel: 01865 274900
www.st-hughs.ox.ac.uk
Registered Charity 1139717

St Hugh's College, Oxford

File Note – Notification of Probation

Conducted By:
Employee:
Department:
Date:

Confirmation of information regarding probation received.

Line manager

CC: Human Resources

Signed

Date

Appendix 3 – Probation Review Form

Employee name:		Job title:	
Department:		Line manager:	
Post start date:		Probation end date:	
	Date due	Date completed	
Initial meeting			
1 st Review – 1 month			
2 nd Review – 2 months			
3 rd Review – 3 months			

Part 1 – First review (month 1)

A separate copy of this form is to be completed by the Line Manager in discussion with the employee for the first and second review meeting.

<i>(Please tick)</i>	Improvement required	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Quality and accuracy of work				
Efficiency				
Attendance				
Time keeping				
Work relations (team work and interpersonal communication skills)				
Competency in the role				
If any areas of performance, conduct or attendance require improvement please provide details below				
Where concerns have been identified, please summarise how these will be addressed during the remaining period of probation				

Summarise the employee's performance and progress over the period			
Have the objectives identified for this period of the probation been met?	Yes / No	If no, what further action is required?	Review Date
Have the training / development needs identified for this period of probation been addressed?	Yes / No	If no, what further action is required?	Review Date
Employee's signature:			
Manager's signature:			
Date:			

Part 2 – Second review (month 2)

A separate copy of this form is to be completed by the Line Manager in discussion with the employee for the first and second review meeting.

<i>(Please tick)</i>	Improvement required	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Quality and accuracy of work				
Efficiency				
Attendance				
Time keeping				
Work relations (team work and interpersonal communication skills)				
Competency in the role				
If any areas of performance, conduct or attendance require improvement please provide details below				
Where concerns have been identified, please summarise how these will be addressed during the remaining period of probation				

Summarise the employee's performance and progress over the period			
Have the objectives identified for this period of the probation been met?	Yes / No	If no, what further action is required?	Review Date
Have the training / development needs identified for this period of probation been addressed?	Yes / No	If no, what further action is required?	Review Date
Employee's signature:			
Manager's signature:			
Date:			

Part 3 – Final Review Meeting (month 3)

To be completed by Line Manager in discussion with the employee.

<i>(Please tick)</i>	Improvement required	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Quality and accuracy of work				
Efficiency				
Attendance				
Time keeping				
Work relations (team work and interpersonal communication skills)				
Competency in the role				
Have the objectives identified for the probationary period been met?	Yes / No	If no, please provide details		
Have the training / development needs identified for the probationary period been addressed?	Yes / No	If no, please provide details		
Summarise the employee's performance and progress over the period.				

Is the employee's appointment to be confirmed? *Please advise HR	Yes / No*
If no, please provide reasons below and summarise what action has been taken to address any difficulties which have arisen during the probationary period.	
Should a formal review meeting be arranged?	Yes / No
Should the employee's probationary period be extended?	Yes / No
If yes, please provide reasons and, where appropriate, specify any areas of improvement required and how these will be monitored.	
Length of the extension (max 2 months):	
New review date:	
<i>Employee: Please be aware that the College treats personal data collected during the probationary period in accordance with its data protection policy. Information about how your data is used and the basis for processing your data is provided in the College's staff privacy notice.</i>	
Employee's signature:	
Manager's signature:	
Date:	