



University of
St Andrews

Probation policy for support staff

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Purpose	Outlines the procedure and management of the probationary period for Support staff.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
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Table of contents

1.	Introduction	3
2.	At the start of employment	3
3.	Progress review	3
4.	End of probation	4
5.	Probationary satisfactory	4
6.	Probation not satisfactory – appointment to be extended	5
7.	Probation not satisfactory - appointment to be terminated	5
Appendix A: Probation process flowchart		7
Appendix B: Review and development scheme (RDS) Form for Support Staff		8
Appendix C: Training & development requirements		12
Appendix D: Probation review form		13

1. Introduction

- 1.1 All support staff appointed to the University are required to complete a probationary period. The length of the probationary period is linked to the grading of the post and is set down in the contract of employment. The length of any probation period may be reduced/waived/extended with the agreement of Human Resources.
- 1.2 Management of probation is the responsibility of the Head of School/Unit but day-to-day responsibility and monitoring can be delegated to a Line Manager. Where this is in operation, the Head of School/Unit must be kept informed of progress and issues as they arise and have sight of the agreed documents listed below. Probation is linked to the annual [Review and Development Scheme \(RDS\)](#).
- 1.3 The purpose of the probationary period is to offer support and guidance to new employees in order that there is a clear understanding of the requirements of the role along with offering the necessary support to achieve the required standard during the initial period of employment. At the same time, it provides the University with an opportunity to assess the performance and future potential of the employee before deciding whether to confirm the appointment.
- 1.4 Please note, support staff are those that are aligned to the following job families:
- Managerial
 - Specialist & Administrative
 - Technical
 - Operational & Facilities
- 1.5 A flowchart of the procedure is shown in [Appendix A](#).

2. At the start of employment

- 2.1 The Head of School/Unit/Line Manager will meet with the probationer at the commencement of employment and jointly complete section E of the [RDS form](#) (Appendix B)
- 2.2 The purpose of this is to set down realistic objectives in relation to the role being undertaken that will allow fair judgement of the probationer. A clear focus should be given to the probationer at this meeting of the expected behaviours, level of collegiality and teamwork expected of them during their employment with the University along with defining training needs. The Head of School/Unit should send a copy of the RDS form to [Human Resources](#). Your HR Business Partner will liaise with you to ensure that the probation is progressing satisfactorily.

3. Progress review

- 3.1 The Head of School/Unit/Line Manager will meet with and review the probationer's progress at formal regular intervals throughout the probationary period and ensure regular feedback is given (see [table](#) below). The purpose of these meetings is to review and record, in writing, progress with regard to the initial objectives, to have a general discussion with regard to performance and to allow the probationer to raise any issues regarding their duties. Any concerns regarding the probationer's performance must be raised at these meetings and formally recorded.

3.2 Formal reviews should be undertaken at the intervals shown below:

Probation period	1 st formal review	2 nd formal review	Final Review
3 months	End of month 1		Last week in month 2
6 months		End of month 3	Last week in month 5
15 months		End of month 6	By end of month 13

4. End of probation

4.1 Grades 1-4

4.1.1 Human Resources will write to the Head of School/Unit at least 6 weeks before the end of the probationary period as a reminder that the probationary report is due.

4.1.2 The Head of School/Unit/Line Manager is required to meet with the probationer to discuss overall performance and to reflect on the probationary period. At this meeting, the Head of School/Unit should recommend whether the appointment is to be confirmed, the probationary period extended or that they will be seeking to terminate the appointment.

4.2 Grades 5-9

4.2.1 Human Resources will write to the Head of School/Unit and probationer during Month 12 of the probationary period as a reminder that the probationary reports are due for completion and must be submitted by the Head of School/Unit/Line Manager at least 6 weeks before the probation end date.

4.2.2 Month 13 after appointment - The probationer should update sections C, E of the [RDS form](#) and the [training and development form](#) (if relevant) and pass this to their Head of School/Unit/Line Manager prior to the review meeting. At the review meeting, the objectives will be discussed along with progress made.

5. Probationary satisfactory

5.1 Grades 1-4

5.1.1 The [probationary form](#) (Appendix D) should be signed by the person undertaking the review. If this is not the Head of School/Unit, the form should be countersigned by them and returned to [Human Resources](#) **at least 4 weeks before the probationary end date**.

5.1.2 The form should identify what the individual has achieved in relation to the objectives set down at the start of the appointment, how performance has been measured, how satisfied you are with the individual's overall performance in relation to behaviour, collegiality and teamwork. A copy of the future objectives should be included for information.

5.2 Grades 5 – 9

5.2.1 The [probationary form](#) should be completed and signed by the Head of School/Unit and returned to Human Resources **at least 6 weeks before the probationary end date**. The report should identify what the individual has achieved in relation to the objectives set down at the start of the appointment, how performance has been measured, how satisfied

you are with the individual's overall performance in relation to behaviour, collegiality and teamwork.

5.2.2 In addition, the Head of School/Unit/Line Manager should discuss and agree a set of objectives for the next RDS review period. This will produce an agreed RDS form which both parties sign off and will move the Probationer into the normal RDS review cycle for the School/Unit.

6. Probation not satisfactory – appointment to be extended

6.1 Where the probationary period has not been completed satisfactorily but where a further period of probation is judged to provide realistic opportunity for a satisfactory outcome, the Head of School/Unit/Line Manager may, in agreement with Human Resources, seek to extend the probationary period for a further period.

6.2 Any extension to the probation period must be with good cause and the Head of School/Unit must be able to demonstrate the benefits of such an extension. The Head of School/Unit must inform the probationer of the decision and provide them with an action plan for completion during the extended period.

6.3 The Head of School/Unit should complete the probation form recommending that the probation period should be extended, indicating the period of the extension and including a copy of the action plan.

7. Probation not satisfactory - appointment to be terminated

7.1 Where the probationary period has not been completed satisfactorily and where a further period of probation is judged not to provide a realistic opportunity for a satisfactory outcome, the Head of School/Unit must inform the probationer of this and complete the [probation form](#) recommending that the employment should be terminated. Please note that if performance is clearly unsatisfactory, the contract can be terminated **before** the end of the probationary period. It is essential that any concerns with performance should have been discussed with the probationer and necessary improvement strategies put in place well in advance of the final report on the probationary period.

7.2 Where improvement is still unsatisfactory, the probationer should be informed of this and the Head of School/Unit should implement the termination process. Please note that the contract can be terminated prior to the end of the probationary period in circumstances of particularly poor performance and/or unsatisfactory improvement.

7.3 The recommendation to terminate the appointment should outline the issues/concerns, provide details of training/support put in place to assist the probationer and state clearly the reasons for the termination of the appointment.

7.4 The following documents should be submitted to the Director of Human Resources with the completed [probation form](#).

- A copy of the original RDS form setting out the objectives at the start of the appointment along with any other notes/paperwork issued at this time.
- A copy of the notes/progress reports from the progress review meetings.
- Any record of the advice and guidance given to the probationer and details of any discussions regarding underperformance and how they might be remedied.
- Any other relevant information.

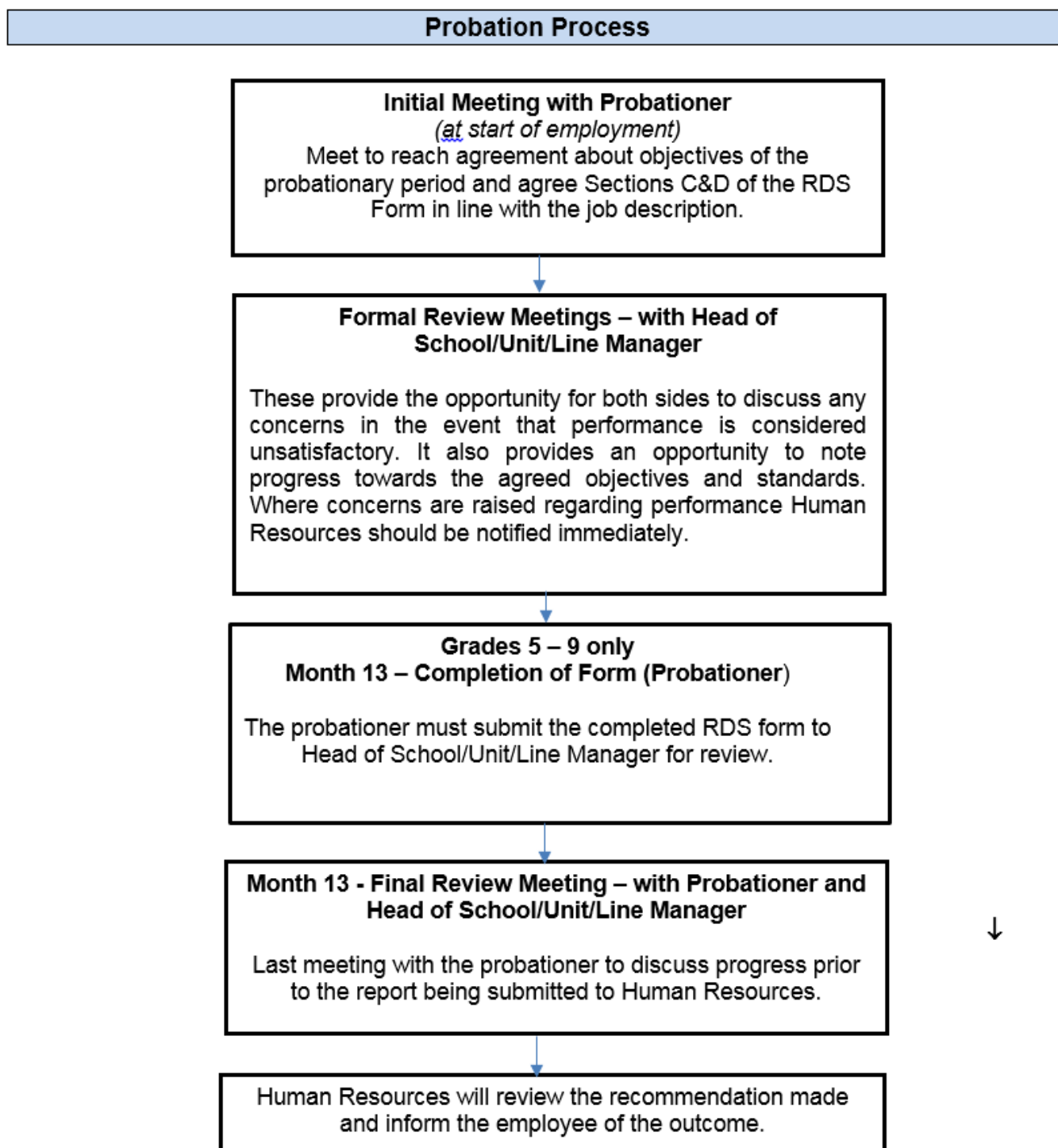
7.5 On receipt of the probation form and related information, Human Resources will write to the probationer to arrange a hearing to discuss the recommendation and to provide them with an opportunity to state their case. This will normally be dealt with as a “dismissal” under the [University’s Poor Performance \(Capability\) Procedures](#) except where Conduct is the reason for action. In this situation the [University’s Disciplinary Procedure](#) will apply. The process outlined in the relevant procedure will be actioned with the following exceptions:

- No investigation will be required in view of the extant probationary documentation;
- The case will be presented by the designated manager
- The authority of the panel is to make one of the following judgements:
 - Find that the employee has no case to answer and probation period should resume or confirm the employment with the University without any further probation period.
 - Extend the period of probation and require satisfactory completion of a course of training or developmental activity.
 - Dismiss the employee with the appropriate period of notice or payment in lieu of notice.
 - Dismiss the employee without notice and without pay in lieu of notice.

7.6 This list is not exhaustive and only gives an indication of what action the University might take following a hearing. Any alternative proposals must be approved by the Director of Human Resources.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.0	Migration of policy to the Governance Zone.	Published	Lisa Stewart Human Resources	27/06/2019
1.1	Minor change to 2.1 to refer staff to the correct section of the RDS form.	Published	Lisa Stewart HR	16/01/2020
1.2	Change to review date only.	Published	Lisa Stewart HR	07/06/2021

Appendix A: Probation process flowchart



*It is important to remember that the basis for these probationary arrangements is that probationers will be provided with timely and realistic feedback about all aspects of their performance. **The responsibility for this feedback lies with the Head of School/Unit/Line Manager.***

Appendix B: Review and development scheme (RDS) Form for Support Staff

A word version of this form can be downloaded the [HR policy page](#) or via the following [link](#).

Introduction

It is important that all roles within the University support the delivery of the University's strategy and that every employee is aware of how they contribute to the overall success of the University. The Review and Development Scheme (RDS) has been designed to support this aim.

The key objectives of the RDS are:

- To have a formal constructive two-way discussion between manager and employee annually.
- To review the past year, providing feedback, identifying successes, and learning from problems in the achievement of last year's objectives.
- To agree realistic goals for the future, taking into consideration the objectives of the School/Unit/University, the knowledge, skills and attitude of the employee and their career development aspirations.

Timetable

The RDS cycle will run from January to June or June to December each year, depending on the School/Unit planning cycle. Human Resources will contact all Heads of School/Unit to confirm which cycle completion will be undertaken and to seek confirmation once the process has been completed.

Stage 1	Sections A & B of form completed by reviewer and issued to reviewee prior to the meeting.
Stage 2	Reviewee completes section C and F and updates section E if objectives set for previous year. This is passed back to the reviewer in advance of the meeting.
Stage 3	RDS Meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewee and reviewer discuss role and previous objectives, if applicable and any issues experienced. • Both parties must agree future objectives, timescales including any interim review periods if relevant and training/development needs to meet objectives.
Stage 4	After meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewer completes sections D, E & Appendix C (if relevant). • Form signed off by reviewee and reviewer and passed to Head of School/Unit. • Reviewer along with Head of School/Unit should consider training and development needs and if necessary seek advice from CAPOD.

Section A: Reviewee/reviewer details (Completed by reviewee)

REVIEWEE:		DATE OF RDS MEETING:	
POSITION:		DATE OF LAST RDS MEETING:	
SCHOOL/UNIT:		REVIEWER:	

**Section B: School/Unit Objectives
(Completed by reviewer prior to issuing form)**

Provide a brief summary of current School/Unit objectives and/or team goals and values

**Section C: Reflection on successes/issues over past 12 months
(completed by reviewee prior to meeting)**

Looking back over the last 12 months, constructively evaluate and reflect on progress: this could include what worked well/issues experienced, what has been learned and any feedback received. This should include your contribution to upholding the values of the School/Unit for example, support you may have provided to colleagues, feedback you have received on exceptional service.

**Section D: Reviewer
(Discussed during meeting and finalised after meeting)**

This section is for the reviewer to complete. It could include:

- any general issues relating to the reviewee.
- main achievements achieved by reviewee with reference to the previous year.
- feedback on performance and contribution to School/Unit/University.

Section E: Objective Setting (Current form updated prior to meeting by reviewee. New Form completed during/after meeting by Reviewer)

Please record all agreed objectives for the forthcoming 12 month period during/after the meeting. The number of objectives should be realistic and achievable based on workload (the 6 boxes are for guidance only). Objectives should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound). In addition, the Reviewee and Reviewer should discuss any Training and Development activities to be undertaken to support the objectives and record these in [Appendix C](#). When updating the current form, please clearly state if objectives met.

	Objective to support School/Unit/University Objectives	Measurement/Success Indicator	Target Date	Final Update e.g. how met success measures/indicators etc. (To be completed at annual RDS meeting as appropriate)
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

***Schools/Units may find it appropriate to hold an interim review to continually assess progress towards targets**

Section F: Any other points for discussion

Use this as an opportunity to reflect on your longer term ambitions and how you feel the School/Unit can help you achieve these.

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Section G: Sign off (Completed after meeting)

Reviewee:	Date:
Reviewer:	Date:
Head of School/Unit:	Date:

Appendix C: Training & development requirements

A word version of this form can be found on the [HR policy page](#) or via the following [link](#).

Training/development requirements (Completed during/after the meeting by reviewer)				
Training/development required	Linked to specific objective in Section E of RDS (if applicable)	Timescale for completion of training	Responsibility for arranging training	Training completed (date)

A copy of this form should be submitted to OSDS, if appropriate, in order that support for training can be provided.

Appendix D: Probation review form

A word version of this form can be downloaded from the [HR policy page](#) or via the following [link](#).

Name of probationer:	
Job Role:	
Grade:	
Date of appointment:	
School/Unit:	
Head of School/Unit:	
Name of person responsible for the management of the probation:	

Has the probationer met the original objectives for the probationary period satisfactorily:	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide additional information detailing where performance has been satisfactory/unsatisfactory.				

Overall, would you rate performance as:	Exceeding expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Satisfactory performance	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Requires improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>

Does the probationer work well with colleagues within their School/Unit/External Groups (where appropriate)	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please elaborate with examples for either response:				

Has attendance at work been satisfactory?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If no, please elaborate:				
Has time keeping at work been satisfactory?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If no, please elaborate:				

Can the appointment be confirmed?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If no, please provide information to support this decision:				

Signed:		Date:	
Head of School/Unit:		Date:	

Once completed, please email the form to [hr-probation](#) for processing.