NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY PROBATION POLICY

Introduction
It is important to the achievement of the University’s mission that newly appointed employees are integrated into their new roles as quickly as possible and are provided with clarity of expectations and appropriate support to enable them to maximise their performance. It may also be appropriate, on an exceptional basis, for employees promoted to significantly different roles to undergo probation. This would not apply to lecturing staff progressing through grades F, G and H.

It is equally important during the early phase of employment that performance (including conduct) is continually assessed and that any areas for development are addressed. The University’s probationary procedure provides a framework within which this assessment can be carried out. The University’s Performance and Development Review (PDR) process is integrated with the probation process so that there is a clear mechanism for assessment, feedback and career development. The PDR form will be the primary documentation upon which recommendations under the probationary procedure will be based and recorded.

This probation policy does not apply to employees on grade I for whom separate arrangements will apply.

Induction period
Induction is a central component of the early period of employment which helps employees to settle into their new work environment and reach their full potential as quickly as possible. As part of induction the employee’s line manager should meet with them during the first few weeks of their employment to formulate an initial work plan which will include any agreed development needs, and the objectives and quality measures against which their performance will be measured. This should be recorded on the PDR form, recognising that there will be no assessment against the previous year’s objectives.

Managing performance issues in advance of review periods
There may be instances when an employee’s performance gives rise to significant concern early in their employment and in advance of formal review periods. Whenever this occurs it should be addressed immediately so the employee is aware of the nature and extent of the shortfall against expected standards. Notes should be kept of all meetings held to discuss the employee’s performance. Where the line manager has concern that the employee’s performance will not meet a satisfactory standard despite the advice and support offered, a report must be prepared, after consultation with HR, for consideration by the reviewing manager in advance of the review period. The report may recommend termination of appointment. The content of the report and its recommendations must be shared with the probationer.
Appointments of a shorter duration than formal probationary periods

Where an employee is appointed to a fixed-term position which is of a shorter duration than the appropriate probationary period, the probation procedure shall be commenced in accordance with this policy to enable a formal review to be carried out should the appointment be extended beyond the formal review period.

Appeals against non-confirmation

Where an employee wishes to appeal against a decision not to confirm their employment, they should set out in writing the grounds of their appeal and submit it to the Assistant Director of HR (Operations) within 7 working days of receipt of written notification of the decision not to confirm their employment.

Appeals will be heard by the following:

- Academic staff grades F to H: Chair of Staff Committee or nominee.
- Research staff grades F to H: Dean of Research
- Non-academic staff grades F to H: Registrar or nominee
- Non-academic staff grades A to E: Head of Service/Registrar or nominee

The employee will be given the opportunity to meet the person hearing the appeal and may be accompanied at any such meeting by a trade union representative or work colleague. Any appeal hearing should be held within 14 working days of receipt of the request to appeal. The decision will normally be communicated in writing to the employee within 2 working days of the hearing. There will be no further right of appeal.

It should be noted that any termination resulting from a decision not to confirm employment shall remain in force whilst an appeal is being heard.

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<th>Effective Date</th>
<th>August 2010</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approval</td>
<td>Staff Committee – 10 May 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy/Procedure Owner</td>
<td>Garry Coupland</td>
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<td>Last Reviewed</td>
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