PROBATION PROCEDURE FOR LECTURING STAFF (UP TO AND INCLUDING GRADE H)

The probationary period for employees in this group is two years with review periods as set out below.

It is important that when assessing performance, due regard is given to the academic job summary and whether there is any emphasis on certain parts of the broader academic role.

In the case of clinical academic staff, it is recognised that under Follett arrangements appraisal is jointly carried out by a University and NHS appraiser. Accordingly, assessment of performance in both academic and clinical activity will be used when making recommendations on probation.

The University provides support for newly appointed teachers through the Newcastle Teaching Award (NTA). It is a requirement that newly appointed lecturing staff complete the NTA during their 2 year probationary period unless they can demonstrate equivalent prior learning. More information on the NTA can be found at [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/staffdev/workshops/programmes/academic/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/staffdev/workshops/programmes/academic/)

First Formal Review (12 months)

At the formal review period, the line manager will hold a PDR with the employee during which their progress will be formally reviewed against the initial work plan. Based on this review, the line manager will make a recommendation to the appropriate reviewing manager as to the assessment of performance, which will be categorised as one of the following: satisfactory; satisfactory with reservations; unsatisfactory. The recommendation must be discussed with the probationer before submission.

The reviewing manager will confirm the recommended assessment or may alter the assessment to one of the other formal categorisations. HR will confirm the decision in writing.

New objectives should be agreed between the employee and their line manager for the following review period.

Final Review (22 months)
At the final review period, the line manager will hold a PDR with the employee during which their progress will be formally reviewed. Based on this review, the line manager will make a recommendation to the appropriate reviewing manager. The recommendation must be discussed with the probationer before being submitted. The options available are as follows:

**Confirmation of appointment**
Where the reviewing manager agrees at the final review stage that the probationer’s performance is satisfactory, HR will be asked to write and confirm the employee’s appointment.

Where the line manager feels that despite support and assistance the employee’s performance does not meet a satisfactory standard, this should be discussed with HR prior to submission of the recommendation to the reviewing manager. The options available are as follows:

**Extension of the probationary period**
Where the reviewing manager agrees to an extension HR will confirm this in writing. The improvements required over the extended period and any measures identified to help the employee attain the required improvements should also be identified. A further recommendation should be submitted to the reviewing manager at the end of the extended probationary period. This option of extension should only be used on an exceptional basis and the maximum extension period is 1 year. There may be instances when a longer period of extension is appropriate if the employee has been absent from work for a substantial period of time. In such an instance, management discretion can be exercised to determine an appropriate extension period.

**Non-confirmation of appointment**
Where it is felt that performance is not likely to reach a satisfactory level, even after an extension to the probation period, a recommendation for non-confirmation of appointment will be made. In this case, the employee will be invited by letter to a meeting with the reviewing manager and HR. The letter will inform them of the recommendation by their line manager that their employment should not be confirmed and that their employment may be terminated. A copy of the PDR form will be enclosed with the letter and they will be given at least 5 working days written notice of the meeting. They will have the right to be accompanied by a Trade Union Representative or work colleague and will be given the opportunity to present any evidence or make any representations that they feel appropriate.

If the reviewing manager decides not to confirm the appointment, the employee will be issued with a letter within 2 working days of the meeting confirming this decision and they will be given their contractual notice period. They will also be informed of their appeal rights.
Line Manager/Reviewing Manager
It is recognised that heads of academic unit rarely carry out the PDR’s for all academic staff in their unit. However, for the purposes of making a recommendation on probation, the line manager will be the head of academic unit and the reviewing manager will be the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor.

G Coupland
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