

Probationary Procedure for Academic staff in the School of Clinical Medicine and clinical academics in other schools



Section	Page Number
1. Contents	2
2. Eligibility	3
3. Procedure	3
3.1 How will the Probationary Scheme work in practice?	3
3.2 Performance Criteria	3
3.3 Years 1 & 2	4
3.4 Year 3	5
3.5 Years 4 & 5	5
3.6 Procedure for fixed term posts	7
3.7 Right of Appeal	7
3.8 Provisions for Academic staff – Teaching and Scholarship Academic Career Pathways Scheme	8
3.9 Period of notice required during the Probationary Period	9
3.10 Support from the Clinical School HR Team for its academics	9
4 Guidance and Additional Sources of Information	10
5 Policy ownership and status	10

2. Eligibility

- This probationary procedure applies to all academic staff in the School of Clinical Medicine and clinical academics in other schools, taking into account their clinical duties. It should be read together with the University's Probationary Policy.

3. Procedure

3.1 How will the Probationary Scheme work in practice?

- The probation reviewer, who is usually the Head of Department, is responsible for managing the probationary period. For the purposes of this procedure, they will be referred to as the probation reviewer. Where the term 'Head of Department' is used, this indicates that the Head of Department should perform that particular function personally.
- The probation reviewer and mentor (as recommended by the Head of Department) will be approved as part of the Selection Committee meeting and recorded in the minutes. If the probation reviewer subsequently leaves or is absent (e.g. due to sabbatical), the Head of Department or Chair of the Selection Committee¹ must assign a new probation reviewer.
- The probation reviewer is responsible for ensuring that:
 - the duties of the probationer are clear and understood by the probationer at the outset;
 - the probationer completes central and local induction within specified timescales
 - the work of the probationer is monitored;
 - the probationer is assigned a mentor
 - any issues around performance are discussed directly with the probationer as and when they arise;
 - a written record is kept of feedback and any steps required of the probationer, using the templates indicated in this procedure where appropriate and
 - an overall view of their progress, commitment and general contribution to the work of the Clinical School is formed during the probationary period.
- The probation reviewer will set goals and objectives in consultation with the Head of Department (if the Head of Department is not the probation reviewer).

3.2 Performance Criteria

- Passing probation is regarded as an important career milestone and a fundamental test of capability to perform the duties of the office. Clear evidence of consistent and

¹The Selection Committee in this procedure is as constituted under Special Ordinance C (x): Selection Committees (Special Ordinance under Statute C XIII 2). Note that this may be the Selection Committee or an alternative School level committee as set out in the local protocol constituted as a Selection Committee, or in the case of unestablished academic staff the relevant School-level or departmental committee.

sustained satisfactory performance of duties and adherence to the University's expected standards of conduct is therefore expected.

- Performance will be assessed by reference to research; teaching and/or researcher² development; service to the University and to the academic community. This will include acting as a positive role model and promoting the University's values of mutual respect and a sense of belonging for all within the University community.
- There must be no doubt that the probationer has been performing according to all the relevant criteria and meets the standards of excellence in their performance and contribution within the Cambridge context.
- Where relevant, College teaching should also be taken into account.
- Guidance on the evaluative criteria applicable to academics during probation can be found in the Report of the General Board on arrangements for the implementation of the Academic Career Pathways scheme³. To ensure transparency, all Departments/Faculties are expected to adopt and publish a protocol setting out what is expected of probationers under each of the evaluative criteria, to be approved by School Councils. As there may be differences in the way probation criteria are set across the various departments and faculties, each department or faculty will determine appropriate practice in their respective area, taking into account the relevant normative standards for their subject discipline.
- In the case of clinical academics, it is recognised that input is required from the probationer's Clinical Director at the relevant NHS Trust/Body. Accordingly, assessment of performance of clinical activity will be used in addition to research; teaching and/or researcher development and service to the University and to the academic community, when making recommendations on probation. This will be recorded on the summary document, the Formal Probation Assessment Form.
- If, during the course of the probation, concerns arise regarding the probationer's clinical practice in their NHS Trust/body role, the probation reviewer shall consider the impact of this in assessing the probationer's performance and ability to carry out the full duties of their role for the University.
- It is also a requirement of the relevant NHS trust that clinical academics are subject to NHS appraisals or Annual Reviews of Competence Progression ("ARCP") as appropriate, alongside their probation with the University.
- Please note that if the probationer is employed under a contract with the University which is co-terminous with another role, should that role be terminated their employment with the University will also come to an end.

3.3 Years 1 & 2

- Before commencing the post or within one month, the probation reviewer will hold a 1:1 meeting to discuss the duties of the post, mutual expectations and developmental needs. Any other relevant requirements should be discussed and recorded.
- It is recommended that a probation review is held at the end of the first 6 months to ensure induction and all mandatory training has been completed. A record will be kept of the meeting and signed by the probationer and probation reviewer using the Formal Probation Assessment Form.
- The probation reviewer will meet with the probationer annually to review the progress under general terms of research; teaching and/or researcher development; and

² This would include post-doctoral researchers where relevant

³ Reporter, 6547, 2018-19, p.562

service to the University and to the academic community, focussing on achievements against relevant performance criteria for the role. In advance of the review the probationer will be asked to consider their progress for discussion at the meeting. A record will be kept of the meeting and signed by the probationer and the probation reviewer using the Formal Probation Assessment Form.

- During the probationary period, the probation reviewer can seek feedback from senior colleagues regarding the progress of the probationer in terms of their research; teaching and/or researcher development; and service to the University and to the academic community. Feedback from students may also be sought. For clinical academics, feedback will be sought from the individual's NHS Clinical Director.
- Where concern arises about aspects of the performance of the probationer, more frequent meetings should be held and a record kept.
- Consideration should be given to any special circumstances that may have resulted in a lack of opportunity to perform to their full potential, including any disability.

3.4 Year 3

- A formal review and assessment will take place in the third year of the probationary period. An overall minimum of three references should be sought, of which at least one should be external (usually the individual's NHS Clinical Director). The probationer will nominate two of these references. The probation reviewer may seek additional references if these are required. A record will be kept of the meeting and signed by the probationer and the probation reviewer using the Formal Probation Assessment Form.
- At this point the Head of Department, after receiving the Formal Probation Assessment Form from the probation reviewer, can recommend confirmation of the probation to the Selection Committee at the end of the 3 year period. All probation documents and references should be reviewed and the final assessment should be completed by Head of Department, using the Final Probation Assessment Form.
- If the probationer is performing to the expected standard, the Head of Department will make a positive recommendation, setting out their case in writing, for the confirmation of appointment to the Selection Committee, supported by the probation assessment forms, references and the probationer's CV.
- If the appointment is confirmed by the Selection Committee, the probationer will receive confirmation of their successful probation in writing and move to the School of Clinical Medicine's or other relevant annual appraisal scheme.
- On confirmation of appointment by the Selection Committee, a holder of an academic office shall hold office, subject to the provisions of Statute C, or any Special Ordinance made under it, until the retiring age or until the end of their appointment in the case of officers on fixed-term appointments, so long as they satisfactorily perform the duties of the office.

3.5 Years 4 & 5

- If the Head of Department assesses that the probation cannot be confirmed at the 3-year stage, or the Selection Committee does not approve the appointment, a further meeting should be set up to provide the opportunity to discuss progress in all areas and to discuss strategy, workload and support required. The probation reviewer will need to draw the probationer's attention to areas for improvement and set clear standards for what is required for the probation to be confirmed. At this stage, the Clinical or other relevant School HR team should be informed of the probation issues raised. Reviews should take place every 6 months and a record kept, using the Formal Probation Assessment Form.

- The final assessment and recommendation of the Selection Committee can take place in years 4 or 5, depending on progress. The Head of Department shall have discretion as to when the final assessment should take place provided that confirmation (or non-confirmation) of appointment by the Selection Committee occurs, if possible, not less than nine months before the end of the five-year period. In any event the recommendation by the Head of Institution to the Selection Committee should be made no earlier than three years into the probationary period. For the purposes of the final assessment, all probation documents and references should be reviewed and the Final Probation Assessment Form should be completed by the Head of Department. New references should be sought if required.
- If the probationer is performing to the expected standard, the Head of Department will make a positive recommendation to confirm the appointment to the Selection Committee. All performance records and supporting documentation shall be made available to the Committee.
- If the appointment is confirmed by the Selection Committee, the probationer will receive confirmation of their successful probation in writing following the Selection Committee and move to the relevant appraisal scheme.
- On confirmation of appointment by the Selection Committee, a holder of an academic office shall hold office, subject to the provisions of Statute C, or any Special Ordinance made under it, until the retiring age or until the end of their appointment in the case of officers on fixed-term appointments, so long as they satisfactorily perform the duties of the office.
- If performance during probation is not satisfactory, the Head of Department should detail these concerns on the Final Probation Assessment Form and ensure that the individual receives a copy. The Head of Department will inform the probationer that the recommendation to the Selection Committee will be to extend or terminate the appointment.
- Exceptionally, the probationary period may be extended where :
 - There is the realistic prospect of a satisfactory outcome on probation;
 - Successful completion of probation has been impacted by factors beyond the probationer's control.
- Usually, extensions will for up to one year. Heads of Department are advised to consult with the Clinical or other relevant School HR Team at an early stage should an extension be likely.
- The probationer must be given the opportunity to make written representations to the Selection Committee and may attend the meeting of the Selection Committee if they wish to do so in order to present their case. They will have a right to be accompanied at the meeting by a trade union representative or work colleague.
- They must tell the Clinical or other relevant School HR Team who their chosen companion is, in good time before the meeting. If their companion cannot attend, they should inform the Clinical or other relevant School HR Team immediately so that an alternative time can be arranged. If the companion is unable to attend within a reasonable period of the meeting, the University may ask the probationer to choose another companion.
- Where a probationer has indicated that they wish to make representations in person, they must make every effort to attend the meeting. If they fail to attend without good reason, or are persistently unable to do so, the University reserves the right to proceed on the evidence available.

- Where circumstances require it, and in particular, to avoid delay, the meeting may be held by way of video or teleconference.
- The Selection Committee may be supported by a member of the relevant School HR Team at the hearing. The University may also arrange for a notetaker to be present.
- The Head of Department will supply the probationer's probation assessment forms, together with any supporting documentation, to the Selection Committee ahead of the meeting, with a copy to the probationer.
- The meeting may be adjourned if required to gather further information, provided that any adjournment will not lead to unreasonable delay.
- The probationer will be informed of the decision of the Selection Committee in writing. If the decision is to extend then a meeting with the probation reviewer will take place to discuss the objectives set for the extension period. A minimum of quarterly meetings with the probation reviewer and a member of the Clinical School HR team will take place thereafter.
- If the decision is to terminate the appointment due to unsatisfactory performance during probation, this is a dismissal in law. The probationer will be given written notice of termination, including the reasons for the dismissal and a right of appeal.
- In cases where there has been an extension at the end of the normal probation period, a final assessment will be conducted at the end of the extension following the process as set out in this section.

3.6 Procedure for fixed term posts

- The provisions of this procedure (including any timings) will be adjusted to take into account shorter probationary periods for fixed term academic offices and unestablished academic posts.
- In particular, the probationary period of clinical academics who are established for a fixed term of four years will be 12 months.
- Accordingly, the procedure outlined above for managing probation will apply, save that formal probation assessment reviews will take place on a regular basis during the 12-month probationary period, with a final probation assessment prior to the end of the probationary period.

3.7 Right of Appeal

Established academic staff

- If the appointment is terminated, the officer will have the right to appeal under the provisions of Special Ordinance C (xiii) (Appeals), which can be found at https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/so/2017/special_c-section16.html, and Ordinances, Chapter II, section 23 - Septemviri, which can be found at <https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/so/2017/chapter02-section23.html>
- Where a probationer appeals against dismissal, the date on which dismissal takes effect will not be delayed pending the outcome of the appeal. However, if the appeal is successful the probationer will be reinstated with no loss of continuity or pay.

Unestablished academic staff

- Where the appointment is terminated, the probationer may appeal in writing within 10 working days of the receipt of the notice of dismissal, setting out the grounds of their appeal. They should direct this letter to the Director of HR.
- The Director of HR will appoint an Appeal Chair, who shall be a University officer of equivalent or greater seniority than the members of the Selection Committee under 3.5, and who has had no prior involvement in the case.
- The appeal hearing will be arranged within 10 working days of the appointment of the Appeal Chair, or as soon as is reasonably practicable thereafter.
- The probationer and a member of the Selection Committee may make representations in person and/or in writing at the appeal hearing. Copies of the probation assessment forms and supporting documentation, and any written representations should be supplied to all parties in good time ahead of the hearing. The Appeal Chair may be supported by a member of the relevant School HR Team at the hearing. The University may also arrange for a further member of HR to act as note-taker.
- The probationer is entitled to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague. They must tell the relevant School HR Team, who their chosen companion is, in good time before the appeal hearing. If their companion cannot attend, they should inform the relevant School HR Team immediately so that an alternative time can be arranged. If the companion is unable to attend within a reasonable period of the original appeal hearing date, the University may ask the probationer to choose another companion.
- Where a probationer has indicated that they wish to make representations in person, they must make every effort to attend the hearing. If they fail to attend without good reason, or are persistently unable to do so, the University reserves the right to proceed on the evidence available.
- Where circumstances require it, and in particular, to avoid delay, the hearing may be held by way of video or teleconference.
- The Appeal Chair may adjourn the appeal hearing if required to gather further information, provided that any adjournment will not lead to unreasonable delay.
- The Appeal Chair will inform the probationer of their decision in writing, wherever practicable within 10 working days of the appeal hearing or adjourned appeal hearing, setting out reasons for the decision. There is no further right of appeal.
- The Appeal Chair may vary the procedure above, as necessary, provided that the appeal is dealt with fairly and impartially and without unreasonable delay.
- Where a probationer appeals against dismissal, the date on which dismissal takes effect will not be delayed pending the outcome of the appeal. However, if the appeal is successful the probationer will be reinstated with no loss of continuity or pay.

3.8 Provisions for Academic staff – Teaching and Scholarship Academic Career Pathways scheme

- The Teaching and Scholarship Academic Career Pathways scheme has been designed for academic staff whose primary responsibilities are the delivery of teaching. It applies in some but not all institutions at the University.

- The provisions of this Probationary Procedure for Academic staff in the School of Clinical Medicine and clinical academics in other schools will apply in full to such academic staff where they are on the Teaching and Scholarship Academic Career Pathways scheme, with the exception of the specific variation set out below:

Variation

- Performance will be assessed under the headings of teaching and scholarship and service to the University and to the academic community, and, in the case of clinical academics, clinical activity in their NHS Trust/Body role.

3.9 Period of notice required during the Probationary Period

- The period of notice to terminate the appointment during the probationary period, will normally be three months on either side (one month's notice for an appointment of less than one year's duration).

3.10 Support from the Clinical School HR Team for its academics

- The Clinical School HR Team will offer:
 - Advice on selecting an appropriate mentor;
 - Training workshops for all probation reviewers;
 - Cascade information to Business and Operations Managers/Departmental Administrators via HR Forum;
 - Guidance documentation maintained by HR and available on Clinical School HR webpages;
 - Support, advice and information on all probation cases where required;
 - Prompt Heads of Departments, Business & Operations Managers/Departmental Administrators and probation reviewers of forthcoming meetings, formal probation assessments and Selection Committees for all academic staff within the probationary period;
 - Request Clinical Director feedback (for clinical academics);
 - Request references, invite individuals to the Selection Committee (where necessary) and draft successful completion/extension or termination letters for the probationer;
 - Attendance at the Selection Committee where extension or termination is recommended.

4.

Guidance and Additional Sources of Information

Policies and Guidance	Templates and Documentation
Practical Guidance for Probation Reviewers Criteria for the assessment of Academic Probation at the School of Clinical Medicine [insert link]	Formal Probation Assessment Form – Academic Staff (Research and Teaching ACP) (HR63a) Final Probation Assessment Form – Academic Staff (Research and Teaching ACP) (HR63b) Formal Probation Assessment Form – Academic Staff G9+ (Teaching and Scholarship ACP) (HR65a) Final Probation Assessment Form – Academic Staff G9+ (Teaching and Scholarship ACP) (HR65b) Confirmation of Appointment template letter (HR66)

5.

Policy Ownership and Status

5.1 This procedure is not contractual. It will be reviewed by the HR Division on a regular basis and amendments may be made in the light of any changes in legislation or operational requirements.

Version	Summary of Amendment	Date
V1	New Procedure	01/10/21