****

**How to…. successfully manage a probationary period**

A well-managed probation period is important for both career development and as a means of assessing an individual’s competency to do the job to which they are appointed. The probation period should be a positive two way process designed to assist the new employee in integrating into their new role and the University.

It also enables the University to assess the contribution of a new employee, and to ensure that they fulfill the requirements of the post. The probationary period gives both manager and new employee the opportunity to recognise progress and to address any difficulties encountered

*Note: Though the principles of probation are the same, there are some differences in the probation process for academic and support staff (including length of the probation period). This ‘how to’ refers to support staff and academic related staff.*

Managers should consider:

* Conducting regular meetings with new members of staff throughout the probation period and provide feedback on a regular basis. At least once a month is good practice.
* Set clear objectives for the duration of the probation period – what will the individual need to do and achieve to successfully complete their probation period?
* Promptly addressing any issues of performance or behaviour that arise, and making staff aware at the earliest opportunity of any factors that may lead to them failing their probation period. Put an action plan together in the event of any problems or concerns. Document discussions.
* Taking feedback from others on the performance of the new member of staff.
* Providing positive feedback on work completed well.
* What will help the member of staff be successful – e.g. formal training, assignment of a buddy or mentor, developmental activities, relevant meetings and information.
* Putting together a formal induction and learning and development plan – engaging the member of staff with discussions on what will help them succeed.

**Above all - encourage an open dialogue**. A probation period is more likely to be successful if the both the manager and member of staff have had regular conversations and raised areas of concern.