**Probation Periods – FAQ**

*What are the circumstances in which a probation period can be extended?*

A probation period can be extended for several reasons, for example, if there are concerns about performance or if the new starter has been off work due to sickness during the probation period (and there has therefore not been sufficient time to assess performance). Extensions must be communicated to the member of staff – there should be a face to face discussion and then confirmation in writing. Inform HR Services of any extension.

*What happens if any new starter if off sick for part of the probation period?*

If someone is off sick for a lengthy period during probation, it may not be possible to adequately assess their performance in the job. In these circumstances, an extension is likely to be appropriate. In the event that a new starter has frequent short-term absence, this may also be taken into account when making a decision whether or not employment continues. Care should be taken to exclude disability or pregnancy related absence from this assessment.

*Can I extend a probation period more than once?*

Normally a probationary period can only be extended once. After this time, a decision on future employment should be made. If you feel there is a reason why an exception should be made to this rule, please discuss this with HR before taking any action.

*How long can I extend a probation period for?*

This differs depending on role type. HR can provide advice.

*Can a member of staff be accompanied at a probation review meeting?*

There is no statutory right of accompaniment at probation review meetings. However, you may accept their request to be accompanied, particularly if you think they would benefit from the support. It is also important to make any necessary reasonable adjustments in relation to accompaniment, for example for staff who have disabilities or may require a translator.

*A new starter in my team is significantly underperforming. Do I have to wait until the end of the probation period before taking action?*

No. Hold a meeting with them as soon as possible. Highlight the areas of underperformance and set targets for improvement. Keep monitoring the situation and have regular dialogue with them. Ensure that you keep notes throughout. If the situation fails to improve, you will need to make a decision about continued employment. HR can provide further advice.

*If any new starter does not successfully pass the probation period, are they entitled to notice?*

Yes. They will be entitled to the notice period detailed in their contract of employment.

Note: this guidance applies to non-academic roles.