**The University of Manchester**

**Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health**

**Guidance on setting objectives for Academic Probation**

**Introduction**

This guidance on setting objectives for academic probation should be read in conjunction with the University (<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=40>) and Faculty guidance on probation and promotion (<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=11>), which include expected achievement for academic staff. This document will apply to probationary periods starting 1st August 2018, for staff already on probation before this date, the agreed probationary goals set at the beginning of the appointment will remain. This document should be used in conjunction with the Faculty Academic Probation Procedure (<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=30667>) and Faculty Probation Objectives Form (<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=30669>) which should be completed by the probationer and their supervisor with input from teaching or research mentors as appropriate.

This guidance has been developed to assist colleagues in their role as probation supervisors, particularly with respect to objective setting. All colleagues involved in the probation process should be mindful that not all probationers are confirmed in post at the end of the probationary period. Failure to achieve targets can results in termination of employment. If a probationer on a T & R contract fails to meet reasonable research targets, it should not be custom and practice to change their contract to teaching focused.

The University operates a New Academics Programme (NAP). Satisfactory completion of this programme is normally required as part of the probationary process.

**Principles of objective setting**

1. The objectives for a new probationer should be for the three year period and then signed off annually and if necessary an adjustment to context made year on year.
2. Each probationer must have a designated supervisor and a separate mentor. Supervisors need to ensure that objectives are documented clearly and that theyare SMART (specific, measurable, agreed, realistic, time-related). Part-time members of staff need to have objectives which reflect the part-time nature of their contract.
3. Probation forms should be linked in with the PDR discussion, and the probation form and P&DR form should not have objectives which contradict each other. The probation objectives should be a minimum achievement across the three years and the PDR should be more of an aspirational discussion.
4. The probation forms need to make explicit what level of quality is required and what level has been achieved ie quality of papers, evidence of innovation and teaching scores as well as information regarding peer review.
5. Teaching and Scholarship contracts need to demonstrate that there is a range of teaching taking place and teaching and research cases should contain information about time costed on grants.
6. PGR supervision should be placed under the research heading.
7. The expectation is that a candidate will not be signed off in less than 2.5 years unless they have been promoted, in which case the probation still needs to be signed off formally through the normal route.
8. After a period of maternity leave, probationers should meet with their probation supervisor to review their progress towards their probationary objectives and whether it is appropriate to amend the objectives and/or the timescale in light of the period of absence.

Below are examples of activities that should be captured in individual objectives which will be used to assess whether a person has performed at the requied levels by the end of the probationary period and in order to confirm them in post.

Teaching and Scholarship contract holders are not expected to meet the research criteria. They will be expected to have a significantly more substantial teaching workload and to undertake service and leadership and may have significant knowledge transfer activities. They may be involved in pedagogic research to improve the quality of teaching.

Account will be taken of part time working and career breaks in interpreting the guidance.

Pro-rata adjustments can be made in cases where the staff member did not start at the beginning of an academic year. A pro-rata adjustment can be made for part time staff and for staff who have had a period of maternity leave or have NHS clinical commitments.

**For Staff appointed at Lecturer (Teaching and Research contract)**

**RESEARCH**

The following description describes the normal expected research achievement of a lecturer (T&R) in the research category and has been informed by the University of Manchester Research Expectations A record of sustained publication of original research judged at least to be of quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour.

* Some success in obtaining research support funding, and/or collaboration in significant research projects and a track record of applications for external funding
* Successful postgraduate research supervision/co-supervision where available.
* Participating in relevant research events at Manchester
* Contributing to the development of their research field(s) for example through regular presentations at conferences.

**Publication output:**

* 4 papers judged at least to be of quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour which has been accepted or published in refereed journals. Evidence of substantial contribution to the papers (e.g. first or corresponding author; description of the contribution to the paper as an author).
* Evidence of trajectory and approaching level of output on for A, above, (e.g. in addition to published work, submitted or prepared manuscripts, reviews of same (to show strong likelihood of being published).

**Research support funding:**

* A notification of success of a grant application or a grant already running (or other similar external funding) *as principal or co-investigator* that supports an RA for at least 12 months.
* In addition, evidence of new research activity since starting at Manchester and a research plan or strategy that demonstrates how the individual’s research topic/areas of strength is coherent with and will, or has the potential to, enhance the strategic research objectives of their Centre/ Institute/Domain/ Division/School at the University.
* Evidence that demonstrates the ability to obtain research support funding. e.g. evidence of grant-writing activity with supportive reviews; significant collaboration on existing project/programme grant; evidence of development of grant writing ability, and a strategic plan to develop a programme of research with grant support. In addition, evidence of new research activity since starting at Manchester, for example seed funding awards.
* A consistent track record of attempts to obtain external funding (e.g. submission of a grant application for every 12 months of probation).

**PhD supervision**

* Is currently supervising or co-supervising a PhD (or clinical doctorate) student.
* Evidence that attempts have been made to secure a PhD student either through applications (including external funding sources) and collaborations within the group.

Supervision should be of high quality (normal expectation is that a thesis should support at least one 3\* output) and there must be evidence of compliance with governance processes, for example eprog.

**TEACHING (All contract types)**

**Teaching Load:**

* A reduced first year of probation teaching load. After year 1, a teaching load as deemed reasonable against the relevant grouping within the School.
* If lower than usual for the grouping, demonstration of compensating activity through for example a significant contribution to organisation of teaching, service and leadership, knowledge transfer and/or social responsibility.

**Teaching Performance:**

* Student Feedback:

For taught course units where the applicant is responsible for the majority, or all of the teaching, the Course Unit Evaluation (CUE) score should demonstrate consistently high quality, in keeping with the University's stated objectives.

* Peer Review:

Output from Peer Review should provide evidence of consistently high quality for a *series* of lectures/teaching sessions.

* High standard, or demonstration of improvement to attainment of high standard of, CUE and Peer Review over the probation period. The applicant should provide adequate documentation to demonstrate self-reflection, an action plan and implemented actions taken in response to student feedback and peer reviewer’s comments, as necessary.
* Where an individual does not deliver an entire course unit (or majority of a course unit) and therefore student feedback in the form of CUE is not targeted enough to identify the lecturer’s individual performance or is not appropriate/meaningful, the emphasis will be on peer review. In addition, individuals can ask for a process to be implemented to collect student feedback on their teaching. There should be demonstrable evidence that any issues raised during peer review have been addressed.

**Supervision (not PhD):**

* As a minimum, positive student feedback on role as Academic Advisor (AA) and of final year (or similar) project supervision or supervision of taught postgraduate students. The majority of students should agree that the AA/supervisor was approachable, knowledgeable and supportive.

**Assessment Practice:**

Peer Review

* Two independent reviewers rate the quality of written feedback for 2 types of assessment (undergraduate/post-grad/) as ‘good’.
* Where the rating is only satisfactory the applicant should provide adequate documentation to demonstrate a process of self-reflection and implemented actions to bring about improvement.

**Learning Resources:**

* Two independent reviewers rate the quality of written feedback for 2 types of assessment (undergraduate/post-grad/) as ‘good’.
* Where the rating is only satisfactory the applicant should provide adequate documentation to demonstrate a process of self-reflection and implemented actions to bring about improvement.

**SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (All contract types)**

Staff should be involved with the University’s Third Goal ideally via one of the‘Signature Programmes’ (<http://www.socialresponsibility.manchester.ac.uk/signature-programmes/>) such as Ethical Grand Challenges or 10,000 actions. Other opportunities for engagement include:

* Become a Dementia Friend or a Dementia Friend Champion
* Engage with the public through events, talks, festival and open days
* Engage policy-makers with your research
* Join a Green Impact Team
* Join a network for promoting staff equality and diversity
* Advise or mentor a Manchester Access Programme student
* Become an Athena Swan or equality and diversity lead
* Lead or support public/patient involvement/engagement activities in teaching.

**SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP and KNOWLEDGE Transfer (All contract types)**

* For inexperienced lecturers, there will be a reduced expectation of these activities during the probation period. Once probation has been completed successfully a reasonable contribution to the organisation and management of teaching (as measured against School or Relevant grouping norm) will be agreed with the line manager.
* For experienced lecturers starting probation, a reasonable contribution at the outset of probation to the organisation and management of teaching (as measured against School/relevant grouping) will be agreed with the line manager.
* If a relatively low teaching contribution is agreed, demonstrate compensating activity in research (for staff on research and teaching contracts only), scholarship, service and leadership or knowledge transfer, for example and/or teaching or other recognised areas of academic-related endeavour

For Staff appointed at Senior Lecturer or Reader level

Objectives set should be more challenging to recognise the level of seniority and the individual’s previous experience (which is highly likely to have been at Lecturer or Senior Lecturer level). Probationary objectives for appointments at this level should be more tailored to individuals taking into account what they have already achieved and what they may bring with them to the University. The objectives should reflect a need to continue on an upward trajectory with clear evidence that achievements and work completed since appointment at Manchester show significant progress.

The University’s criteria for academic promotion is also a useful resource when setting objectives. This criteria identifies the normal level of achievement for staff appointments at Lecturer, Senior Lecturer and Reader level and can therefore be used to set objectives for staff working at those levels.

## Key documents, policies and procedures

* [FBMH academic probation procedure 2017-18](http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=30667)
* [FBMH academic probation summary form](http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=30668)
* [FBMH academic probation objectives form](http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=30669)
* [Probationary arrangements for newly appointed academic staff](http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=40)