



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

## Guidance on completing the new Probation form

### Why is there a new probation form?

Following a review of Academic Probation at the University, a new probation process has been agreed. This includes the introduction of single electronic probation form that covers the whole of the probation process.

The new form, available via Google docs, has a number of benefits:

- As an electronic document the form can be quickly shared with everyone involved in the process (e.g. probationer, HoD, probation adviser etc.). This will reduce the amount of time taken to circulate, complete and sign off forms.
- Electronic forms are more secure and don't get lost in the internal mail or in filing cabinets.
- Instead of having several documents the entire probationary period is recorded in one place.
- Forms can easily be collated for Faculty probation meetings.

### Completing the form at the start of the probationary process

Shortly after the new academic member of staff's start date the designated member of departmental support staff will set up an electronic probation form and share this with the Probationer, Head of Department and the Probation Adviser.

Within a month of the new academic member of staff's start date a meeting will be held between the Probationer, Head of Department/Line Manager and the Probation Adviser. At the meeting the following sections of the form should be completed:

- Probation Plan and summary overview for full review period

In this section you will agree challenging and realistic objectives in the areas of Learning & Teaching, Research, Leadership/Management, Esteem and Professional Standing, and where appropriate, Clinical sessions/duties. These should be high level objectives for the entire probationary period for example 'Secure £220k of research income as Principle Investigator'.

- Milestones for all probationary periods (normally 1, 2 and 3)

The 'Milestone' sections are intended to break down the overall probationary objectives into more manageable chunks. For example, in the Probation Plan you may have set an overall objective of 'Obtain £220k of research income'. In this section you might set a first year target of 'Apply for an EPSRC First Grant of £100k'.

In the second column you should then detail the priority level, any training or support that is needed and who is responsible for it. For example, you might set the research income target as 'high' and identify that the probationer needs to attend a grant writing course which they should take responsibility for attending.



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

Once the sections above have been agreed the Probationer and Head of Department should declare their agreement of the Probation Plan and summary overview typing their name in the box at the bottom of that section on the form. This should be done from their own Google account as the Google document will record specifically who types what into each section.

The Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor (or representative) should then be notified so that they can review the Probation Plan and milestones. Once they have agreed the plan they will type their name in the 'Agreement of Overall Objectives' section.

### **Completing the form at the end of first and second probationary review periods**

In advance of the period review meeting the Probationer should reflect on her/his progress over that period in relation to the Milestones and development activity. She/he should then complete the Probationers comments in the relevant 'Milestones' section detailing progress against each objective, ensuring sufficient information is provided to enable a decision to be made concerning the future of the probationary appointment/confirmation of appointment.

The probationer should also complete the 'Progress Update' section within the overall Probationary Plan with brief details of progress against each of the objectives. This section is intended to provide an 'at a glance' view of progress throughout the probationary period. The detailed progress should always be recorded in the 'Probationers Comments' of the 'Milestones' section.

Once completed the Probationer should notify the Head of Department/Line Manager in advance of the review meeting.

At the review meeting the Probationer and Head of Department/Line Manager will discuss progress over the probationary period paying attention to the progress recorded on the form by the Probationer. They will also consider future Milestones recoded at the start of the process, ensuring that they are still appropriate. It may be appropriate to alter Milestones based on progress within the previous period. For example progress in one area may be better in one area (for example research income) but to the detriment of another (for example Leadership/Management). Changes to Milestones should be made in discussion with the probationer.

Following the meeting, the Head of Department/Line Manager should complete the Head of Department Review section providing her/his assessment of the competence and performance of the probationary Lecturer.

Once completed the Head of Department/Line Manager should complete the 'Outcome of Period' section where she/he will make a recommendation as to how the probationary process should progress. The Head of Department should then type their name type her/his name and complete the date to confirm they agree the review outcome.

The Head of Department/Line Manager should notify the Probationer that they have completed the form. The Probationer should read the feedback. The Probationer should then type there name and date at the bottom of the section.



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

The process for receiving Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) agreement will be subject to local Faculty arrangements but will normally be via a Faculty Probationary Review meeting or by simply alerting the Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor that the form is complete.

### **Completing the form at the end of the final probationary review period**

At the end of the final probationary period, the review process is largely the same as for the first and second probationary periods.

The probationer should reflect on her/his progress over period and should complete the *Probationers comments* in the final 'Milestones' section and the 'Progress Update' section within the overall Probationary Plan. The Head of Department/Line Manager should then be notified in advance of the review meeting.

At the review meeting the Probationer and Head of Department/Line Manager will review final progress against the Milestones and the overall objectives as set out in the Probationary Plan.

Following this focus should turn to future objectives and development needs beyond probation. Objectives and development needs should be recorded in the 'SRDS Objectives for First Year Following Confirmation'. This will ensure a smooth transition between Probation and SRDS for staff who are confirmed at the end of Probation.

Following the meeting the Head of Department/Line Manager should complete the Head of Department Review section providing her/his assessment of the competence and performance of the probationary Lecturer.

Once completed the Head of Department/Line Manager should complete the 'Outcome of Period' section where she/he will make a recommendation as to how the probationary process should progress.

The Head of Department/Line Manager should notify the Probationer that they have completed the form. The Probationer should read the feedback. The Probationer should then type their name and date at the bottom of the section.

The process for receiving Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) agreement will be the same as for periods 1 and 2. Once the PVC has agreed the outcome she/he should type their name in the 'Outcome of Period 3' box and in the 'Final outcome' box of the overall probationary plan.

Once finalised the designated member of departmental/faculty support staff should notify HR of the outcome so that the appropriate steps can be taken regarding the Probationers future employment.