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Academic, Teaching and Research Probation Policy

As a research-led teaching institution the University strives for excellence and all new academic, teaching and research colleagues are required to demonstrate the highest levels of performance. Successful completion of a probationary review period will be a condition of employment for University academic, teaching and research staff.

Scope: All academic, teaching and research staff. The policy should be read in conjunction with the University statutes (Section 6).

Key Principles:

1. The period (i.e. defined as from the date of commencement to the date of anticipated confirmation of appointment) is a period of both professional development and assessment, capturing both: individual, as well as strategic needs of the University, Faculty and/or Department, as applicable, for new academic, teaching and research staff.
2. The aim of this period is to enable new staff to be made aware of and demonstrate that they meet the expectations of the role.
3. This period will make provisions for professional development and assessment which allow the staff member to develop, with appropriate guidance and support, the necessary skills to become fully effective within their post.
4. A plan will be put in place as soon as possible following appointment and will be regularly reviewed and updated during the review period.
5. The plan will: state training and development needs according to the requirements of the post and; set clear objectives and; support the provision of feedback on progress to the individual.
6. The review process reflects the principles of reviewing and assessing performance, and setting objectives. Development needs identified throughout this period shall be fed into annual Departmental Staff Development planning.
7. Performance improvement processes will be implemented where it is considered that an individual is not performing his/her duties to the expected standards, the primary purpose of which will be to enable sustained improvement in performance
8. The period will provide the University with sufficient information to assess the staff member's contribution, potential and suitability and to enable decisions to be made on confirming the appointment.



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9. The period will also provide the individual with sufficient information to assess their own suitability for meeting the required performance standards of their post.
10. Should it be deemed that the progress and performance of the individual is insufficient, this may lead to non-confirmation/non continuation of appointment.
11. Following successful conferment, SRDS objectives for the coming period will be agreed as part of the final annual review meeting.

How the University supports this policy:

- The Sheffield Academic statement reflects the requirements of an academic role.
- Learning and Teaching Services (LeTs) works collaboratively with staff, providing policies and processes to monitor and control teaching quality, and services to encourage and enable skills development, including the provision of a Toolkit which includes information on personal and professional development provisions (www.shef.ac.uk/lets/toolkit).
- The University is committed to the implementation of the Concordat to support the career development of researchers (www.shef.ac.uk/ris/ecr/additional/concordat). Research & Innovation Services offers a wide variety of support to those undertaking research activities including information on training and development sessions, mentoring and career planning.
- A procedure(s) provides the steps required to manage the probationary period for new academic, teaching and research staff to make informed decisions on confirming the appointment.
- Guidance is available to assist reviewers in the key areas of objective setting, professional development, and performance and review for new academic, teaching and research staff.
- New staff are encouraged to access University wide staff induction information and will participate in local induction arrangements within their own departments.
- New staff, who teach will, where deemed appropriate by their department, be expected to have (or be working towards) an appropriate teaching qualification HEA recognition as Fellow (FHEA) or Senior Fellow (SFHEA).

Document control

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