

# **Probation Guidance for Managers**

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## **Introduction**

This guidance supplements the UECS Probation Policy for new staff, providing additional information to managers on what needs to be done and when.

Probation is a key time for both the employer and the new staff member and therefore it is vital that it is managed correctly to ensure both parties' benefit.

It is important for managers to meet regularly with their new employee to review performance and training. You should always highlight to the new employee at the earliest opportunity if there are any problems and allow them time to improve.

It is also important to encourage your new employee to raise any areas of concern they may have during their probation period.

Line managers play a crucial role in welcoming new employees to UECS and ensuring they make the best possible start. You must ensure that new employees are receiving the support and guidance they need in order that they are able to perform and fulfill the requirements of their role.

It is important you are fully prepared for the arrival of the new employee. The [Induction Checklist for Managers](#) highlights everything that should be in place for a new employee's arrival.

# Section 1: Probationary Period

## 1.1 Induction

As the line manager, you must make sure you are available when the new employee starts in their new role. You should explain the requirements of the role and provide a copy of the [Welcome and Induction information for new employees](#), including training and any development objectives.

You should introduce the new employee to their team, familiarise them with their work area, check they have a staff care and ensure they can access systems such as HR Organiser.

If appropriate, the new employee may benefit from a 'buddy' or a 'mentor' while they are settling into their service area. This should be arranged by you or a more senior manager.

## 1.2 Training and Development

You must ensure the new employee completes all essential training as early as possible. The maximum period for completion is 6 months.

New employees will be invited to a series of 6 monthly Induction events which are repeated on a rolling basis. Each event offers an insight into a different department within the University enabling the new employee to gain an overall operational understanding of the work of UECS and the University.

The events also offer an opportunity to meet colleagues who are also new to working at Essex. The invitations to these events are sent directly by Organisational Development and can be booked through [HR Organiser](#).

You must also ensure that the new employee completes the operational training that enables them to fulfill the duties of their role.

## 1.3 Review Meetings

You must have regular review meetings with the new employee. At a minimum these must be held at one month, three months and between the fifth and sixth month of service for permanent employees.

If a new employee is on a fixed term contract, you should arrange review meetings as appropriate for the length of the contract. If the fixed term contract

is of more than six months duration, review meetings should be held as per a permanent employee.

If a new member of staff has moved to a new role within UECS or has moved to UECS from the University, you should arrange review meetings as appropriate, taking into account the new employee's knowledge and experience and their previous role.

The review meetings are an opportunity to check that the new employee is settling in and to assess their progress against their training programme, their objectives and the requirements of their role as outlined in the job description.

It is important for the review meetings to be a two-way process, so the new employee can discuss what they think of their role, if it meets their expectations and if they are happy with their induction. You should also discuss if there is any additional training they would like to have.

You should note areas of good performance and identify any areas where further support or training may be needed.

It is really important that any areas that require improve are discussed as this gives the new employee sufficient time to meet targets and does not put them in a difficult position at the end of their probation period.

People & Culture will contact you, or a more senior manager within your service area, at the midway and end points of the probationary period. You, or the relevant manager will confirm to People & Culture at the end of the probationary period that the new employee's appointment can be confirmed.

## Section 2: Performance Issues

### 2.1 Management of performance issues

If areas of underperformance are identified during the probation period, the UECS [Capability Procedure](#) relating to probation (informal and stage 4) will be followed.

The first formal warning and final formal warning stages do not apply to capability action during the probationary period.

You should discuss with your manager and arrange to meet with the new employee to agree a [performance improvement plan \(PiP\)](#) and a timeline for improvement.

A period of between one and three months should be sufficient to determine if the required improvements are being made and sustained. Managers should act quickly to support staff in being able to make the necessary improvements required in the PiP within the probationary period.

You should arrange additional reviews during this period, as well as any further support or training to assist the new employee to meet the requirements of the post, and to ensure that the performance issues have been resolved.

You should keep your manager informed of the new employee's progress against the [PiP](#).

When instigating a [PiP](#), you will need to take into account how much of the probation period is left to ensure that the new employee can meet the objectives within the timeframe. The probationary period can be exceptionally extended if necessary.

If the new employee does satisfactorily address the performance issues, their appointment can be confirmed.

If performance continues to fall below the required standard, stage 4 of the UECS [Capability Procedure](#) relating to probation will be followed which could result in dismissal.

### 2.2 False statements during recruitment

If information becomes available to suggest that a new staff member has not

been honest during the recruitment process, you should inform your Head of Service who will discuss with People & Culture to agree the appropriate course of action.

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