



PROBATION PROCESS FOR LECTURERS (E&R) 2024/25

Below sets out the probation process for Lecturers (E&R). Full guidance can be found on the following pages.

1. TARGET SETTING



Within four weeks of the confirmation of employment, the nominated Academic Manager will meet with the new Lecturer.

2. RECORD KEEPING



The Academic Manager will record the targets (form ER01).

3. REGULAR MEETINGS



Regular meetings will take place between the Lecturer and Academic Manager to review performance and progress.

4. ANNUAL REVIEW FIRST YEAR



At the first annual review, the Lecturer should submit a summary of their progress against the probation objectives on their PDR form.

5. ANNUAL REVIEW SECOND YEAR



At the second annual review, the Lecturer should submit a summary of their progress against the probation objectives on their PDR form.

6. CONFIRMATION OF APPOINTMENT & FINAL PROBATION REPORT



Before the third anniversary of appointment there will be a final review of the Lecturer's progress and achievements against the probation objectives. The Lecturer, Academic Manager and Faculty Deputy PVC will prepare a 'final probation report' (form ER02).

7. FACULTY REVIEW PANEL DECISION



The Faculty Executive Office will arrange for the 'final probation report' to be considered by the FPRP. The Faculty Deputy PVC will present the report and recommendations to the FPRP.

8. FACULTY REVIEW PANEL CONFIRMATION



If the FPRP confirm the appointment then HR Services will send out the confirmation of appointment letter.



PURPOSE & PRINCIPLES

The purpose of the probationary period is to provide a clear framework to:

1. ensure that the University appoints to its academic staff those with aspirations, ambitions and professional accomplishments that are appropriate to its position as a world-leading institute of research and higher education;
2. provide a period of development to enable the new Lecturer to gain appropriate experience, training and support, skills and competencies, so that they may understand and contribute fully to the mission and objectives of the Faculty and University;
3. enable new Lecturers to achieve their full potential and to satisfy their career aims in research and education.

The probation process is intended to ensure that new Lecturers are given:

- appropriate support (including time) to accomplish what they are required to do and thereby complete probation satisfactorily;
- a clear statement of the standards that they are required to meet;
- guidance on how best to meet the standards;
- feedback on progress and early notification if they are failing to make satisfactory progress.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Part-time appointments

For part-time appointments, the length of the probationary period will remain the same, but consideration will be given (at the initial meeting, within four weeks of the appointment commencing) to varying the performance expectations to account for the part-time nature of the employment. Any variation which is agreed will modify the quantity of the target outcomes, but not the quality.

Family friendly leave and other extended absence

- Where a Lecturer is absent during the probationary period for a period of more than three months on account of maternity, paternity, adoption or parental leave or other leave of absence approved by the University for caring responsibilities, the University will take this into account in considering whether the Lecturer has met the requirements for probation within the three year period of probation.
- The University will not normally extend the period of probation, rather consideration will be given to applying a pro-rata reduction in the quantity of objectives to be achieved in the period under review. The quality of outcomes will not be varied. There will always be a minimum output expectation to provide evidence of competence and achievement (ie no target will be eliminated or reduced to zero).



- This decision will be made by the Faculty Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor following consultation with the Academic Manager and the Senior HR Partner.

The revised expectation will be discussed with the Lecturer and confirmed in writing.

Proleptic Appointments

At the point the Research Fellowship of the proleptic appointment expires, the management of the Faculty will make an assessment of the individual's achievements at Exeter against the criteria for probation and for progression to Senior Lecturer. The individual will be advised in writing of the further evidence of achievement and timescales required by the University for his/her appointment to be confirmed and for progression to Senior Lecturer.

Other staff transferring from a different job family

Staff who have previously completed their probation under a different job family, will mirror the above process for proleptic appointments. The individual will be advised in writing of the further evidence of achievement and timescales required by the University for his/her appointment to be confirmed and for progression to Senior Lecturer.

1. ACADEMIC MANAGER

The Academic Manager who will undertake all line management responsibilities including induction and promotion arrangements will be confirmed following appointment.

2. TARGET SETTING

Within four weeks of the commencement of appointment, the nominated Academic Manager will meet with the new Lecturer to:

- explain the University's probation arrangements for new Lecturers;
- confirm the specific objectives relating to Education, Research and Impact and Academic Citizenship to be achieved within the period of probation;
- confirm any agreements regarding accreditation of prior achievements;
- confirm the development activities which the new Lecturer will undertake within the period of probation;
- agree dates for review during the period of probation (at least annually, but usually six monthly).

3. RECORD KEEPING

The Academic Manager will record the targets (form ER01). This will be:

- a. Approved by the Head of Department or Deputy Head of Department (in consultation with APVC Research / APVC Education as appropriate);
- b. sent to the new Lecturer and their Academic Manager



- c. retained on the new Lecturer's HR file.

Following the annual PDR meeting, the Academic Manager will update form ER01 with a report of progress of the Lecturer.

This will be reviewed by the Head of Department or Deputy Head of Department.

The review will assess whether performance and progress is satisfactory or performance and progress is unsatisfactory in Education, Research and Impact and Academic Citizenship - in which case the report must give details of the areas giving concern and the remedial action proposed (see What If Things Go Wrong? on page 4). A copy will be retained on the Lecturer's HR file.

4. REGULAR MEETINGS

Regular meetings will take place between the Lecturer and the Academic Manager to review performance and progress. The Academic Manager will make a record of these meetings on form ER01.

5. ANNUAL REVIEW – FIRST YEAR

At the first annual review (which will take place within the academic PDR cycle), the Lecturer should submit a summary of their progress against the probation objectives to the Academic Manager on their PDR form.

Progress against the probation objectives will be discussed in the PDR meetings.

6. ANNUAL REVIEW – SECOND YEAR

At the second annual review (which will take place within the academic PDR cycle), the Lecturer should submit a summary of their progress against the probation objectives to the Academic Manager on their PDR form.

Progress against the probation objectives will be discussed in the PDR meetings.

7. CONFIRMATION OF APPOINTMENT AND FINAL PROBATION REPORT

Before the third anniversary of appointment - or earlier if recommended by the Academic Manager and supported by the Faculty Deputy PVC (but subject to a minimum probation period of twelve months) - there will be a final review of the Lecturer's progress and achievements against the probation objectives. Progress against the probation objectives will be discussed in the PDR meetings.

The Lecturer, Academic Manager and Deputy PVC will prepare a "final probation report" (form ER02). The Lecturer will complete a statement regarding their achievements and then pass to the Academic Manager. Once this has been reviewed by the Faculty Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor, the final probation report will be sent to the Lecturer to sign and state that they have seen the form.



If there is no statement submitted by the Lecturer within two weeks of being requested to do so (or within an agreed extension) then a report will be submitted to the Faculty Probation Review Panel (FPRP) without a statement by the Lecturer.

8. FACULTY REVIEW PANEL DECISION

The Faculty Executive Office will arrange for the report to be considered by the FPRP. The Faculty Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor will present the “final probation report” and recommendation to the panel.

The FPRP will constitute of Deputy Vice Chancellor or Provost, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor and Dean (Medical School and Business School), Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor / 2 APVC representatives and a HR Representative. The Chair will be agreed by the panel.

The FPRP may:

- a. confirm appointment, or;
- b. if the FPRP is not satisfied that the Lecturer’s progress and achievements match the agreed standard for probation they will refer the case for consideration under the Probation Procedure (see page 5).

9. REVIEW PANEL CONFIRMATION

If the FPRP confirm the appointment, then HR Services will send out the confirmation of appointment letter. An additional increment will be effective from the first day of the month following sign-off by the Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor for consideration by the Review Panel decision.

10. WHAT IF THINGS GO WRONG?

Where problems with meeting the appropriate standard(s) are highlighted and/ or relevant training needs identified, appropriate opportunity/support/remedial action shall be provided to assist the Lecturer in meeting the agreed objectives. This will be discussed with the Lecturer in a follow up meeting with the Head of Department or Deputy Head of Department (and, if appropriate the Academic Manager and the Senior HR Partner). The outcome of this meeting will be recorded and sent to the Lecturer and Academic Manager.

Exceptionally, at any time during the probation period, where there is concern that the Lecturer will not meet the standards for confirmation of appointment, the Head of Department or Deputy Head of Department, in consultation with the Senior HR Partner, may initiate the Probation Procedure, as set out below.

PROBATION PROCEDURE (PDP) WHERE REQUIREMENTS ARE NOT MET/UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE (NON-CONFIRMATION OF PROBATION)



The non-confirmation of probation procedure may be invoked at any time during the period of probation where there are concerns about the Lecturer's performance, competence, attendance or conduct which may lead to a decision that the requirements for confirmation of appointment have not been met.

A Lecturer will not normally be dismissed under this procedure without a warning being issued that if performance does not improve to the required standards the University will take steps to terminate the employment by further application of the probation procedure.

The Lecturer will be given a minimum of ten working days' notification of the date of the meeting and warned that their on-going employment is at risk. This letter will set out the concerns/issues/ reasons why the procedure is being applied, including documentation to be submitted by the Faculty (to include the ER01 and PDR Forms).

The Lecturer may also submit written evidence to HR Casework no later than six working days prior to the date of the meeting.

All papers will be circulated at least five working days prior to the date of the meeting.

The Lecturer may be accompanied by a trade union representative or fellow worker.

For Cases referred by the Head of Department (or Deputy Head of Department)

The panel will be chaired by the Faculty Deputy PVC; the other members of the panel will be drawn from current and former members of the Faculty Executive Board. Panels will comprise of the Chair and up to two additional panel members, and will, where reasonably practicable, be gender balanced. The panel may:

- issue a formal warning for up to twelve months.

For cases referred by Faculty Probation Review Panel

The panel will be chaired by a Deputy PVC from a different Faculty; the other members of the panel will be drawn from current and former members of the Faculty Executive Board. Panels will comprise of the Chair and up to two additional panel members and will, where reasonably practicable, be gender balanced. The panel may be advised by an HR Partner.

The panel will hear evidence from the Faculty and may call other witnesses to attend. The panel may:

- confirm the appointment;
- issue a formal warning for up to twelve months and extend the period of probation for up to twelve months;
- terminate the employment, normally after a formal warning has already been issued.

Notification of Outcome of the meeting/hearing



The panel will write to the member of staff within five working days of the meeting to advise of the decision and (in cases of dismissal) to give notice of dismissal. This letter will also advise of the right of appeal and the procedure to be followed to make an appeal. The member of staff may exercise their right of appeal by writing to the Director of Human Resources within ten working days of the date of the notification.

PDP/Probation Appeal

The appeal will be considered by a panel who have not previously been involved in the decision, comprising a Deputy Vice Chancellor, a member of the Senior Management Group and a member of Senate.

- The Lecturer will be given a minimum of ten working days notification of the date of the meeting.
- The Lecturer may be accompanied by a trade union representative or fellow worker.
- The University's case is presented by the University's representative, i.e. the Deputy PVC who chaired the non-confirmation of probation hearing supported by an HR Partner.
- The University and the Lecturer may submit further written evidence.
- All papers will be circulated at least five days prior to the date of the meeting.
- The appeal panel will follow the University's standard appeal procedure at the hearing and the decision of the appeal panel will be final.