



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Probation policy and procedure

Information sheet

Information box

For further advice contact: Human Resources

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Version control

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Impact assessment

- A business rationale assessment has been carried out and this policy contributes to Estyn's strategic objectives and delivery principles.
- An equality impact assessment has been carried out and this policy is not deemed to adversely impact on any people on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Policy agreement

This policy and its associated procedures are agreed by Estyn's management and Trade Unions.

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Probation policy

Policy purpose

- 1 The purpose of probation is to enable employees to demonstrate that they are suitable for the grade/post to which they have been recruited. The policy supports managers in managing probation effectively and encourages employees to work in partnership with their manager to demonstrate their suitability. Suitability is assessed through conduct, attendance and performance. All employees must satisfactorily complete probation before their appointment can be confirmed.
- 2 Managers are responsible for ensuring that employees understand the purpose of probation, as well as expected standards of conduct, attendance and performance. Managers should provide employees with appropriate guidance and support and review their employment with them at regular intervals to aid development.

Scope of policy

- 3 The policy applies to:
 - all new employees (AO to Strategic Director), including fixed term appointees and re-joiners to the Civil Service
 - existing employees who are promoted to a different role at a higher grade within Estyn
 - existing HMI who are appointed to an Assistant Director post (due to the change in duties and skills required)
 - employees transferring on promotion within the Civil Service
- 4 Former civil servants who were previously appointed on merit through fair and open competition and have previously completed a probation period within Estyn, may be re-appointed at an equivalent or lower grade than their previous appointment (to a permanent or fixed term appointment), without re-serving probation, within a maximum of five years of leaving the Civil Service.
- 5 Employees transferring on level transfer within the Civil Service are not normally required to serve probation if they have previously successfully completed a probation period (with a minimum length of six months).
- 6 Any requirement to serve probation will be specified in the letter of appointment.

Principles

- 7 The following principles underpin the probation policy and procedure:
 - probation will normally last for six months, however in certain roles a longer period is necessary to demonstrate ability to meet the full requirements of the role and probation may last up to 12 months
 - for posts at AO grade up to Grade 7 probation will normally last for six months
 - for all Grade 6 and Strategic Director roles a 12 month probation period applies

- the probation policy for fixed term appointees is the same as for permanent employees, or will last for the length of the appointment if this is shorter than six or 12 months
- the probation period commences on the first day of employment for a new employee, or, for an employee who is promoted internally, on the first day they commence their duties in the new role
- in exceptional circumstances, the probation period may be extended if it is deemed reasonable and necessary in order for the employee to achieve the required standard
- the probation period may be suspended if the employee is temporarily absent from work, preventing an assessment of their suitability for the role
- new employees will undertake a formal induction and employees promoted internally will undertake an induction into the new role/team. All employees will receive guidance from their line manager through ongoing review and discussion
- the employee's development should be assessed frequently, with regular discussions focusing on conduct, attendance and performance. Any areas of concern must be addressed as soon as they arise, to avoid potential issues later on
- conduct, attendance and performance are considered as a whole. Failure to meet required standards in one area or in any combination of areas may result in a written warning being given and/or dismissal at any stage during probation
- there should be at least two formal probation review meetings:
 - for employees on a six month probation period – the first review at two months of employment and the second no later than one month before the end of the probation period
 - for employees on a 12 month probation period - a checkpoint review after four months and a formal review at nine months
- following the formal review meetings, the manager will present the evidence and their recommendations to the relevant Probation Review Panel:
 - Corporate Services Management Team (CSMT) for Corporate Services employees (only CSMT members who are at least a grade higher than the individual on probation will be involved in the review)
 - Directors Group for Inspectors and Grade 7 posts
 - Executive Board for Assistant Directors
 - Estyn's Remuneration Committee for Strategic Directorsand the Panel will decide whether the employee is confirmed in their post or will ratify proposed extensions and time periods in line with a formal action plan prepared by the line manager in discussion with the employee
- Estyn may terminate employment at any time during probation if it is clear that the employee will not meet the required standards of conduct, attendance and/or performance. The employee must be given the correct period of notice, typically a minimum of five weeks for monthly paid staff. In cases of gross misconduct, the employee may be dismissed without notice. Please refer to the [Discipline Policy and Procedure](#) for further information

Related documents

- Managing probation guide
- Probation checklist for managers
- Probation template letters
- Probation review form

Probation procedures

- 8 The Managing probation guide is a user-friendly guide for managers and employees that sets out the procedures within the probation process.
- 9 Employees will be required to serve a six month or twelve month probation period depending on the role they are appointed to (see [paragraph 7](#) for details). The probation period allows the employee to learn what is expected of them in their new role. It also allows them to show they are suitable for the grade/post to which they have been recruited, by meeting the required standards of conduct, attendance and performance.
- 10 The employee will be allocated a manager who will be responsible for the probation process. The manager will assess the employee during the probation period, after setting clear expectations. They will also provide help and support. This will enable the manager and employee to make sound decisions on the employee's suitability and future in Estyn.

Probation procedure overview

