



Associate Staff Probationary Policy

Version 5.0

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Policy Statement

The Education Alliance (the Trust) has a vision to seek excellence through inspirational leadership, teamwork, innovation and challenge we work to ensure that all of us achieve our best. Our values are:

- Working together for students
- Generating ideas and sharing outstanding practice
- Promoting independence and interdependence
- Encouraging questioning, feedback and challenge

The Trust has four guiding principles:

- Believe in the team
- Focus on learners to drive decisions
- Keep it simple, do it right
- See it, own it, make it happen

Probationary periods provide the organisation and new employees with an opportunity to assess and review performance and suitability of employment transparently, openly, discreetly, fairly and consistently, celebrating success and encouraging new employees to reflect on their performance with their manager, seeking opportunities to develop and flourish in their new role.

The probationary process within the Trust is structured and includes regular monitoring of performance through progress meetings. It allows for clear and specific supervisory support and guidance alongside access to appropriate learning and development.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the process for managing a probationary period, enabling managers and new members of staff to review together the employee's performance in their new role, ensuring the induction process is completed and signed off by both parties.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all new associate staff employed by the Trust.

3. Responsibilities

The **Trust Board and the CEO** are responsible for approving this policy and **Local Governing Bodies** are responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy in their schools.

The **Heads of School** are responsible for ensuring that staff are treated fairly and consistently in the application of this policy.

The **Director of Human Resources** is responsible for overseeing the introduction, implementation, monitoring and review of this policy and will report to the CEO and the Trust Board as required. The **Human Resources Department** will provide advice, guidance and support in the implementation of this policy, acting as a point of contact for managers and staff. The Human Resources Department will ensure that this policy is implemented fairly and consistently, whilst also ensuring that relevant employment legislation is adhered to.

Staff with **managerial responsibilities** must operate within this policy in a fair, consistent and reasonable way; ensuring confidentiality is protected where possible. It is a manager's responsibility to manage the probationary period sensitively, clearly, objectively, fairly and supportively, seeking advice and guidance as and when required. Managers must ensure that employees understand their role, responsibilities and the expectations of the Trust. Managers are encouraged to address any concerns regarding performance at the earliest opportunity, seeking to support the employee to achieve the required level of performance through the provision of clear guidance, access to appropriate learning and development opportunities, regular feedback, monitoring and review. Managers are encouraged to seek advice from the Human Resources Department at the earliest opportunity should they have any concerns regarding the employee's performance.

Employees are expected to behave in a professional manner at work in line with the values of the Trust and the Expectations and Code of Conduct. Employees are expected to fully engage in the probationary process, ensuring they seek regular feedback, access the learning development opportunities available to them and ask for additional support, clarification and guidance as and when they require it.

4. Equality and Diversity

The Education Alliance is committed to:

- Promoting equality and diversity in its policies, procedures and guidelines
- Delivering high quality teaching and services that meet the diverse needs of its student population and its workforce, ensuring that no individual or group is disadvantaged

5. Probationary Period

The probationary period is an important part of an employee's career and should be seen as an opportunity to support new starters through any early challenges that may arise, enabling a full induction to take place and any training needs to be established and met. We pride ourselves on having strong organisational values and expectations and how we enable new colleagues to understand and meet these will be evident in the long term retention of staff.

As part of the induction process, line managers must ensure that any new employee to their department is aware of the probationary period, which is detailed in the employee's contract of employment. The line manager must discuss the role and responsibilities and their expectations of the employee during the induction and probationary periods. The line manager and employee must arrange to meet at least once a month for the first six months of their employment in that role to review their performance against the role requirements, duties, responsibilities and expectations.

The line manager must discuss the progress their new employee makes against the expectations and also take the opportunity to inform the employee of any gaps in performance in a meaningful sensitive, clear way. It is important that specific actions are agreed and implemented and that their impact is understood by both the employee and their line manager, ensuring they help the employee to address any areas requiring additional focus.

Whilst for most new starters, probationary periods are positive, enabling managers and new staff to celebrate success, it is also important to ensure employees are aware of the potential consequences of failing to achieve the required level of performance whilst in the probationary period. Their line manager must ensure they engage with the employee in a supportive, objective, sensitive, constructive way, seeking advice from the HR Department as and when required. They must ensure the employee understands the probationary period, the expectations, role and responsibilities.

6. Concerns during the Probationary Period

Although regular review dates will be set with a final review towards the end of the probationary period, it is important that any concerns are brought to the attention of the employee when they arise to provide the employee with the opportunity to address those concerns. If a line manager has concerns about a new employee's performance they should arrange to meet with the employee and clearly and sensitively express those concerns in an objective, constructive way. The meeting should be held in private and the line manager must make notes of the meeting. Key concerns and any targets, actions or objectives agreed as a result of the meeting must be detailed in writing to the individual with appropriate timescales and it is advisable that the manager speaks to the HR Department about those concerns at the earliest opportunity. If the member of staff is a member of a Union, they should be encouraged to seek union support if they so wish.

Equally, if the employee has any concerns regarding the role, or the organisation that would benefit from being addressed as part of the probationary period it is important that these are brought to the discussion as early as possible so that these can also be addressed in any action planning.

An extension to the probationary period may be considered in those cases where six months may not be sufficient for either party to confidently meet the requirements of the role. Consideration should be given to the prior knowledge and experience of the employee, and the extent of organisational learning required. An extension should be considered on a case by case basis, in agreement with the employee. The line manager must also discuss with the HR Department.

7. Support during the Probationary Period

All new employees need help and support as they settle into a new job. The line manager is responsible for ensuring that agreed learning and development needs are met as soon as possible. The line manager is also responsible for ensuring the employee is:

- aware of key Trust policies and procedures
- introduced to all members of the team and key contacts
- familiar with the site and facilities
- aware of the expectations regarding their role
- has regular opportunities to raise concerns or questions regarding the role

8. Termination before the End of the Probationary Period

Employees will normally complete the full 6 month probationary period as the length of time has been set to allow employees time to settle into the Trust and their role and access appropriate learning and development. However, once all support avenues have been exhausted, there may be circumstances where the employee experiences fundamental difficulties with the work they are employed to carry out and on speaking to the employee it becomes apparent that the employee is not going to be able to meet the required standards within the time given. The line manager must seek HR advice prior to ceasing a probationary period. Where this is necessary, the process will be managed in a fair and dignified manner, and in a way that achieves the best outcome for all parties.

The decision to terminate the employee's contract can only be made by the CEO or the Head of School. The employee will be invited to attend a meeting with the CEO or the Head of School and their line manager will present a management report, detailing the expectations, role and responsibilities, the individual's performance, clearly identifying the aspects of their performance

that are fundamentally unsatisfactory. The line manager will also present the actions taken to improve the employee's performance and the impact of their unsatisfactory performance.

The CEO or Head of School will be supported by the HR Department and the employee will be given every opportunity to present their case and challenge any information submitted, detailing any mitigation. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague at a potential dismissal meeting.

If the CEO or Head of School decide to dismiss, the employee will be notified and will be advised of their right of appeal. An appeal must be submitted by the individual and received by the Director of Human Resources within 5 working days of the date of the letter confirming their dismissal. Most employees in their probationary period will be given one month's notice to terminate their employment, although in some circumstances they may be given the statutory minimum notice of seven days.

9. Confirming Successful Completion of the Probationary Period

It is important that the employee is notified of the successful completion of their probationary period. Their line manager is responsible for informing the employee that they have successfully completed their probationary period and it is an opportunity to celebrate their successes and look at how they can continue to learn and develop within their role. A letter will be issued to confirm successful completion of the probationary period. The line manager must also notify the HR Department and ensure all completed documentation is submitted to the HR Department.

10. Termination at the End of the Probationary Period

Employees should be made aware of any concerns regarding their performance as they arise and prior to the end of the probationary period. At a minimum this should occur at the regular monthly review meetings. If the employee has failed to meet the required standards despite accessing help and support, a decision will be taken to terminate the probationary period. **This decision must be made prior to the end of the probationary period and HR advice must be sought before a decision is made and at least two weeks before the probationary period is due to end.**

11. Sickness Absence During the Probationary Period

While we appreciate that employees may experience some sickness absence during their first six months with the Trust, it is important to observe any patterns of attendance and to address these in the usual way. If it becomes apparent that a poor attendance record is transpiring, then managers should address this with the employee, ensuring any additional needs are met and take advice from the HR Department. Also a prolonged period of absence may impact on the length of the probationary period and may require it to be extended. A discussion with HR with regards to this will be required.

12. Concerns Following the Completion of the Probationary Period

If the employee is retained following the completion of their probationary period, any subsequent performance issues will be dealt with in the normal way utilising the Trust's policies and procedures.

13. Discovery of Irregularities during the Probationary Period

If there are concerns that a new employee has not been honest about their previous experience, qualifications, criminal or health record or professional membership they could be dismissed for breach of contract. In such circumstances the line manager must contact the HR Department for advice at the earliest opportunity.

14. Protected Characteristics

Additional support must be considered for disabled employees and reasonable adjustments may be made. If an employee is disabled their line manager must contact the HR Department for advice and support at the earliest opportunity. Line managers must also seek advice and support from the HR Department should any new member of staff have a protected characteristic resulting in a requirement for adjustments or adaptations to be made.

15. Monitoring Compliance with and Effectiveness of this Policy

Compliance and effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Human Resources Department.

16. Associated Documentation

Detailed below are the most common policies that may be applied instead of or in conjunction with this policy. This is not an exhaustive list.

- Capability Procedure
- Appraisal Policy and Procedure
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Health and Wellbeing Policy and Procedure

17. Review

This Policy will be reviewed within 2 years of the date of implementation with trade union representatives at local secretary level.

Probationary Review – 1st Month

Name of Employee

Job Title

Name of Line Manager

Please comment on the standard the above employee has reached in the following areas. You should refer to the job description and person specification for the job.

Attitude to job and colleagues

Attendance/Time Keeping

Highs and Lows

What does good look like in this role?

.....

Where are you now? Rate 1-10

How can we achieve 10? (e.g. work activities, learning and development)

.....
.....
.....

Overall Performance (including impact/added value)

Any Other Comments (Manager)
(including training and development requirements)

Comments (Employee)

Induction:

Attended School Induction Yes No

Completed Departmental Induction Yes No

Received Job Description Yes No

Received Person Specification Yes No

Read and understand key policies and procedures received during the initial induction
Yes No

Line Manager's Signature Date

Employee's Signature Date

Probationary Review – 2nd Month

Name of Employee

Job Title

Name of Line Manager

Please comment on the standard the above employee has reached in the following areas. You should refer to the job description and person specification for the job.

Key Contacts (who are they? Any feedback?)

Attendance/Time Keeping

Highs and Lows

What does good look like in this role?

.....

Where are you now? Rate 1-10

How can we achieve 10? (e.g. work activities, learning and development)

.....
.....
.....

Overall Performance (e.g. impact/added value/ideas/achievements/plans)

Any Other Comments (Manager)
(including training and development requirements)

Comments (Employee) (including training and development requirements)

Line Manager's Signature Date

Employee's Signature Date

Probationary Review – 3rd Month

Name of Employee

Job Title

Name of Line Manager

Please comment on the standard the above employee has reached in the following areas. You should refer to the job description and person specification for the job.

Key Contacts (who are they? Any feedback?)

Attendance/Time Keeping

Highs and Lows

What does good look like in this role?

.....

Where are you now? Rate 1-10

How can we achieve 10? (e.g. work activities, learning and development)

.....
.....
.....

Overall Performance (e.g. impact/added value/ideas/achievements/plans)

Any Other Comments (Manager)
(including training and development requirements)

Does the employee generally reach the required standard for the job? Yes No

If no, discuss your concerns with the Human Resources Department as soon as possible.

If no, what action/training is required to improve job performance?
(Note who will be responsible for arranging and the date the action/training is to be completed by)

Comments (Employee) (including training and development requirements)

Line Manager's Signature Date

Employee's Signature Date

Probationary Review – 4th Month

Name of Employee

Job Title

Name of Line Manager

Please comment on the standard the above employee has reached in the following areas. You should refer to the job description and person specification for the job.

Key Contacts (who are they? Any feedback?)

Attendance/Time Keeping

Highs and Lows

What does good look like in this role?

.....

Where are you now? Rate 1-10

How can we achieve 10? (e.g. work activities, learning and development)

.....

.....

.....

Overall Performance (e.g. impact/added value/ideas/achievements/plans)

Any Other Comments (Manager)
(including training and development requirements)

Does the employee generally reach the required standard for the job? Yes No

If no, what action/training is required to improve job performance?
(Note who will be responsible for arranging and the date the action/training is to be completed by)

If performance does not improve is it likely they will be retained? Yes No

If no, discuss your concerns with the Human Resources Department as soon as possible.

Comments (Employee) (including training and development requirements)

Line Manager's Signature Date

Employee's Signature Date

Probationary Review – 5th Month (FINAL)

Name of Employee

Job Title

Name of Line Manager

Please comment on the standard the above employee has reached in the following areas. You should refer to the job description and person specification for the job.

Key Contacts (who are they? Any feedback?)

Attendance/Time Keeping

Highs and Lows

What does good look like in this role?

.....

Where are you now? Rate 1-10

How can we achieve 10? (e.g. work activities, learning and development)

.....

.....

.....

Overall Performance (e.g. impact/added value/ideas/achievements/plans)

Any Other Comments (Manager)
(including training and development requirements)

Have all the relevant policies, procedures and guidelines, as identified in month one, been read and understood? Yes No

1. Does the employee generally reach the required standard for the job? Yes No

If no, and you have not previously done so, contact the Human Resources Department immediately.

2. Please return a copy of all your completed review forms to the Human Resources department as soon as possible so we can confirm to the employee in writing that they have successfully completed their probationary period (if appropriate).

Comments (Employee) (including training and development requirements)

Line Manager's Signature Date

Employee's Signature Date

Successful Completion Letter Template

Private and Confidential

DATE

Dear

As you are aware, your appointment at SCHOOL was subject to a probationary period of 6 months. I am delighted to inform you that you have successfully completed this probationary period and your employment will now continue at SCHOOL. Your probationary period counts towards your continuous service at SCHOOL.

I look forward to working with you over the coming months and years and value the commitment, hard work and flexibility you have shown throughout the last 6 months.

Yours sincerely