

PROBATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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1 Introduction

- 1.1. The University is committed to fostering an inclusive culture where every employee feels valued and enabled to thrive and perform to the best of their ability and fulfill their responsibilities.
- 1.2. The university expects all employees to strive to attain the highest levels of performance, conduct and attendance to contribute to the delivery of its vision, to be the best modern university in the UK, and to feel empowered to do so by upholding and demonstrating the university's core values; to be inclusive, collaborative, and impactful.
- 1.3. The probation period is intended as a constructive process to allow the employee to understand the university, their department, their role and how these fit together. It is an opportunity for the employee to understand the standards required for their role and to fulfill those standards in full and ultimately for both employee and manager to assess the employee's suitability for the role.

2 The Public Sector Equality Duty

- 2.1. The Equality Act (2010) requires public bodies such as the University of Greenwich to consider how their decisions and policies affect people with different protected characteristics (or a combination of these).
- 2.2. The university is committed to promoting equality of access and outcome for all, celebrating diversity, and providing an inclusive learning and work environment for all students, staff, and visitors. The university will ensure they pay 'due regard' to:
 - a. the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation;
 - b. advance equality of opportunity;
 - c. foster good relations between people, irrespective of their age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation'.
- 2.3. Paying 'due regard' means the university will consciously consider or think about the need to do the above.

3 Aims

This policy and its procedures seek to:

- 3.1. Set a clear framework for line managers on how to manage the performance, conduct and attendance of their new staff member during the probation period.
- 3.2. Provide clearly defined steps for line managers to follow when their employee's performance, conduct or attendance falls below acceptable standards and requires additional intervention beyond the expected levels of advice, encouragement, training, or support during their probation period.
- 3.3. Ensure employees are given reasonable opportunities to improve and maintain their performance, conduct and attendance to the required level and to succeed in their role.

4 Scope

4.1. This policy and its procedures apply to all university employees, including people employed on a fixed term contract. This policy does not apply to Jobshop, PGRTA, agency workers, self-employed contractors, or Hourly Paid Lecturers (HPL's).

5 Induction

5.1. All university employees who are subject to a probation period receive an induction programme to introduce them to the university and help them to settle in. This is arranged by the line manager.

5.2. The line manager should provide the new employee with a welcome checklist, which can be found on the university staff portal. The welcome checklist is applicable for all academic and professional services staff. Some activities and tasks should be completed by the employee and some by the manager. The employee should regularly review the checklist and ensure their tasks are completed at the specified points in the probation period.

5.3. Line managers should ensure that agency workers and self-employed contractors are sufficiently orientated to the university and their department, however as noted in this policy and procedure, will not be subject to an induction or probation period.

6 The Probation Procedure

6.1. The employee probation procedure is outlined in this policy and procedure. All employees are expected to pass each of their milestone probation reviews and achieve all the required standards of performance, conduct and attendance and objectives set, by the end of their probation period.

6.2. The probation period for individual employee's based on their role is as follows:

- a) Lecturers, Senior Lecturers, Professors, Associate Professors and Staff on Senior Management Contracts – 12 months' probation
- b) Professional Services employees, Researchers and Apprentices – 6 months' probation

6.3. What a New Employee can Expect from their Manager

Employees can expect their manager to:

- a) provide them appropriate time to orientate to the university and carry out the expected induction activities and training as per the welcome checklist.
- b) treat performance, conduct or attendance issues occurring during their probation period promptly, fairly, and consistently across the university in line with this policy and procedure.
- c) provide them with clear and constructive feedback on their performance, conduct and attendance, clarifying any required improvement, providing an opportunity to rectify this within a reasonable timescale.
- d) give appropriate support, help and where necessary, training to improve.
- e) make reasonable adjustments where required to ensure that employees with disabilities, or physical or mental health conditions, are not substantially disadvantaged when doing their jobs and treated no less favourably than their non-disabled colleagues in line with its duty under the Equality Act 2010.

- f) give them the right to be accompanied at any meeting which may result in their dismissal, providing written notice of the meeting and a right of appeal against dismissal.
- g) provide notice in accordance with the employment contract, in the event of their dismissal if they do not perform their role to the required standards after being given an appropriate opportunity to improve as set out in this policy and procedure.

6.4. What the University Expects from its New Employees.

The university expects all new employees to:

- a) carry out their job to the standard that is expected and required for the role and grade as per the job description or person specification.
- b) understand the impact of their performance, conduct and attendance on colleagues, customers, and the wider university.
- c) clarify expectations, standards, tasks, objectives, and behaviours with their line manager if they are unclear about them.
- d) engage fully in their induction, the setting of their objectives and standards and monitoring of their performance, conduct and attendance through this policy, and develop their skills and knowledge to carry out their role to the highest possible standard
- e) bring any issues which may affect their ability to carry out their role to the attention of their line manager at the soonest opportunity, including matters related to their mental or physical health, or where they may have a disability.
- f) attend meetings to discuss any aspects of their performance, conduct or attendance which are considered unsatisfactory as requested to do so and respond constructively to any feedback given.

6.5. What the University Expects from its Managers

The university expects all its line managers to:

- a) be responsible for managing the probation period and conducting probation review meetings in line with this policy and procedure for their new staff member and to support and monitor their performance, conduct and attendance through regular contact, typically with one-to-one discussions.
- b) meet their new staff member at the earliest opportunity and set objectives of performance, conduct and attendance and the expected timeframes at the latest by the end of the first month.
- c) give the employee ample opportunity during their probationary period to understand the university, their department, and their role and how they fit together and to achieve the identified standards and objectives for their role.
- d) monitor objectives throughout the probation process.
- e) give the employee positive feedback where they have met set standards and objectives.
- f) identify any areas of performance, conduct or attendance that fall below the required standards promptly with the employee so that they have opportunity to improve before the end of their probation period. Feedback should be clear, specific, and constructive.
- g) remain aware of the possibility that a physical or mental impairment, which is either undisclosed, or remains unknown to the employee, could be the reason or a contributing factor to the employee's underperformance, conduct or attendance (see also *Neurodiversity in the Workplace Guidance* found on the university staff

portal). Following discussion with the employee, this may be explored with an occupational health referral (see [Occupation Health Referrals](#) in this policy).

- h) document each probation review meeting in Horizon for the individual employee. Written records should include theme of discussions, training or support needs, actions required and if appropriate areas for improvement with timescales.
- i) proactively seek advice from the People Directorate where appropriate and as indicated in this policy and procedure.
- j) ensure that when they either leave the university or move job role, they provide where possible a thorough handover to the incoming manager including records of meetings.

7 Occupational Health Referrals

7.1. If, during the probation period, matters come to light which indicate that an employee's mental or physical health is impacting on their ability to carry out their role, or where they have, or may have a disability which is affecting their performance, conduct or attendance, the manager should discuss this promptly with their People Directorate representative and seek an occupational health referral if it is deemed appropriate. Managers can also seek guidance on making an occupational health referral from the university staff portal.

7.2. Occupational health will advise on the impact of any disability or health problem on an employee's ability to perform their role, including any reasonable adjustments that should be considered.

7.3. The Equality Act (2010)

A disability is defined under the Equality Act 2010 as a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long term' negative effect on an individual's ability to do normal daily activities. This includes progressive conditions, which is a condition which gets worse over time.

8 Probation Procedure for Lecturers, Senior Lecturers, Professors, Associate Professors and Staff on Senior Management Contracts

8.1. Line Managers Guide

8.1.1. Line managers should follow the steps below and document each probation review meeting on Horizon for the individual employee. A probation guide for line managers can be found on the university staff portal.

8.1.2. Line managers can also refer to [Appendix A: Probation Process Flow Chart](#) in this policy.



8.1.3. *If at any point during the probation period the line manager identifies performance, conduct or attendance that falls below what is expected, they should refer to [Unsatisfactory Performance, Conduct or Attendance](#) in this policy, and [Appendix B: Unsatisfactory Performance, Conduct, Attendance Flow Chart](#).*

8.2. Prior to Start Date

8.2.1. The line manager should locate the welcome checklist on Horizon, prior to their new staff member's start date. Line managers should review the checklist and action their own activities where it is required. Line managers should refer to this

checklist regularly throughout the probation period to ensure actions are achieved and signed off.

8.2.2. Line managers should arrange and schedule one to one time with their new employee at the soonest opportunity on their first day, whether face to face or remotely, to welcome them to the university and discuss their induction.

8.2.3. Line managers should arrange for their new employee's orientation of the campus and facilities. Meetings with their colleagues should also be scheduled as soon as possible after joining.

8.2.4. Line managers should ensure all relevant equipment including, specialist equipment, and access to systems is arranged prior to their new employee joining the university. Managers should be proactive in establishing the employees specific needs.

8.3. Day One

8.3.1. Meet and welcome employee.

8.3.2. Line managers should share the welcome checklist with their new employee on day one and direct the employee to the actions required within the first two days.

8.3.3. Line managers should ensure they highlight the 'essential training' listed on the welcome checklist which must be completed by the employee to pass their probation period.

8.4. Week 1

8.4.1. Line managers should refer to [Appendix A: Probation Process Flow Chart](#) in this policy, to identify the formal review meetings required throughout the probation period and **diarise these meetings with the employee in the first week.**

8.5. Month 1

8.5.1. The line manager should meet with their new team member at the soonest opportunity to set **SMART** objectives (**Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound**) to outline the expectations in their role. Objectives should be added to the employees performance page in Horizon.

8.5.2. Objectives should be in place by the end of the first month at the latest, however the line manager should still meet with their employee at the end of the first month regardless, to check on their progress, identify any needs they may have and to review their welcome checklist.

8.6. Month 3 – Probation Review Meeting

8.6.1. The line manager should hold the first probation review meeting at the end of the third month to discuss progress and provide feedback against the objectives set at the end of the first month to ensure the employee is 'on track' and check whether the employee has any additional needs.

8.7. Month 6 – Probation Review Meeting

8.7.1. The line manager should hold the second probation review meeting at the end of month six to discuss progress and provide feedback against objectives.

8.8. Month 9 – Probation Review Meeting

8.8.1. The line manager should hold the third probation review meeting at the end of month nine to discuss progress and provide feedback against objectives.

8.9. Month 12 – Final Probation Review Meeting

8.9.1. The line manager should hold the final probation review meeting at the end of month twelve. Where probation has been successful the line manager should confirm the employee in post. (see [Confirming in Post](#) in this policy).

9 Probation Procedure for Professional Services, Researchers and Apprentices

9.1. Line Managers Guide

9.1.1. Line managers should follow the steps below and document each probation review meeting in Horizon for the individual employee. Probation guides for managers and employees can be found on the university staff portal.

9.1.2. Line managers can also refer to [Appendix A: Probation Process Flow Chart](#) in this policy.



9.1.3. *If at any point during the probation period the line manager identifies performance, conduct or attendance that falls below what is expected, they should refer to [Unsatisfactory Performance, Conduct or Attendance](#) in this policy and [Appendix B: Unsatisfactory Performance, Conduct, Attendance Flow Chart](#).*

9.2. Prior to Start Date

9.2.1. The line manager should locate the welcome checklist on Horizon, prior to their new staff member's start date. Line managers should review the checklist and action their own activities where it is required. Line managers should refer to this checklist regularly throughout the probation period to ensure actions are achieved and signed off.

9.2.2. Line managers should arrange and schedule one to one time with their new employee at the soonest opportunity on their first day, whether face to face or remotely, to welcome them to the university and discuss their induction.

9.2.3. Line managers should arrange for their new employee's orientation of the campus and facilities. Meetings with their colleagues should also be scheduled as soon as possible after joining.

9.2.4. Line managers should ensure all relevant equipment including, specialist equipment, and access to systems is arranged prior to their new employee joining the university. Managers should be proactive in establishing the employees specific needs.

9.3. Day One

9.3.1. Meet and welcome employee.

9.3.2. Line managers should share the welcome checklist with their new employee on day one and direct the employee to the actions required within the first two days.

9.3.3. Line managers should ensure they highlight the 'essential training' listed on the welcome checklist which must be completed by the employee to pass their probation period.

9.4. Week 1

9.4.1. Line managers should refer to [Appendix A: Probation Process Flow Chart](#) in this policy, to identify the formal review meetings required throughout the probation period and **diarise these meetings with the employee in the first week.**

9.5. Month 1

9.5.1. The line manager should meet with their new team member at the soonest opportunity to set **SMART** objectives (**Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound**) to outline the expectations in their role. Objectives should be added to the employees performance page in Horizon.

9.5.2. Objectives should be in place by the end of the first month at the latest, however the line manager should still meet with their employee at the end of the first month regardless, to check on their progress, identify any needs they may have and to review their welcome checklist.

9.6. Month 3 – Probation Review Meeting

9.6.1. The line manager should hold the **first probation review meeting** at the end of the third month to discuss progress and provide feedback against the objectives set at the end of the first month to ensure the employee is 'on track' and check whether the employee has any additional needs.

9.7. Month 6 – Final Probation Review Meeting

9.7.1. The line manager should hold the **final probation review meeting** at the end of month six. Where probation has been successful the line manager should confirm the employee in post. (See [Confirming in Post](#) in this policy).

10 Confirming in Post

10.1. Employees whose performance, conduct and attendance meet the expected standards will be confirmed in post at the end of their probation period.

10.2. The line manager should inform the employee they have successfully completed their probation period at the final probation review meeting and record the final review electronically on Horizon. Once all the necessary stages have been completed on Horizon, the People Directorate will approve and release a confirmation letter to the employee.

11 Unsatisfactory Performance, Conduct or Attendance

11.1. Attempts should always be made to resolve minor concerns in one-to-one conversations during the probation period. However, where the line manager has identified performance, conduct or attendance concerns that fall below the required expectations and standards, and a one-to-one meeting has not resolved the concerns, the line manager reserves the right to hold an early review meeting. The meeting should be held promptly and confidentially between the line manager and employee with no other member of staff present. The employee does not have the right to be accompanied at an early review meeting.



11.2. *Line managers must not wait to address concerns. It would be reasonable for an employee who reaches their final probation review without any concerns brought to their attention, to expect to pass their probation successfully. If a line manager has concerns, they must raise them at the earliest opportunity in the probation period.*

11.3. The following are examples of unsatisfactory performance, conduct and attendance, although this list is not exhaustive:

- a) Performance, conduct, or attendance falls short of the required standard but is not considered to be so unsatisfactory that the contract of employment needs to be terminated.
- b) Absence (for any reason) that has affected the line manager's ability to make a fair assessment.
- c) Failure to achieve performance, conduct or attendance objectives set during the probationary period.
- d) Poor timekeeping.
- e) Inability to follow university policies and procedures.
- f) Poor standard of customer care.

11.4. The early review meeting should be a collaborative, two-way discussion providing the employee opportunity to respond.

11.5. At the meeting the manager should:

- a) Be clear with the employee about the specific concern(s) and what improvements need to be made.
- b) Be clear with the employee that the improvements must be significant and sustained over a period of time, and prior to the final probation review meeting.
- c) Confirm if the probation period will be extended (see also [Extending the Probation Period](#) in this policy).
- d) Confirm the final probation review meeting date.
- e) Agree any support or intervention required to assist the employee with meeting the required improvement if appropriate (including training).

11.6. Following the meeting the manager should:

- a) Record details of the meeting on the employee's performance page in Horizon.
- b) Confirm all the points discussed in writing to the employee.
- c) Continue to monitor the employee's performance, conduct or attendance maintaining regular one-to-one contact and continuing to hold formal probation review meetings where appropriate prior to the final probation review meeting.

11.7. If, during the review meeting, it is brought to the attention of the manager that the employee has or may have a disability, the manager should refer to the Occupational Health Referrals section within this policy and procedure, and where appropriate, ensure that reasonable adjustments are implemented, and effectiveness assessed.

12 Misconduct

12.1. If during the probation period, an employee's conduct is deemed by the line manager to be so serious that the contract of employment needs to be terminated, they should bring this to the attention of their People Directorate representative immediately (See also [Dismissal Decision Procedure](#) in this policy).

13 Extending the Probation Period

13.1. Extension of the probation period does not have to wait until the end of the probation period and the line manager should also consider this as part of the early review.

13.2. Where the line manager considers it to be appropriate action, the probation period can be extended for up to three months and in exceptional circumstances for up to six months. Before proceeding further, the line manager should contact their People Directorate representative to agree the next steps.

13.3. The details of the probation extension and the discussion had at the early review meeting, and the date of the final probation review meeting should be confirmed by the line manager in a letter to the employee, the content of which should be agreed with their People Directorate representative. A copy of the letter should be saved to the employee's file and the details of the extension recorded on the employee's performance page in Horizon.

14 Final Probation Review Meeting

14.1. If the employee has successfully made the required improvements set out at the early review meeting and the line manager is satisfied that their employee should complete their probation period, they should inform them of the outcome at their final probation review meeting (see also [Confirming in Post](#) in this policy).

15 Unsuccessful Completion of the Probation Period

15.1. Where it becomes apparent that the employee is unable to make the required improvements or meet the targets set, and it is evident they will be unable to reach the required standards by the end of the probation period, the line manager should contact their People Directorate representative and recommend dismissal (see also [Dismissal Decision Procedure](#) in this policy).



15.2. Where the manager is recommending dismissal, they must act swiftly and discuss the next steps with their People Directorate representative without delay, prior to the end of the review period. Sensitivity to the impact on the employee is vital.

15.3. The University will ensure that the employee is given the right to be accompanied at any meeting which may result in their dismissal and to be given written notice of the meeting and the right of appeal.

16 Dismissal Decision Procedure

16.1. Dismissal may be recommended at any point during the probation period for the following reasons:

16.1.1. Where the employee's performance, conduct or attendance fall below the required expectations and standards. Where the employee is unable to make the required improvements or meet the targets set and it is evident, they will be unable to reach the required standard that is expected of and required for their role and grade as per their job description or person specification, by the end of the probation period.

16.1.2. Where an employee's performance, conduct or attendance is considered serious enough that the contract of employment should be terminated with immediate effect, usually without notice or payment in lieu of notice (summary dismissal). Where dismissal is with notice, it will normally be paid in lieu.

17 Dismissal Decision Meeting

17.1. The Dismissal Decision Meeting will be conducted by the relevant decision maker (see also [Appendix C: Decision Making Authority](#) in this policy). The employee will be invited in writing to attend a Dismissal Decision Meeting, at which their performance and/or attendance and/or conduct within their probation period to-date will be discussed and at which they may be dismissed. The employee will have the opportunity to present any mitigating circumstances that they wish to be considered.

17.2. A representative from the People Directorate will attend the meeting and a note taker may also be present. This meeting should take place without undue delay and with reasonable notice.

17.3. The employee may be accompanied at the Dismissal Decision Meeting by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or an official employed by the trade union. (see [Right to be Accompanied](#) in this policy).

17.4. The meeting will go ahead in the absence of the employee if they fail to attend and have not provided prior notice.

17.5. Following the meeting the decision maker should discuss the outcome with their People Directorate representative before taking further action.

17.6. The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed both verbally and in writing to the employee without undue delay. Where the outcome is dismissal, the effective date of dismissal will also be confirmed. If the employee is not required to work any period of notice, pay in lieu of notice will be provided instead, except in the case of summary dismissal (termination with immediate effect without notice or payment in lieu of notice). The employee will be offered the right to appeal against dismissal (see [Appeals](#) in this policy).

18 Covert Recording of Meetings

18.1. The employee and anyone accompanying the employee, are prohibited from making covert audio recordings of any meetings conducted under this procedure. The covert audio recording of meetings will be regarded as misconduct.

18.2. Except where the audio recording of a meeting is requested as a reasonable adjustment by the employee, the university will not make audio recordings of any meetings conducted under this procedure.

19 Right to be Accompanied

19.1. An employee may be accompanied at a Dismissal Decision Meeting or Appeal Meeting under the Probation Policy and Procedure by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or an official employed by the trade union. The employee must inform the decision maker conducting the meeting and the People Directorate representative who their chosen companion is, in good time before the meeting takes place.

19.2. If the companion is not available at the time proposed for the meeting, the meeting will be postponed and rearranged at a date and time proposed by the employee that is both reasonable and no more than seven calendar days after the date originally proposed.

19.3. Acting as a companion is voluntary and colleagues are under no obligation to do so. Employees are allowed reasonable time off from duties without loss of pay to act as a companion.

19.4. A companion should not answer questions on behalf of the employee but may make representations and ask questions and sum up. The employee and companion may talk privately at any time during the meeting.

19.5. Typically, an employee would not be accompanied by a relative or partner, however at the university's discretion, the employee may be allowed to bring a companion who is not an employee or trade union representative if this is deemed reasonable, for example, where this will help overcome a disability or significant health condition, or where the employee has difficulty understanding English.

20 Appeals

20.1. If an employee wishes to appeal the dismissal decision, they should appeal in writing, within seven calendar days of the date on the dismissal letter, stating the grounds for appeal. The appeal hearing would not usually be a complete re-hearing of the case and therefore, the employee must be specific about the grounds for appeal as these will form the agenda for the hearing.

20.2. The appeal should be addressed to the person named in the outcome letter and copied to the People Directorate representative involved in the case.

20.3. The appeal hearing will take place without undue delay and the employee provided with seven calendar days' notice, in writing, of the date, time and place of the meeting. The appeal hearing will be conducted by the relevant decision maker (see [Appendix C: Decision Making Authority](#) in this policy). A representative from the People Directorate will also attend, and a note taker may also be present. The employee has the right to be accompanied at the hearing (see [Right to be Accompanied](#) in this policy).

20.4. The date on which dismissal takes effect will not be delayed pending the outcome of the appeal. However, if the appeal is successful the employee will be reinstated with no loss of service or pay.

20.5. Following an appeal, the original decision may be confirmed, revoked, or replaced with a different decision. The final decision will be communicated to the employee in writing

without undue delay, within seven calendar days. The appeal decision will be conclusive and there will be no further right of appeal.

21 Other Policies

21.1. Overlapping Grievances

If an employee raises a Grievance which is not linked to the Probation Policy and Procedure, it will typically be heard separately and without delaying the Probation Policy and Procedure.

If an employee raises a Grievance which is linked to the Probation Policy and Procedure, it will typically be heard as a relevant issue in the course of the Probation proceedings.

21.2. Reasonable Adjustments Guidance

Guidance on Reasonable Adjustments can be found on the university's staff portal.

21.3. Menopause Guidance

Information and Guidance on the Menopause for staff and line managers can be found on the university's staff portal.

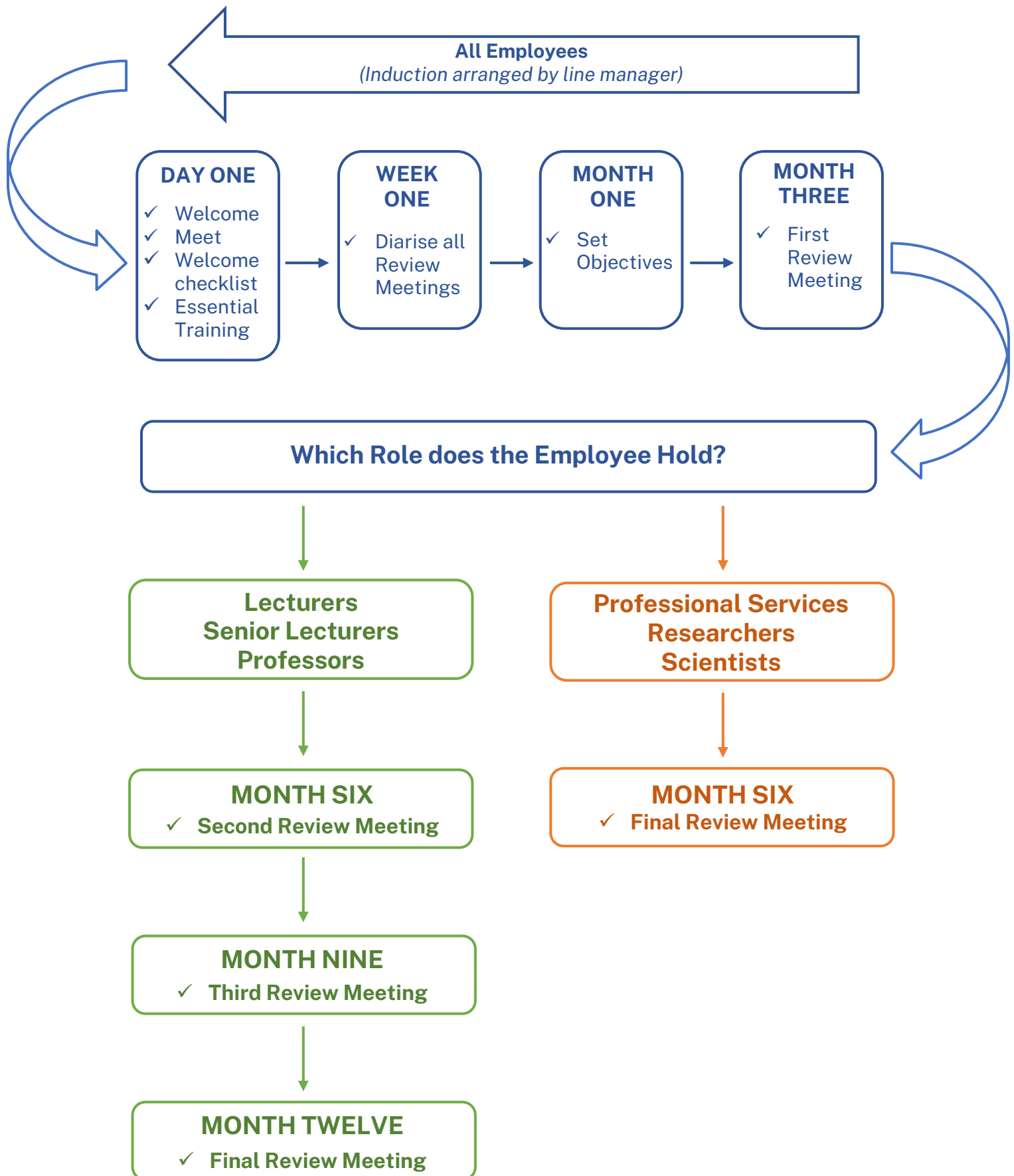
21.4. Appraisal Policy and Procedure

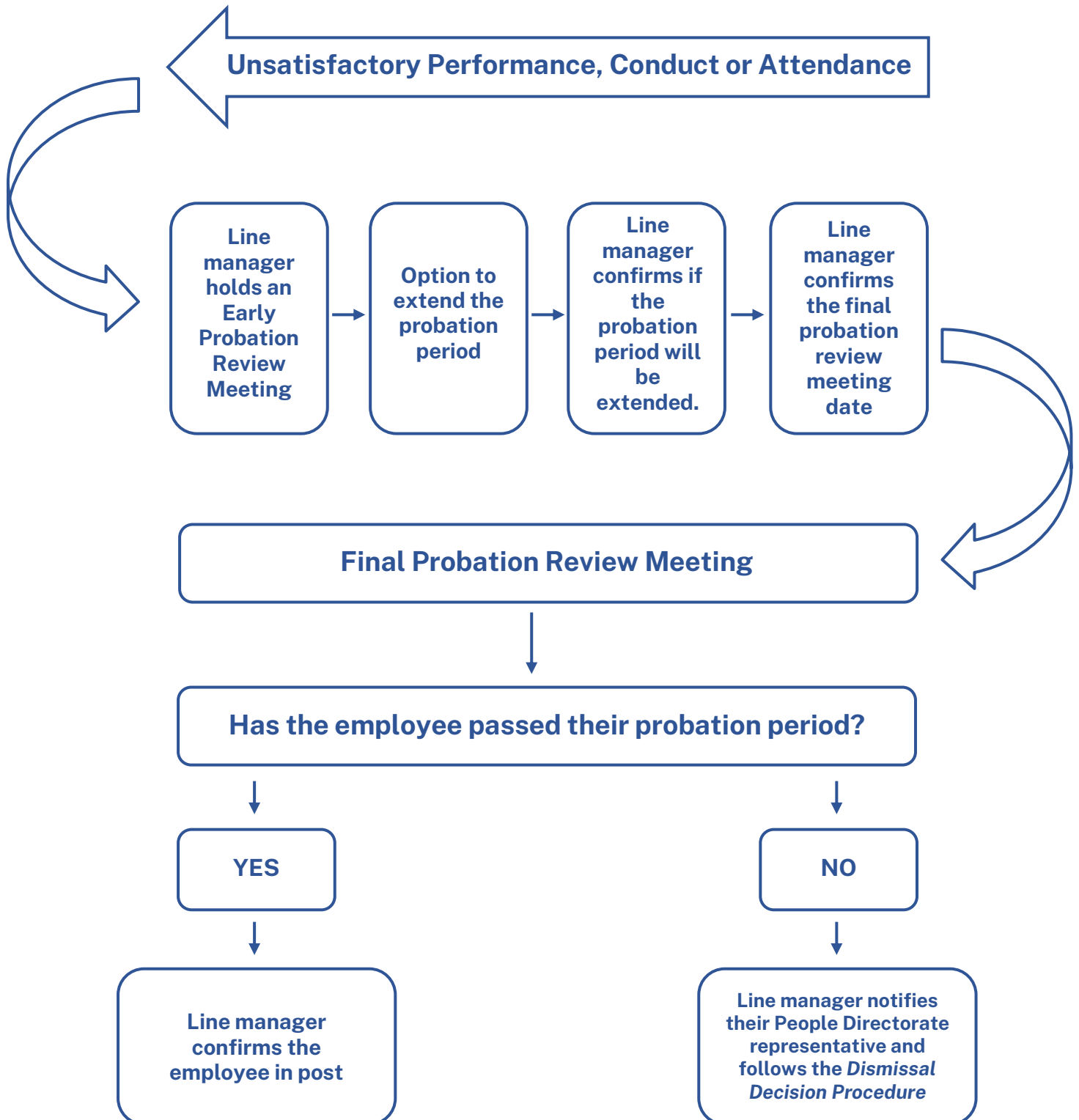
Guidance on the appraisal process can be found on the university's staff portal.

21.5. Professional Teaching Qualification and Recognition Policy

This policy for academic staff can be found on the university's staff portal.

22 Appendix A: Probation Process Flow Chart



23 Appendix B: Unsatisfactory Performance, Conduct, Attendance Flow Chart


24 Appendix C: Decision Making Authority

The tables below set out who is responsible for conducting meetings and appeals at the formal stages of this policy and procedure, dependent upon where the employee works within the university.

Professional Services Directorates, Vice-Chancellors Office, Secretariat and Greenwich Research and Enterprise (GRE)

Dismissal During Probation	
Dismissal Decision Meeting Conducted by	Appeal Heard by
Executive Director	Vice Chancellor or Nominee

Faculties

Dismissal During Probation	
Dismissal Decision Meeting Conducted by	Appeal Heard by
PVC	Vice Chancellor or Nominee

**Where cases involve professional services staff within Faculties, Faculty Operating Officers (FOO) can undertake duties assigned to Deputy Dean or Associate Dean.*

Member of Vice Chancellor Group (VCG)
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Dismissal During Probation	
Dismissal Decision Meeting Conducted by	Appeal Heard by
Vice Chancellor	Governor

N.B. for some employees on senior management contracts, certain employment procedures have been incorporated into the contract of employment.

This policy will be reviewed regularly.

Version No.	Purpose/Change	Author	Approved By	Date
1.0	First Draft	Vanessa Roots Senior Workforce Policy Officer	JNC	25/10/2023