

Probation Policy & Procedure

Policy · UK · Updated 2026-07-23 · Square brackets are placeholders to replace with your own details.

A probation policy sets out how an employer uses probationary periods: how long they last, what new starters must demonstrate, when reviews happen, and the procedure for confirming, extending, or ending employment at the end. It turns probation from a date in a contract into a managed process with evidence behind whatever decision is made.

Probation fails as a tool when it is passive — six months elapse, nobody says anything, and a marginal hire becomes a long-term problem by default. The value is in the reviews: honest, recorded conversations held early enough that the person can improve, or the business can act while acting is still straightforward.

This template includes probation terms, a review schedule, and step-by-step procedures for extension, non-confirmation, and passing.

Purpose and scope

This policy sets out how probationary periods work at [Your company] for all new employees [and, if you use them, employees moving into significantly different roles]. Its purpose is a fair, evidenced decision about confirming employment — made actively, not by lapse of time.

Policy statement

Every new employee serves a probationary period stated in their contract. During it, [Your company] gives real feedback at set reviews, provides the training the role needs, and acts promptly when the match is not working. No probation end date passes without a recorded decision.

Probation terms

- Length: [three/six] months from the start date, stated in the offer letter and the written statement of particulars.
- Notice during probation: [number] week(s) on either side, always subject to statutory minimums — check current guidance.
- Benefits that begin on confirmation: [list, e.g. enhanced company sick pay, benefit schemes]. Statutory entitlements, such as annual leave accrual, run from day one regardless.
- Probation may be extended once, by up to [length], using the procedure below.

Responsibilities

- Managers: set objectives in week one, hold every review on time, record them, and raise concerns when they first appear — not at the final review.
- New starters: engage with the induction plan, raise obstacles early, and act on feedback.
- [HR/owner role]: track review dates, quality-check outcomes, and make sure no end date passes undecided.

Reviews during probation

1. Week one: the manager sets and records [number] objectives, the standards expected, and the training the person will receive — linked to the new starter induction checklist.
2. Mid-point review ([timing]): a recorded one-to-one against each objective. Say plainly whether the person is on track; if not, record what must change, the support offered, and the check-in dates agreed.
3. Between reviews: brief check-ins every [frequency], with concerns raised as they arise, not saved up.
4. Final review (at least [number] weeks before the end date): assess the evidence against the objectives and recommend one of three outcomes — confirm, extend, or do not confirm.
5. Record every review on the [form/system]. An unrecorded review cannot support any later decision.

Extending probation

Extension is for genuinely incomplete evidence — long absence during probation, a changed role, or improvement underway but unproven. It is not a way to defer a difficult decision. To extend: meet before the original end date, explain the specific gaps and what must be demonstrated, and confirm in writing the new end date, the objectives, and the support provided. An extension is valid only if confirmed before the original period expires.

If probation is not passed

1. Check the file first: were objectives set, reviews held, concerns raised, and support given? If the record is thin, take advice before proceeding.
2. Invite the employee, in writing, to a meeting at which non-confirmation of employment will be considered [state whether you offer the right to be accompanied].
3. At the meeting, set out the evidence, listen to their response, and adjourn before deciding.
4. Confirm the outcome in writing, with the reason, the notice arrangements, and any [appeal] route you offer.
5. Complete the leaver steps under the exit procedure, then debrief internally: was this a hiring miss, an induction miss, or a management miss?

Passing probation, records and review

Confirm successful completion in writing promptly: congratulate the person, confirm the date, and list what changes — the notice period, [benefits]. The confirmation letter matters as much as the difficult ones; people remember whether anyone noticed they passed.

Objectives, review records, and outcome letters are kept on the personnel file in [system/location]. This policy is reviewed [frequency] and after any disputed probation outcome. Owner: [name/role]. Next review: [date].

How to use this template

1. Match this policy to your contracts first — probation length and notice must say the same thing in both documents.
2. Choose a length that fits the learning curve: three months suits most operational roles, six suits roles that take longer to evidence.
3. Put the review dates in the manager's calendar on day one — missed reviews are the single most common failure.
4. Write the objectives for each role once and reuse them, editing per hire, so week one never starts from a blank page.
5. Decide whether you offer accompaniment and an appeal at non-confirmation meetings, and state it in the policy rather than deciding case by case.
6. Audit outcomes each year: if everyone passes by default, the reviews have stopped doing their job.

Official guidance

- › [GOV.UK — Employment contracts and conditions](#)
- › [ACAS — Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures](#)

This template is provided in good faith and for general information — it is not legal advice. Adapt it to your organisation and, where your sector carries specific legal requirements, have the finished document reviewed by a qualified adviser. The live version at <https://trainedteam.com/templates/probation-policy> is kept current; this file is a snapshot.