

Probation Termination Letter

Letter · UK · Updated 2026-08-09 · Square brackets are placeholders to replace with your own details.

A probation termination letter is the written notice that an employee has not passed their probationary period and that their employment is ending — it states the reasons for the decision, the notice period and last day of employment, final pay including accrued holiday, and the route to appeal.

Most probation dismissals that end badly go wrong at this stage: the underlying decision was defensible, but the letter announced it cold, stated reasons the reviews never mentioned, or got the notice and final pay wrong. The letter's job is to record — accurately and without drama — a decision the employee has already heard in person at a meeting.

This template gives you the full letter with every placeholder marked, the checks to run before sending it, how notice, final pay and accrued holiday work, and how to deliver and file it.

When to use this letter

Use this letter when a fair probation process has run its course and the decision is not to confirm employment: objectives were set, reviews happened and were recorded, concerns were raised early enough to act on, and a meeting has been held at which the employee heard the evidence and responded. The letter is the record of that decision — it cannot substitute for the process.

It is not the right tool for everything that goes wrong during probation. Gross misconduct is a disciplinary matter — use the disciplinary policy and its letters. And if the honest position is that the evidence is incomplete rather than negative, extend probation instead — see the probation extension letter.

What to check before you send it

- A meeting came first. Acas guidance treats dismissing someone during probation as a last resort and expects a fair procedure — tell the employee the concerns, meet, listen to their response, and adjourn before deciding. A termination letter that arrives cold is the classic sign of a process that did not happen.
- The file supports every reason you are about to state: objectives from week one, recorded reviews, and the support offered. If the record is thin, pause and take advice — the letter cannot be stronger than the evidence behind it.
- None of the reasons touch a protected characteristic, pregnancy or maternity, a whistleblowing disclosure, a health and safety complaint, or the employee asserting a statutory right. Claims like these need no qualifying service — they are day-one rights — so short service is no protection at all if the reason is tainted.
- You are not relying on short service as a shield. The qualifying period for ordinary unfair dismissal is being reduced under the Employment Rights Act 2025 — check the current position and commencement dates on GOV.UK before assuming a probationer cannot claim.
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The notice arithmetic is right: the employee gets the longer of their contractual notice and the statutory minimum, which applies once they have a month's service — current amounts are on GOV.UK. Pay in lieu of notice only if the contract allows it; if there is no pay-in-lieu clause, take advice first.

- Extension is not the honest answer. If the evidence is genuinely incomplete — long absence during probation, a changed role — extend rather than dismiss, and confirm it before the original end date.

The letter template

[Send on [Your company] letterhead or from a company email address. Delete the bracketed guidance before sending.]

Date: [date]

Dear [employee name],

Re: Outcome of your probationary period

I am writing following our meeting on [date], at which we discussed your performance during your probationary period and explained that ending your employment was being considered. The concerns were set out for you in advance and you had the opportunity to respond [, accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative if you wished]. Having considered what you said, I am sorry to confirm that [Your company] has decided not to confirm your employment, and your employment will end.

The reasons for this decision are: [state the specific reasons — for example, the objectives set at the start of your probation that have not been met, with the examples discussed at your reviews]. These concerns were raised with you at [review dates] and, despite the support provided — [training, coaching, additional supervision] — the standard required to pass probation has not been reached.

Your last day of employment will be [date]. This reflects your notice period of [number] week(s) under your contract [or the statutory minimum, if that is longer]. [You are required to work your notice as normal. / You will be paid in lieu of notice, as your contract allows, and your last working day is [date].]

Your final pay will be made on [date — the normal payroll date] and will include your pay up to your leaving date and payment for [number] days' accrued but untaken holiday[, less any deductions your contract permits — these will be itemised on your final payslip]. Please return all [Your company] property, including [laptop, pass, keys, uniform], by [date].

If you believe this decision is wrong, you may appeal. Write to [name/role] within [number] working days of receiving this letter, setting out your grounds. The appeal will be heard by [name/role — someone not involved in the original decision, so far as the size of the organisation allows], and you may be accompanied by a colleague or a trade union representative.

Thank you for your efforts during your time with us. I am sorry it has not worked out, and I wish you well for the future. If you have any questions about this letter or your final pay, please contact [name/role].

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

[Job title], [Your company]

Notice, final pay and holiday

- Notice: the employee gets the longer of their contractual notice and the statutory minimum. The statutory minimum applies once they have a month's service, whatever the contract says — check the current amounts on GOV.UK rather than quoting from memory.
- Working the notice: decide whether the employee works it or is paid in lieu where the contract allows, and state which in the letter, with the exact last day.
- Final pay: Acas guidance is that a leaver should get their final pay on the date they are normally paid. Itemise every payment and deduction on the payslip so nothing needs explaining afterwards.
- Holiday: statutory leave accrues from day one, and GOV.UK is explicit that untaken statutory holiday must be paid when employment ends — even where someone is dismissed for gross misconduct. If the employee has taken more holiday than they accrued, deduct it only if the contract permits.

Offering an appeal

The Acas Code of Practice recommends giving employees the opportunity to appeal a dismissal decision, and this template offers one. During probation an appeal is cheap insurance: it puts a second pair of eyes on a decision that carries day-one legal risk, and it catches a flawed process internally rather than in a tribunal claim. Have the appeal heard by someone not involved in the original decision where the size of [Your company] allows, keep the timetable short — [number] working days to appeal, a hearing within [number] days — and confirm the appeal outcome in writing.

Delivery and record-keeping

- Give the letter in person at the end of the meeting or send it promptly afterwards — the same day where possible — by [email and post to the employee's confirmed address].
- Keep a copy on the personnel file together with the objectives, review records, and meeting notes it rests on. If the decision is ever challenged, this bundle is the defence.
- Trigger the leaver steps at the same time: payroll instruction, system access, property return, and handover — see the exit and leaver procedure.
- Debrief once the dust settles: was this a hiring miss, an induction miss, or a management miss? A failed probation is data — use it.

How to use this template

1. Hold the meeting before you write anything — invite the employee in writing, set out the concerns, listen, and adjourn before deciding. This letter records the outcome; it is not the process.
2. Check the probation file supports every reason you state: objectives, recorded reviews, and the support given. If the record is thin, take advice before sending.
3. Work out notice — the longer of the contract and the statutory minimum on GOV.UK — and only pay in lieu if the contract allows it.
4. Fill in the reasons using what was actually said at the reviews and the meeting; no reason should appear for the first time in this letter.

5. Ask payroll to calculate final pay and accrued holiday for the normal pay date, itemised on the final payslip.
6. Deliver it in person at or straight after the meeting, follow up by [email/post], and file a copy with the review records.

Official guidance

- › [Acas — Dismissal during the probation period](#)
- › [GOV.UK — Dismissal: notice periods and pay](#)
- › [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-termination-letter-template> is kept current; this file is a snapshot.