

# Probationary Policy

**Board Approved: January 2019**

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## Context

* V Learning Net (hereafter referred to as VLN) is committed to providing a smooth and supportive working environment. It is VLN’s policy to require all new members of support staff to undertake a period of probation when they commence employment.
* The probationary period is six months and operates in conjunction with the induction and initial training offered to new employees.
* This policy is intended to allow both the employee and their Line Manager to assess objectively whether the individual is suitable for the role. This includes, and is not restricted to: attendance, performance, conduct and satisfactory pre-employment checks,
* Concerns will be addressed at an early stage with support measures put in place. Should the required improvements not be made the probationary period may be extended or if performance remains unsatisfactory termination of employment may be considered.

1. **Purpose**
2. This policy is intended to support and guide staff and enable managers to manage employee performance and conduct in a way which is fair and consistent.
3. The Employee’s performance will be monitored and supported by their Line Manager. The employee is expected to fully contribute to the process. During this period the employee should be able to:

* Understand VLN and their own role
* Understand the expectations, standards, behaviours and job tasks required for their role and how to fulfil these
* Reach a level of performance which is satisfactory to VLN.

1. **Scope**

* This procedure applies to all permanent and fixed term support staff in the Trust.
* Employees with prior service in other educational establishments and other local government employers will be required to undertake a probationary period with the Trust.

1. **Procedure**

**Structured Probationary Review Meetings**

During the six months probationary period, three formal meetings between the Employee and Line Manager should take place to discuss the employee’s progress.

**Meeting One: Within First Two weeks of Employment**

* Soon after an employee commences in the role, the Line Manager should formally meet with the employee and set standards of performance and conduct required.

**Meeting Two: Three months Employment Assessment**

* This meeting is half way through the probationary period and therefore a good opportunity to a review progress and make future objectives.

**Meeting three: Five months Employment Assessment**

* This meeting is towards the end of the probationary period and as such could be the final review to consider the overall performance during the first 6 months of employment.

A record of performance and progress should be completed.

Regular informal meetings between the line manager and employee are encouraged. The Employee should reflect on their own performance and raise any concerns. The Line Manager should make note of all meetings and agreed actions and copies of formal review meetings to be placed in the employee personnel file.

## Confirming a Satisfactory Probation period

Towards the end of the probationary period the final review meeting is to consider the overall performance. Should the employee’s performance be deemed as satisfactory, successful completion of their probationary period will be confirmed in writing.

1. **Concerns during a Probationary period**

* Where concerns become apparent they will be raised at the earliest opportunity with the aim of supporting the employee to improve their performance or conduct.
* The employee should be made aware that should the required improvements not be made their employment may be terminated.
* The Line Manager will seek advice from the CEO

1. **Extending a Probationary period**

* The maximum extension of probation period is up to a further 3 months, to further enable the employee to attain the required standard.
* The employee should be made aware that if the required improvements are not met their employment may be terminated.
* Towards the end of the extension a final review meeting will take place. Should performance be deemed satisfactory the employee will receive written confirmation of the successful completion of their probationary period.
* Where probation has been extended a salary increment will not be awarded.
* Confirmation of satisfactory probation period is also subject to complete paperwork being entered into the personnel file.

1. **Terminating Employment during the Probationary Period**

* To give the employee the fullest opportunity to meet the required standard VLN’s policy is to allow the employee to complete the designated period of probation.
* If there is clear evidence or information that comes to light that may be so serious as to call into question the employee’s suitability for the role, VLN may convene a hearing and terminate the employment prior to the end of the probation period. Suspension may be considered pending investigation.
* The employee will be invited to attend a probationary hearing. The outcome of the hearing will be confirmed in writing to the employee within a reasonable timeframe.

1. **Right of Appeal**

* An employee may appeal against a decision to dismiss. The employee must set out the grounds of their appeal, in writing, to the CEO within five working days of receiving the written confirmation of dismissal.
* The appeal will be heard by the Board of Trustees. The decision of the board is final and there is no further right of appeal.
* A letter confirming the decision will be sent to the employee within a reasonable timeframe.