1. **Purpose**

Outline Probation Process applicable to all new Support staff.

2. **Description**

This policy applies to all newly-appointed permanent and temporary support staff (Administrative, Technical, Library and General Operative). The appointment of staff members covered by this policy is subject to a satisfactory probationary period of 12 months. Where the contract is for a fixed term less than 12 months, the duration of the contract will be considered part of the probation period – see Figure 1 for Probation Period Timeline.

Existing members of staff who are promoted or transferred within the University and have not completed their initial probation period will be required to complete the remainder of the original probation period under the new contract. The appointment will not be confirmed until the original period has been successfully completed.

Human Resource Business Partners are available to provide professional advice and support at all stages of the process.

**Figure 1 Probation Period Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day One</td>
<td>Line Manager Commences Induction Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week One</td>
<td>Induction Completed and Objectives set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month One</td>
<td>Informal Review Meeting with Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month Three</td>
<td>Informal Review Meeting with Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month Five</td>
<td>Mid Term Review Meeting. Form Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month Seven</td>
<td>Informal Review Meeting with Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month 10</td>
<td>Final Probation Review Meeting. Report Completed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.1 Induction

On the commencement of the new staff member, the Line Manager and the new staff member review the job description and ensure the new staff member understands the tasks and responsibilities of the job. The new staff member’s objectives will be set out clearly and any initial training needs identified. The Line Manager will then organise an Induction Program introducing the staff member to the key people/ units they will be dealing with. This should be completed within week one of the appointment and should be followed by an informal review meeting at week 4.

2.2 The Mid-Term Review

After a 5-month period, a formal process of assessment of the staff member’s performance/capabilities commences. The Line Manager will submit a mid-term review form to the Human Resources Office. It should be borne in mind that the Induction Process, as outlined in the Induction Policy, will have been on-going ahead of this review. Any early issues/development needs will have been identified and steps taken to address them at the induction and informal review stages.

Approximately four weeks prior to mid-term, the Human Resources Office reminds both the Line Manager and the staff member of the upcoming review. The Line Manager and Staff Member will separately complete a Probation Form (see attached). At least two weeks prior to the mid-term review meeting, the Staff member will submit his/her form to the Line Manager. As well as establishing that the staff member has been properly introduced to the job and the University, the questions on the form will help the manager and staff member focus on performance, training needs and other required supports.

2.3 The Review Meeting

The Line Manager and the staff member will meet at an agreed time and venue to discuss the issues raised on the forms. The discussion should be centered on:

- The Induction Process to date;
- Progress and planned developments in relation to each element of the job;
- Actions agreed to be taken by either party.

At the end of the meeting, a completed version of the Probation Report Form which will include an action plan, must be completed and signed by both parties. Both parties will retain a copy. The Line Manager must inform the HR Office, in writing, within two weeks that the meeting has taken place and enclose a copy of the Mid-term Review Report signed by both parties.

Where particular development needs or serious performance difficulties have been identified, the Line Manager must write formally to the staff member highlighting these areas. The Line Manager will consult with the Human Resources Business Partner prior to issuing this letter. This
letter will emphasize the actions that need to be taken and the implications, should no satisfactory improvement take place, which could include termination of contract. This letter should be copied to the HR Office.

Support will be given to the staff member between the mid-term and final probation review. It may be appropriate to hold another review meeting between the mid-term and the final review meeting. In this case, the same procedures as outlined above will apply.

### 2.4 Final Probation Review

A **final review** of the staff members’ performance takes place after a 10-month period and a Probation Report is submitted to the HR Office. In addition, it is also important for informal review meetings to be held between the member of staff and Line Manager at 3-month and 7-month intervals. The final assessment meeting will be followed by confirmation in post unless issues have been raised in terms of performance or compatibility.

The final review should take place **eight weeks** before the end of the probationary period.

Approximately four weeks prior to this date, the HR Office will send a reminder email to the Line Manager and the staff member who will separately complete a form and exchange them at least two weeks prior to the final review meeting.

In completing the forms, the Line Manager and staff member should focus on the outcomes of the Mid-Term Review and any other issues that may have arisen in the meantime.

### 2.5 The Final Review Meeting

The Line Manager and the staff member will meet at an agreed time and venue to discuss the issues raised on the forms. The discussion should be centered on:

- The Mid-Term Review Report;
- Progress and planned developments since the Mid-Term Review;
- Actions agreed to be taken by either party;

At the end of the meeting, a completed version of the **Probation Report Form**, must be completed and signed by both parties who will retain copies. The form will include a record of any actions agreed and one of three possible recommendations:

- the appointment should be confirmed; OR
- the appointment should be terminated in accordance with NUIG procedures; OR
- the probationary period should be extended for a further period;

*Extensions of probation should only be recommended for a period not exceeding six months to allow for continued improvement and only in exceptional circumstance approved by the Human Resources Office.*
The Line Manager must inform the HR Office in writing within two weeks that the meeting has taken place and enclose a copy of the report signed by both parties.

The Director of Human Resources or designated Senior Human Resources Manager will review the file and either approve or reject the recommendation. Where the confirmation of appointment is recommended and approved, the HR Office will write to the staff member formally noting the outcome and confirming their appointment to NUI Galway.

Where termination of appointment is recommended and approved, the HR Office will write to the staff member formally noting the outcome and initiating termination procedures in accordance with this policy.

In exceptional circumstances a Probationary Period may be extended for a limited period with specific objectives set for the end of that period. The HR Office must be informed of the intention to extend and consulted where there are particular training needs to be met. If a staff member is absent from work due to leave in excess of the normal annual leave entitlements, the probation period may be extended to take account of this absence period. The staff member must be informed of the extension by the Line Manager on his/her return to work.

Where an extension is recommended and approved, the HR Office will write to the staff member:

- noting the reasons for extension
- offering appropriate help and support, if necessary
- stating the possible outcomes at the end of the extended probation (i.e. confirmation of employment or termination.)

To encourage discussion and feedback during the extension period a further mid-extension review will be required, as well as a final end of extension probation report. The procedures as outlined above to be followed again.

If the recommendation is rejected, the Director of Human Resources or designated Senior Human Resources Officer will meet the Line Manager to discuss the case and agree appropriate action. The action agreed will depend on the individual circumstances of the case. The HR Office will write to the staff member formally notifying them of the outcome.

Either party may terminate the employment during, or at the end of, the probationary period. The staff member is required to give notice as set out in their conditions of service. If the University is terminating the employment, then the staff member will be aware of the reasons for this, after having had an in-depth discussion with the Head of School.

Please note: The dates for review are outlined in the Contract of Employment and should be led by the Line Manager/Head of Section.
## 3. Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director of HR &amp; Organizational Development</td>
<td>Policy Owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>Read Terms and conditions of employment policies and procedures. Meet with Line Manager on a regular basis. Complete Probation Review Forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line Manager</td>
<td>Meet with Employee at regular intervals. Carry out Induction. Set goals and objectives. Arrange Probation Review Meetings. Complete Probation Forms and return to HR. Consult with HR where necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources Office</td>
<td>Advise Managers and staff on application of the probation policy. Record probation period and send notifications to employee and line manager. Record Probation decision on staff file</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 4. Related Documents

- [Probation Report Form](#)
- [Staff Handbook](#)
- [Induction Videos](#)
- [Staff Training Website](#)