



GMAT POLICIES

Probationary Period Guidance

Greater Manchester Academies Trust

Revision Information

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Introduction

The purpose of a recruitment and selection exercise is to employ the best person for the post in question. The Trust believes that probationary periods are a part of this process and provide a structured framework within which the suitability of a newly appointed employee can be assessed and evaluated.

A probationary period also provides a structured framework to ensure that any newly appointed employee is inducted into the school and understands the requirements of the post, to enable them to contribute to the Trust's overall aims, objectives and values.

The purpose of a probationary period is therefore to:

- Inform the employee of the standards that are expected of them in terms of performance, attendance and behaviour
- Allow for monitoring and assessment of suitability against pre-determined criteria such as the job description, person specification etc.

- Provide for support and assistance in helping the employee to meet the required standards by identifying any difficulties that may become apparent in relation to the duties and responsibilities of the post
- Identify and provide for any short-term developmental needs

In addition, the probationary period is also an opportunity for the new employee to identify and raise any concerns that they may have in relation to their understanding of the requirements of the post and the values and culture of the Trust.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees newly appointed to Greater Manchester Academies Trust (GMAT), including temporary and fixed term appointments with a contract of 12 weeks or longer.

This policy specifically excludes:

- I. Trainee teachers who are covered by separate probationary arrangements aligned to their recruitment scheme e.g. Schools Direct
- II. Casual employees
- III. Agency staff

The Policy

All new employees to GMAT will be subject to a probationary period of 6 months. During the probationary period, the Trust will supervise and support new employees so that they understand the standards expected of them in terms of their performance, attendance and behaviour.

Where problems arise during the probationary period, the Trust will support the employee to rectify these issues. In order to give the employee a full opportunity to come up to the required standards, the line manager will usually wait until the end of the probationary period before taking a decision to not confirm the appointment. However, if there is clear evidence to suggest that the employee is wholly unsuitable for the role, the line manager should consult the Principal/Head with a view to early termination.

During the probationary period, a high level of attendance at work is particularly important in order to meet and maintain the required level of performance. During the probationary period, the employee will not have access to the Trust's standard sickness and absence policy and pay. Neither will they be entitled to the Trust provision of a flexible day for personal circumstances.

At the end of the 6 month probationary period:

- the employment will be confirmed; or
- the employment will not be confirmed and the contract will terminate

The Procedure

During the first week of employment (or as soon as practicable thereafter if this is not possible), there will be an initial meeting between the line manager and the probationary employee. The purpose of this initial meeting will be:

- to describe how the probationary process operates
- to discuss and clarify standards and expectations, including any job specific targets
- to agree provisional dates for review meetings
- share the criteria that will be reviewed at the meetings
- to give the employee an opportunity to ask any questions

During the 6 month probationary period, at least two formal probationary reviews will take place between the line manager and the probationary employee at appropriate intervals.

Wherever practicable, these reviews should take place at the end of the third month and the fifth month. It is particularly important that the final review takes place before the end of the 6 month period so that a decision can be made about the outcome of the probationary period, before this period ends.

Each review should be well documented by the manager and standard documents are contained in the manager's guidance document to assist. Again, this documentation should be shared with the employee at the end of each review meeting.

First Review

The first review should take place at the end of the third month of employment. This meeting should assess progress since commencement of employment. Where performance, attendance or behavioural issues have become evident, then these should be

Second Review

The second review should take place no later than the end of the fifth month of employment. This review should focus on progress and performance during the whole probationary period and explain the transition from the probationary period into a continuous development process which will be managed through the performance management framework and routine supervision processes.

Where the manager is not satisfied that the employee has achieved the standards expected of them in terms of performance, attendance and/or behaviour during the probationary period then this should be discussed at length with the employee who should be given the opportunity to respond.

Where the manager remains dissatisfied then the employee must be told that they have failed to reach the required standards of performance, conduct and/or attendance required for their position, and that they will be invited to a Formal Final Review Meeting in order to reach a decision about their continued employment status with the Trust.

Formal Final Review Meeting

The employee should be invited in writing to attend the meeting, allowing 5 working days notice to prepare. The letter should:

- state the reasons why they have fallen short of the required standards; and
- advise them that a possible outcome of the meeting could be the decision not to confirm them in post following their probation period and termination of their employment

The employee will have a right to be accompanied at the meeting by a work place colleague or trade union representative, if they so wish.

The meeting will be chaired by the Principal/Head or another member of SLT and they may be assisted by a HR Adviser.

At the meeting the line manager who has been involved throughout the probationary period will provide the Chair with:

- the reasons for considering non-confirmation of appointment
- discuss in detail the evidence and provide examples of the problem / issues

The Chair will ensure that:

- the employee and/or their representative is allowed to respond to the concerns and to ask any questions
- due consideration has been given to issues of equality and diversity and any other issues pertinent to the individual case

The Chair will then adjourn the meeting for consideration to be given to all the evidence and for a decision to be taken.

The Chair's decision should be conveyed to the employee the same day and confirmed in writing. The employee should also be informed of their right to appeal, against the decision to terminate their contract, to the Governing Body. The appeal should be lodged within 10 working days of receipt of the letter confirming the decision.

The employee should be informed of the final date on which they will be required to work. Ordinarily the employee will not be expected to work their one weeks' notice; instead a payment will be made in lieu.

The line manager should notify the Finance and Admin Team as soon as possible so that appropriate documentation can be issued and no overpayments occur.

Guidance

This policy and procedure should be read in conjunction with the Manager Guidance notes.