



Banc Ceannais na hÉireann
Central Bank of Ireland
Eurosystem



Human
Resources

Probation Policy

Applicable to: All Employees

Policy Owner: HR Advisory Manager, Human Resource Division

Document History

Document Location

The most current version of this policy is available on the HR Site on Plaza. Paper copies are valid only on the day they are printed. Refer to the owner if you are in any doubt about the accuracy of this document.

Revision History

This document will be reviewed from time to time to take into account changes in legislation, organisational developments and experience of the policy in practice.

Date of this Revision:		Date of next Revision:
Revision Number	Revision Date	Summary of Changes
V1	April 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information added on Grievance/Dignity at work Procedure for New Entrant Probationary Employees - Changes to process on termination of employment
V2	December 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information added on suspension of probationary period due to absence arising from protective leave
V2	December 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change of probation cycle from existing 2, 4, 6 month sequence to 3 & 6 month sequence
V3	May 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change of probation period duration template - Information added to Reverting to Previous Grade following Promotion, point vi, vii, viii

Approvals

This document requires the following approvals:

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Distribution

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Unite Union		June 2014
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1. Introduction

This policy sets out the guidelines and processes to be followed in relation to the application of a probationary period for employees on appointment and promotion within the Central Bank of Ireland (the Central Bank).

2. Objective

A probationary period is a specified period of time during which an employee's overall suitability for a role is formally assessed. Probation is intended to be a positive, collaborative process which provides an opportunity to allow:

1. The newly appointed or promoted employee to integrate into the role and/or organisation;
2. For a fair assessment of an employee's performance, behaviour and overall suitability to the role and;
3. A recommendation in relation to the employee's suitability for continued employment is made by the line manager.

3. Scope

The Probation Policy applies to all employees on probation (either on new appointment or promotion within the organisation).

4. Policy Details

4.1 Duration of the Probationary Period

- i. A probationary period of **six months** will apply which, in restricted circumstances, may be extended to no more than **ten months** in total. Any extensions are at the discretion of the Central Bank.
- ii. A shorter probationary period will apply for employees appointed to a short fixed term contract as outlined in Table 1. Probation extensions will apply to short-term contracts on an exceptional basis only, at the absolute discretion of the Central Bank.
- iii. In all cases, the probationary period provided for in the employees' terms and conditions of employment applies.

Table 1: Probationary Period Duration

Contract Duration	Probationary Period Duration
≤6 month duration	2 month probationary period
>6 but < 12 month duration	3 month probationary period
≥ 12 month duration	6 month probationary period

4.2 During Probation

- i. The line manager is required to hold regular review meetings during probation with the employee, at which feedback on the employee's performance and progress should be discussed, and any learning and development needs should be identified where appropriate.
- ii. Probation progress reports are issued by the Human Resources Division (HRD) at approximately two and a half months and five and a half months. These intervals will vary for those completing a shorter probationary period.
- iii. The line manager is required to chair each meeting and complete these reports thereafter in a fair and objective manner. Reports must be signed-off by local management (usually Deputy Head level upwards or equivalent as stated on the report). The employee is provided with a copy of each progress report for discussion and sign off.
- iv. The final meeting must be held prior to the final progress report being returned to HRD by the date indicated on the report. It is the responsibility of local management to ensure meetings are held and probation reports are issued to HRD by the specified deadlines.
- v. Employee requests for internal transfers will not be facilitated during the probationary period.

4.3 Dealing with underperformance during probation

- i. Where performance is below standard, or there are other issues for concern, the employee should be advised at the earliest possible stage including specific task or behavioural examples.
- ii. The line manager will provide feedback and reasonable support in order to help the employee to reach the expected standard.

- iii. Similarly, the line manager should advise the HR Advisory Manager or his/her nominee of any concerns at the earliest possible stage. HRD will provide guidance and support to line managers on how best to manage the situation.

4.4 At the End of Probation

The line manager is required to make a recommendation prior to the end of the probationary period on:

- i. whether the individual has **successfully completed probation** and will be offered continued employment;
- ii. whether the probationary period should be **extended**,
- iii. whether the individual has **not successfully completed probation** which could ultimately lead to the termination of their employment contract or reversion to a previous grade where an employee was promoted

5. Outcomes of the Probationary Period

5.1 Successful completion of probation

Where the final progress report recommends continued employment, HRD will issue a letter to the employee to confirm successful completion of the probationary period, and the continuation of employment to the grade and/or organisation as appropriate will be confirmed.

5.2 Extension of Probationary Period

For employees completing a six month probationary period, the Central Bank reserves the right to extend the probation to no longer than ten months where it considers it appropriate to do so.

Probation extension does not automatically apply in any case and will only be applied where the Central Bank considers it appropriate. Where the final progress report recommends an extension of the probationary period, the employee will be advised in writing as to the reasons for the extension, the period during which these concerns must be addressed and the consequences of failing to do so. HRD will issue this written notification following consultation with the line manager.

In cases where an employee is absent from work on protective leave such as Maternity Leave or Adoptive Leave, the probationary period shall be deemed to be suspended for the duration of the absence and shall be completed by the employee on return to work from such absence. This may

also apply in other cases of significant or frequent absence during the probationary period due to long term illness.

5.3 Termination of Employment

Where the final progress report recommends termination of employment the employee will be given no less than one week's notice or as stated in the terms of employment, and the following process will apply;

- i. The line manager or local management representative, and a representative from HRD will hold a meeting with the employee to advise him/her of the recommendation and the reasons for it. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the probation recommendation and to allow the employee the opportunity to respond to the issues raised in the probation reports and the recommendation.
- ii. The employee will be entitled to be accompanied by a work colleague or Union representative at the meeting.
- iii. Following this meeting, the line manager/local management representative will consider all information and confirm a final decision in writing to the employee.
- iv. Should the decision be to terminate employment, the employee will have the right to appeal to the Employee Relations Manager. Any such appeal should be made in writing within three working days of receipt of issue of notice.
- v. The Central Bank reserves the right to pay in lieu of notice.

5.4 Reverting to Previous Grade following Promotion

Where the final progress report recommends a reversion of an employee to their previous grade due to underperformance in the new role during probation, the employee will return to his/her previous grade (including terms and conditions) and the point on that grade's scale which was effective immediately prior to promotion. This can occur at any stage during the probationary period and will be subject to one week's notice. (This will not apply in cases where the reason for termination is of a disciplinary nature.)

On receipt of the final progress report not recommending the person for the new role, the following process will apply:

- i. The line manager or local management together with a representative from HRD will hold a meeting with the employee to advise him/her of the recommendation and the reasons for it.
- ii. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the probation recommendation and to allow the employee the opportunity to respond to the issues raised in the probation reports and the recommendation.
- iii. The employee will be entitled to be accompanied by a work colleague or Union representative at the meeting.
- iv. Following this meeting, the line manager or local management will consider all information and confirm a final decision in writing.
- v. Should the decision be to return the employee to his/her previous grade, the employee will have the right to appeal to a senior member of the Employee Relations Unit (Any such appeal should be made in writing within three working days of receipt of issue of notice.
- vi. The nature of the position to which the employee reverts and the date, will be determined by the line manager or the relevant business area. It will be the responsibility of the line manager to source a suitable role for the employee. The nature of the position should be discussed with your HRD representative.
- vii. Subsequently, it is the line manager's responsibility to update HR Support of any employment details change, such as role title, grade, salary, effective date of change.
- viii. Upon receipt of these details, HR Support will issue a letter to the staff member informing them of the contractual changes with the effective date of change.

6. Grievance/Dignity at Work Procedure for New Entrant Probationary Employees

The Central Bank's Grievance Procedures, Disciplinary Procedures and Dignity at Work complaint procedures do not apply to probationary employees.

An employee who is on probation on appointment to the Central Bank's employment (as distinct from being on probation on promotion) may raise a formal grievance or complaint on any matter related to their employment, such as working relationships or the application of terms and conditions of employment in accordance with the following procedures only:

- i. The employee will submit the complaint in writing to the relevant line manager/supervisor. The line manager/supervisor will meet with the employee to investigate the matter and thereafter issue a decision in writing on the matter, normally within 5 working days of receipt of the written complaint. Where it is not appropriate for the direct line manager/supervisor to investigate, the matter should be referred to the relevant HR Business Partner who will arrange for an alternative line manager/supervisor to investigate.
- ii. If the employee is still dissatisfied following the investigation, they may notify the relevant HR Business Partner that they want to appeal the decision. Notification of appeal must be in writing and sent to the relevant HR Business Partner within 2 working days of the decision. The HR Business Partner will then arrange for an appropriate HRD or other colleague to hear the appeal. The appeal decision will subsequently be confirmed in writing and issued to the employee, normally within 5 working days of receipt of the notification of appeal from the employee.
- iii. The employee may be accompanied by a colleague or a recognised trade union representative at any meetings in this process.
- iv. The Central Bank will not continue to process complaints/grievances where the employee's employment has been terminated.
- v. In certain circumstances, e.g. where a complaint/grievance is raised by a probationary employee in contemplation of being, or after having been, informed that they are not recommended for permanent appointment, the Central Bank reserves the right to place the probationary employee on special leave with pay for the purposes of facilitating an investigation.
- vi. For the avoidance of doubt, probationary employees may raise grievances or complaints using this procedure only. However, where an employee is confirmed as having successfully completed probation then the appropriate procedures for raising grievances/complaints or Dignity at Work matters are the Central Bank of Ireland **Grievance Procedure** and; the Central Bank of Ireland **Dignity at Work: Appropriate Workplace Behaviour policy**.

7. Procedure for Dealing with Misconduct for New Entrant Probationary Employees

The Central Bank of Ireland Disciplinary Procedure will not apply to new entrant probationary employees. In cases of alleged misconduct against a new entrant probationary employee, the following procedure will apply:

- i. The employee will be informed of the allegation(s) in writing and requested to attend a meeting of a disciplinary nature with an impartial line manager and HR representative
- ii. The employee will be advised of their right to be accompanied at the meeting by a colleague or a recognised trade union representative and advised that the outcome of the meeting could result in any of the following:
 - a. **Final written warning** of dismissal, with or without extension of probation;
 - b. **Dismissal** with notice for misconduct
 - c. **Dismissal** without notice for serious misconduct
- iii. The employee will be given an opportunity at the meeting to respond to the allegation(s).
- iv. Following the meeting the employee will be advised in writing of the outcome.
- v. The employee will have the right to an appeal meeting with a more senior manager accompanied by a HR representative. Any request for an appeal should be notified to HR within **2 days of receipt** of the written outcome.
- vi. The outcome of the appeal will be communicated in writing.
- vii. The Central Bank reserves the right to place the probationary employee on special leave with pay during all stages of this procedure.

Key Areas of Responsibility under this Policy

Employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that he/she understands the terms of the probationary period. ▪ Comply with all processes and procedures under the policy. ▪ Seek early clarification on any aspect of their role requirements and performance as necessary.
Line Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Confirm that the employee understands the terms of the probationary period. ▪ Comply with all processes and procedures under the policy. ▪ Ensure that employees on probation are provided with necessary training and support. ▪ Outline the key objectives of the role and the expected standard of performance and behaviour. ▪ Provide regular and timely feedback on performance and progress. ▪ Identify any concerns or shortcomings in performance or behaviour at the earliest possible stage. ▪ Work with the employee to identify reasonable supports that might facilitate improvements.
Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and monitor the policy in line with best practice and stakeholder needs. ▪ Ensure that blended learning solutions are available to support the effective implementation of the policy. ▪ Provide guidance and support for line managers as required.