

## **Entrance Probation versus Performance-Related Probation**

Classified staff serve a six-month **entrance probation** period to give both the University a chance to evaluate that employee's likelihood of success and to give the employee a chance to determine if he or she is in the right job. It is very important for supervisors to provide clear expectations, guidance, training and be available to help the employee learn the job. Sometimes, even when we do this, we discover that the employee is just not meeting our expectations. We encourage supervisors to provide frequent counseling, advising and verbal warnings to an entrance probation employee and to document those discussions. HR does not recommend a letter of warning, reprimand or other discipline short of termination for an employee on entrance probation.

In some unique circumstances, entrance probation can be extended. Because this extends an employee's ability to become certified in a position, we should only use it in limited circumstances – usually when an employee has not had the opportunity to receive sufficient training for a position.

### Guidelines for Extending Entrance Probation

- Employee missed a month or more of work due to illness or other acceptable reason
- Employee training was unavailable and additional training and time will likely lead to the employee successfully passing probation (Note: a supervisor's failure to ensure available training was delivered does not count).
- The job is so technically complex that any individual in the job deserves additional time for the supervisor to be able to evaluate performance (Note: this assumes the supervisor has been working closely with and evaluating the employee's performance along the way and has the documentation to back it up)

Entrance probation should not be extended because a supervisor failed to adequately supervise or review and evaluate the employee's work during this period. If it becomes clear that the employee is not likely to work out, it does both the employee and the University a service to end that relationship. Do not wait until the sixth month because processing and notice time require us to make the determination by about the five month mark.

**Performance-related probation** or "**probation**" as it is more commonly referred, is typically 90 days in length with a formal review at 30, 60 and 90 days. It typically is used when an employee needs a reasonable period of time to turn a work performance issue around and prove it through measurable criteria. This type of probation should come with clearly identified and specific problem areas and clear expectations of what is required and by when. APM 50.21 (C-1) provides guidance on what to include. Although we want to separate the connection between a Professional Development Plan and discipline or corrective action, the components of a PDP (expectations, desired outcomes, timelines) are useful with a probation letter.

An employee put on probation must be told that failure to meet the expectations outlined in the probation may result in a notice of contemplated action for dismissal.

Probation is typically the last chance arrangement for an employee failing to meet expectations. Probation periods typically last 90 days but may be ended earlier with language in the probation letter that creates this option. Probation is not required prior to contemplating dismissal.

HR typically does not recommend probation for behavioral issues because they should be corrected immediately or within a short period of time, and then sustained indefinitely.

If you do not intend to or cannot commit to conducting a formal review at each 30 day mark (or sooner), do not consider probation as an option. These reviews are required.

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