

PROBATIONARY REPORTING PROCEDURES

1. PROBATION PERIOD

A new entrant to the Civil Service will normally be required to serve a period of probation. This is normally of 6 months duration and during this time the civil servant's work and conduct will be carefully assessed.

- 2.** The minimum requirement for the successful completion of probation is that the civil servant must have demonstrated that he has the capacity to fully meet the normal standards/requirements of the post or grade concerned. Also that his attendance record and conduct must have been satisfactory. For certain posts it may be necessary for the Civil Service Commission to lay down additional requirements such as the need to show progress towards obtaining specified qualifications even if these will not be obtained during the probationary period.
- 3.** Details of any probationary period and any additional requirements will be clearly stated in the job offer letter, a copy of which is sent to the Reporting Officer concerned.
- 4.** The Civil Service Commission may waive the requirement for a civil servant to serve a period of probation where it considers it appropriate to do so.

5. PROCEDURE

A Performance & Development Review (PDR) probationary report should be completed on each civil servant on probation after -

- 3 months
- 6 months

An additional report should only be completed between 3 and 6 months' service if the civil servants' performance or conduct shows, or has shown, cause for concern and a report is considered necessary either by the department in which the civil servant works or the Office of Human Resources.

A copy of the PDR summary sheet (excluding the incremental section) should be submitted to the department's Senior Nominated Officer and Office of Human Resources within 3 weeks from the end of each reporting period.

- 6.** A PDR probationary report can be completed and submitted to the department's Senior Nominated Officer and Office of Human Resources at any time if performance or conduct warrants it.
- 7.** The jobholder should contribute to each PDR probationary report and have the opportunity of a PDR meeting. At the meeting performance should be discussed as should progress of any resolutions.
- 8.** Civil servants on probation do not also need to have an annual PDR report completed on them.
- 9.** The PDR paperwork must be used for all reports on civil servants who are subject to probation.

10. MONITORING PROBATION

Reporting Officers must ensure that new entrants who are on probation are made fully aware of the purpose of probation and the standards of performance, attendance and conduct expected of them.

Effective monitoring of probation is essential and Reporting Officers should ensure that: -

- a) the performance and development review of a probationer is a continuous process throughout the probationary period and regular checks are made on his work, attendance and conduct
- b) probationers are kept fully informed as to their progress and where necessary given support and/or guidance
- c) early consideration is given to a probationers training and development needs
- d) when a PDR probationary report is due, the Countersigning Officer discusses the probationers progress with him, taking into account the comments made by the Reporting Officer.

11. PERFORMANCE, ATTENDANCE, CONDUCT GIVES CAUSE FOR CONCERN

If a probationer's performance, attendance or conduct begins to give any cause for concern, informal oral or formal written warnings should be given at the earliest reasonable opportunity. The warning **MUST** provide a clear indication of what improvement(s) are needed to reach the required standards and of the consequences if this is not achieved within the required period and sustained. (Refer to 12 below if the cause for concern does not occur until the last few weeks).

If the cause for concern continues, a formal written warning should be issued and **MUST** clearly state the nature of shortcomings, the improvement required, the period over which this will be monitored and finally that termination of the appointment may have to be considered if the required standards are not achieved within that period. Occasionally at this stage and depending on circumstances consideration should be given as to whether a change of duties or Reporting Officer is appropriate.

12. EXTENSIONS OF PROBATION

As a period of 6 months is adequate to make an assessment on a probationer's suitability for employment, extensions of probation will be rare.

An application to extend a period of probation must be referred to the Secretary of the Civil Service Commission. If the Secretary is satisfied that there is a reasonable prospect that the probationer will achieve the required standard, an extension may be granted. If granted, an extension of probation will not be more than 3 months and during that period the Secretary may ask that monthly reports are submitted.

Where problems with performance, conduct or attendance only arise in the last few weeks of the probationary period, a warning should be given as soon as possible and if considered appropriate, an extension of the probationary period should be sought.

If the Accounting Officer believes that unsatisfactory attendance is due to a medical condition which is not expected to recur, he may seek an extension to allow time for the civil servant to show that he is capable of regular attendance.

Where an application to extend probation is to be made, the probationer **MUST** be informed in writing by the Accounting Officer as to the reasons for it.

13. ILL HEALTH

If it appears that ill health may be a factor in unsatisfactory performance or attendance, the Secretary of the Civil Service Commission should be informed in writing as soon as possible so that early advice can be obtained from the Commission's Medical Adviser. The procedure for doing this is set out in the Civil Service Regulations.

The Secretary must also be informed where there is concern that the issue of a warning will have an adverse effect on a civil servant's health.

Refer to 12 above if a medical condition which is not expected to recur has resulted in an unsatisfactory attendance record.

14. RECOMMENDATION TO TERMINATE AN APPOINTMENT

Before making a recommendation to terminate an appointment, the Accounting Officer must ensure that the probationer has been given every assistance and encouragement to improve their record and to establish the reasons for not meeting the required standards.

If a probationer fails to meet the required standards after warnings have been issued and is not expected to make sufficient improvement, the Accounting Officer may recommend to the Civil Service Commission, via its Secretary, that the appointment be terminated either before or at the end of the probationary period by completing an Adverse report. Refer to Annex B for an Adverse report format.

15. CONSIDERATION BY THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION - HEARING

- a) A probationer who is informed by his Accounting Officer that he has recommended to the Commission that his appointment should be terminated, may make a written submission to the Commission within 7 days of being informed. The civil servant must also forward a copy of the written submission to his Department's Accounting Officer.
- b) The Commission will then invite the probationer to be interviewed to discuss the recommendation to terminate his appointment. The Accounting Officer will attend to answer questions about the recommendation unless the probationer informs the Commission and his Accounting Officer in writing that he will not attend the interview. Accounting Officers may delegate their requirement to attend the hearing to a senior officer for the purposes of paragraph 15 b.
- c) The probationer will be given every opportunity to discuss the reasons for his unsatisfactory performance and may be accompanied at the interview by a friend of his choice (who may be either a work colleague or a staff association representative).
- d) The Commission, having considered the recommendation and any oral or written submissions from the probationer, may terminate the appointment if it is satisfied that the probationer has failed to meet the required standards (as detailed in paragraph 2 and 12).

- e) A probationer who is dissatisfied with the decision of the Commission to terminate his appointment may appeal against that decision to the Civil Service Appeal Tribunal in accordance with the Civil Service Appeals Rules 1992 at Annex B4.

16. NOTICE PERIOD UPON TERMINATION

A civil servant whose appointment is terminated for failing probation will be given the minimum period of notice as set out in Regulation **A 20**.

In the case of a civil servant on a fixed term contract, the notice periods will be as stated in the contract.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Advice on any aspect of probation can be obtained from the Employee Relations Advisers in the Office of Human Resources.