

Procedure for Managing Lecturers'¹ Probation Period

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¹ For the purposes of this guidance Lecturer refers to all Clinical and Non Clinical Lecturers and Senior Lecturers unless otherwise specified

Introduction

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the [Annex to the Appendix to the Ordinances - Annex H Academic Appointments Containing a Probation Period](#), which covers all Lecturers and Senior Lecturers on probation. In the event of conflict the Ordinance will have precedence.

Length of the Probation Period

Lecturer (except Clinical Lecturer) and Senior Lecturer appointments are usually probationary for three years. Within Imperial College Business School, Assistant Professor appointments² are probationary for three years.

For more experienced staff who have held equivalent appointments at other universities previously, Heads of Department can consider a shorter probation period, normally a minimum of one year.

Clinical Lecturer appointments are usually probationary for one year. As they are not normally recognised as 'academic career' posts, appointments are normally fixed term due to the training nature and funding of such posts.

The probation period also applies to existing College employees who are newly appointed as Lecturers from another staff group e.g. Research staff despite the fact that their employment with the College remains continuous.

Requirements of the Probation Period

Lecturers are expected to carry out specific duties and development activities during their probation period, details of these are set out within [Appendix A](#), and to develop the appropriate teaching, research, clinical (where appropriate) skills, and contribution to departmental activities in order to demonstrate their suitability for confirmation of appointment.

The probation period enables the new Lecturer's performance to be monitored regularly and allows any problems to be discussed and dealt with at an early stage.

Formal reviews must take place mid-way through the probation (Mid-Probation Review) and near the end of the probation period (End of Probation Review).

For a standard three year probation period, the Mid-Probation review should take place no later than the fifth term (20th month) of service and the End of Probation review no later than the penultimate term (32nd month) of service.

Where the Lecturer is on a fixed term contract and the contract expiry date coincides with the end of the probation, the probation review must still be conducted and written confirmation of the outcome provided.

² Within Imperial College Business School, Lecturers and Senior Lecturers are known as Assistant Professors

At the Start of the Probation Period

As part of the induction, the line manager should meet with the Lecturer at the start of the probation period to discuss the requirements of the job, expectations of what should be delivered during the probation period and any appropriate support and learning and development requirements for the new job. This should include:

- the name of the Academic Adviser if not previously notified in their contract (HR should also be informed);
- [Imperial College Essentials](#) (Essentials) training requirements, which are to be completed during the lecturer's first six months of service.
- the specific duties to be undertaken in the first academic year;
- any special arrangements for academic staff and/or educational development in the department;
- expectations of activity and activity levels in subsequent years

Following the meeting, the line manager should forward a brief record of the discussion to the Lecturer and copy this to the Academic Adviser and HR.

The Role of the Academic Adviser

All new Lecturers should be assigned an Academic Adviser. Within the Faculty of Engineering only, Academic Advisers are not compulsory for Senior Lecturers.

Academic Advisers have a vital role to play during the new Lecturer's probation period. They should be someone with whom the Lecturer can discuss any question or issue.

The responsibilities of an Academic Adviser can be found at [Appendix B](#).

If the Lecturer considers that the relationship with their Academic Adviser is unsatisfactory, they should discuss the matter with their line manager in the first instance who, in turn, should raise the matter with the Head of Department. An alternative Academic Adviser may be appointed if this is thought to be the best outcome. HR should be informed of any change.

Reviews during the Probation Period

The line manager should meet with the Lecturer informally between reviews (ideally once a month) to discuss work and give advice and guidance on progress.

Before each term, the line manager should discuss with the Lecturer the specific duties expected during that term. Following the meeting, they should forward a brief record of the discussion to the Lecturer and copy this to the Academic Adviser. Every effort must be made to provide a varied workload and to give adequate time to develop teaching, research, and (where appropriate) clinical skills and contribution to departmental activities.

The Head of Department should consult regularly with the line manager and Academic Adviser (who will provide reports) about the Lecturer's progress during their probation.

Learning & Development

New Lecturers should be encouraged, and given the fullest opportunity, to develop appropriate and relevant skills. This includes undertaking professional development for their role and all mandatory courses as outlined in their contract of employment.

New Lecturers are required to complete the training requirements contained within Imperial Essentials during their first six months of service.

All new Lecturers must complete their Faculty's learning and teaching development programme within the Probationary Period as a minimum pre-requisite for successfully passing the Probationary Period.

It is a College requirement that all staff with responsibility for supervising PhD students complete the online course; [Fundamentals of supervising PhD students](#). Depending on the level of previous supervisory experience of the new member of staff, the individual may also wish to attend the face-to-face complementary workshop offered by the Educational Development Unit called [Introduction to supervising PhD students at Imperial](#).

In addition to the courses on learning and teaching, certain management and equality-related courses are also compulsory and Lecturers will be notified of these by either their line manager, HR, Organisational Development and Inclusion, or the Educational Development Unit. The College also offers an extensive range of staff development opportunities designed to assist the new Lecturer. These include courses to develop personal skills. Information about staff development opportunities is available from the member of staff responsible for staff development in each Department as well as from Organisational Development and Inclusion: <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/staff-development>. Safety training is of vital importance and some specialist programmes are mandatory. Details can be found at: <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/safety>.

Annual Review Conversations (ARC)

It is College policy for Lecturers to have an [Annual Review Conversation \(ARC\)](#). Objectives should be in line with probation requirements and provide a good opportunity to review progress and career plans. Organisational Development and Inclusion is able to advise on any staff development issue that may arise during the ARC.

Clinical Senior Lecturer ARC's should be conducted jointly by the Head of Department and the Clinical Lead from the NHS Trust. [As part of a separate exercise, an online job plan for the coming year should be agreed and signed off by all parties and a copy forwarded to HR.]

Clinical Lecturer ARC's should be conducted jointly by the Head of Department and an appropriate NHS Trust representative or Postgraduate Deanery representative if the post requires a National Training Number (NTN) and will count towards specialist training. The Head of Division/Department should forward a report to HR.

The Academic Adviser (where appropriate) should be consulted in advance of the ARC and provide a report to inform the process.

Mid-Probation Reviews

HR will notify the line manager when the mid-probation review is due.

The purpose of a mid-probation review is to assess the Lecturer's progress against the objectives set at the start of the probation period/previous formal review(s) and, if appropriate, amend existing objectives or set new objectives for assessment at the next review stage(s).

Mid-probation reviews should be conducted by a Review Panel consisting of the following:

- The Head of Department
- The Head of Group
- The Academic Adviser
- For Clinical Lecturers only - appropriate NHS Trust or Postgraduate Deanery representative if the post requires a National Training Number (NTN) and will count towards specialist training
- For Clinical Senior Lecturers only - Clinical Lead from the NHS Trust

The Lecturer will prepare and give the following information to the Head of Department:

- A copy of their CV;
- An outline of any significant achievements during probation;
- Details of the following that have been undertaken during probation:
 - Teaching activities (including courses given, changes/innovations made, contact hours and examining experience);
 - Research activities (including any research grants/contracts secured, research workers and/or students supervised);
 - A list of research publications indicating which have been published since appointment;
 - Clinical activities (where appropriate);
 - Other contributions to departmental activities (external visibility, management responsibilities/skills, administration/supplementary responsibilities)
 - Courses attended as part of the Faculty's learning and teaching development programme (if applicable)
 - Completion of the online course, Fundamentals of Supervising PhD students.

The Lecturer will be invited to attend the meeting before the panel considers its views.

The Review Panel should consider all the relevant information provided. [Appendix C](#) may also provide a useful prompt for discussion.

Following the meeting, the Head of Department should send a written report to the Lecturer, members of the Review Panel, and HR.

End of Probation Reviews

HR will notify the line manager when the end of the probation review is due.

The purpose of an end of probation review is to assess the Lecturer's activities and performance and to consider whether the appointment should be confirmed.

End of probation reviews should be conducted by a Review Panel consisting of the following (with a quorum of four):

- The Head of Department
- The Head of Group
- The Academic Adviser
- One representative from the panel elected by and from the academic staff of the Department
- For Clinical Lecturers only - appropriate NHS Trust or Postgraduate Deanery representative if the post requires a National Training Number (NTN) and will count towards specialist training
- For Clinical Senior Lecturers only - Clinical Lead from the NHS Trust
- HR representative (for all formal probation reviews in faculties when appropriate)
- Other members who, in Head of Department's opinion, would enhance the review process.

The Lecturer will prepare and give the following information to the Head of Department:

- A copy of their CV;
- An outline of any significant achievements during probation;
- Details of the following that have been undertaken during probation:
 - Teaching activities (including courses given, changes/innovations made, contact hours and examining experience);
 - Research activities (including any research grants/contracts secured, research workers and/or students supervised);

- A list of research publications indicating which have been published since appointment;
- Clinical activities (where appropriate);
- Other contributions to departmental activities (external visibility, management responsibilities/skills, administration/supplementary responsibilities);
- Courses attended as part of the Faculty's learning and teaching development programme (if applicable),
- Completion of the online course, the Fundamentals of Supervising PhD Students.

For Clinical Senior Lecturer reviews, the Clinical Lead will prepare a report for the Head of Department that assesses the Lecturer's performance in undertaking their clinical responsibilities.

The Head of Department, in consultation with the Head of Group, will prepare a report for the Review Panel that assesses the Lecturer's performance and overall contribution, and recommends whether the appointment should be confirmed.

The Lecturer will be invited to attend the meeting before the panel considers its views. Where this might result in an extension of probation or non-confirmation of employment, a formal review meeting should be set up as outlined in the "Recommendation for Extension of Probation or Non-Confirmation of Employment" paragraph below.

The Review Panel should consider all the relevant information provided. [Appendix C](#) may also provide a useful prompt for discussion. The Review Panel should satisfy itself that the Lecturer has been given appropriate guidance and the opportunity to achieve satisfactory performance.

Recommendation for Confirmation of Employment

Following the meeting, the Head of Department should send the following information to HR:

- the names and positions of members of the Review Panel;
- a statement in support of the Review Panel's recommendation;
- details and the Review Panel's assessment, of:
 - Teaching activities (including courses given, changes/innovations made, contact hours and examining experience);
 - Research activities (including details of any grants/contracts secured and any students or research workers supervised);
 - Clinical activities (if applicable);
 - Other contributions to departmental activities (external visibility, management responsibilities/skills, administration/supplementary responsibilities);
- A copy of the Lecturer's curriculum vitae;
- A list of research publications indicating which have been published since appointment;
- confirmation of completion of the Faculty's learning and teaching development programme and any other compulsory management, supervisory and equality-related courses;
- A copy of the Lecturer's Student Online Evaluation questionnaires (SOLE) for the last two years.

HR will then issue a confirmation of probation letter to the Lecturer.

Recommendation for Extension of Probation or Non-Confirmation of Employment

Where concerns about the Lecturer's performance or conduct have been identified which might lead to an extension of probation or non-confirmation of employment, a formal probation review should be conducted by the Review Panel, with support from an HR representative. There is no requirement to wait until the end of the probation period to conduct this review.

HR will write to the member of staff. The letter will include a copy of all the information provided to

the Panel and the Lecturer will be invited to an interview to present their case in person to the Review Panel. The Lecturer should be given no less than ten working days' notice of a formal probation review meeting. They will be entitled to be accompanied by a Trades' Union representative or another member of staff.

The Head of Department should outline the areas of concern with the Lecturer's performance or conduct and confirm the standards of performance required. Consideration should be given to any obstacles that might be preventing the Lecturer from completing their responsibilities in full and any additional training or support that might assist them with meeting the job requirements/required standards.

At the end of the interview the Review Panel may decide to:

- Confirm employment;
- Extend the probation for up to one year to allow time for improvement in performance;
- Issue a formal written improvement notice;
- Not confirm employment.

Following the meeting, HR will prepare a letter confirming the discussion, outlining the reasons for the decision, and, where appropriate, confirming the written improvement notice, contractual notice and/or payment in lieu arrangements (for non-confirmation) and notification of the right of appeal, to the Lecturer, their representative and members of the Review Panel.

It is expected that the Lecturer will have attended at least two ³formal probation review meetings before consideration is given to non-confirmation of employment. However, in the event of serious or gross misconduct, termination of employment may be considered without the need for prior warning. In this situation the meeting will be conducted in accordance with the College's Disciplinary Procedures.

Appeals

In the written notification of a formal written improvement notice, extension of probation or non-confirmation of appointment, the Lecturer will be informed of the name of the person to whom an appeal should be addressed and the time scale for doing so.

The appeal will be conducted in line with the [Annex to the Appendix to the Ordinances - Annex H Academic Appointments Containing a Probation Period](#).

³ These must be formal probation review meetings with an HR representative present where the Lecturer has been given due notice of the meeting and the right to be accompanied.

GUIDANCE NOTE FOR LECTURERS AND SENIOR LECTURERS ON PROBATION

Welcome to Imperial College London. This note is to inform you about your probation period. If you have any questions, please contact the [HR Staff Hub](#).

Length of your Probation Period

This is specified in your contract of employment.

At the Start of your Probation Period

As part of your induction, your line manager will meet with you at the start of your probation period to discuss the requirements of the job, expectations of what should be delivered during the probation period and any appropriate support and training for your new job. This will include:

- the name of your Academic Adviser if not previously notified in your contract;
- [Imperial College Essentials](#) (Essentials) training requirements, which are to be completed during your first six months of service;
- the specific duties to be undertaken in your first academic year;
- any special arrangements for academic staff and/or educational development in the Department;
- expectations of activity and activity levels in subsequent years

Following the meeting, they will forward a brief record of the discussion to you, your Academic Adviser and HR.

The Role of your Academic Adviser

You will be assigned an Academic Adviser. Within the Faculty of Engineering only, Academic Advisers are not compulsory for Senior Lecturers.

Your Academic Adviser is responsible for advising you on your progress and is, generally, someone to whom you may refer. Their role is to meet with you regularly to offer guidance and advice on good teaching practice, curriculum development, the preparation of research applications, the management of research projects, the extent of clinical duties (where applicable) and to provide information on systems and procedures.

Your Academic Adviser will not have managerial responsibilities for you. They will usually be a senior member of the academic staff in your Department but may be from another Department if this is considered more appropriate.

Your relationship with your Academic Adviser is very important. If you find this to be unsatisfactory, you should discuss this with your line manager in the first instance who, in turn, will raise the matter with your Head of Department. An alternative Academic Adviser may be appointed if this is thought to be the best outcome.

Requirements during your Probation Period

You will normally be expected to lecture, give tutorials, supervise research students, be involved in examining students, make satisfactory progress with your research, carry out clinical duties (where

applicable) and contribute to departmental activities (external visibility, management responsibilities/skills, administration/supplementary responsibilities).

You are required to complete the training requirements contained within Imperial College Essentials (Essentials) during your first six months of service.

Your contract sets out the mandatory requirement to complete the Faculty's learning and teaching development programme and any other compulsory management, supervisory and equality-related courses.

It is a College requirement that all staff with responsibility for supervising PhD students complete the online course, Fundamentals of supervising PhD students. Further details about the course and how to enrol are found here: [Cornerstone | Study | Imperial College London](#)

Depending on the level of your previous supervisory experience you may also wish to attend the face-to-face complementary workshop offered by the Educational Development Unit called Introduction to supervising PhD students at Imperial. College London. Further details about the course and how to enrol can be found here: [Introduction to Supervising PhD students | Staff | Imperial College London](#)

The College also offers an extensive range of staff development opportunities designed to assist new Lecturers. These include courses to develop personal skills. Information about staff development opportunities is available from the member of staff responsible for staff development in your department as well as from [Organisational Development and Inclusion](#).

Reviews during your Probation Period

Your line manager should meet with you informally between reviews (ideally once a month) to discuss work and give advice and guidance on progress.

Before each term, your line manager should discuss with you the specific duties expected during that term. Following the meeting, they should forward a brief record of the discussion to you and your Academic Adviser.

You will also have an [Annual Review Conversation \(ARC\)](#). If you are a Clinical Senior Lecturer, your ARC will be conducted jointly by the Head of Department and the Clinical Lead from the NHS Trust. [As part of a separate exercise, an online job plan for the coming year should be agreed and signed off by all parties and a copy forwarded to HR.]

If you are a Clinical Lecturer, your ARC will be conducted jointly by your Head of Department and an appropriate NHS Trust representative or Postgraduate Deanery representative if your post requires a National Training Number (NTN) and will count towards your specialist training. Your Head of Department should forward a report to HR.

Your Head of Department will consult regularly with your line manager and Academic Adviser (who will provide reports) about your progress during your probation.

Formal reviews must take place mid-way through your probation (Mid-Probation Review) and near the end of your probation period (End of Probation Review).

For a standard three year probation period, the Mid-Probation review should take place no later than the fifth term (20th month) of service and the End of Probation review no later than the penultimate term (32nd month) of service.

Mid-Probation Review

The purpose of the mid-probation review is to assess your progress against the objectives set at the start of the probation period/previous formal review(s) and, if appropriate, amend existing objectives or set new objectives for assessment at the next review stage(s).

Mid-probation reviews should be conducted by a Review Panel consisting of the following:

- The Head of Department
- The Head of Group
- The Academic Adviser
- For Clinical Lecturers only - appropriate NHS Trust or Postgraduate Deanery representative if the post requires a National Training Number (NTN) and will count towards specialist training
- For Clinical Senior Lecturers only - Clinical Lead from the NHS Trust

You will normally be asked to prepare information for the Review Panel's consideration (including an up-to-date CV, an outline of significant achievements during probation, details of teaching, research and (where applicable) clinical activities, details of mandatory training completed and contributions to other departmental activities (external visibility, management responsibilities/skills, administration/supplementary responsibilities)). You will be invited to attend the meeting before the panel considers its views. Any issues of concern will be raised with you. You will be provided with a written report following the meeting.

Where concerns about your performance or conduct have been identified which might lead to an extension of probation or non-confirmation of appointment, a formal probation review will be conducted. You will be informed about the appropriate arrangements as necessary.

End of Probation Review

The purpose of the review is to assess your activities and performance and to consider whether your appointment should be confirmed.

End of probation reviews should be conducted by a Review Panel consisting of the following (with a quorum of four):

- The Head of Department
- The Head of Group
- The Academic Adviser
- One representative from the panel elected by and from the academic staff of the Department
- For Clinical Lecturers only - appropriate NHS Trust or Postgraduate Deanery representative if the post requires a National Training Number (NTN) and will count towards specialist training
- For Clinical Senior Lecturers only - Clinical Lead from the NHS Trust
- HR representative (for all formal probation reviews in faculties when appropriate)
- Other members who, in Head of Department's opinion, would enhance the review process.

You will be asked to prepare information for the Review Panel's consideration (including an up-to-date CV, an outline of significant achievements during probation, details of teaching, research and (where applicable) clinical activities, details of mandatory training completed and contributions to departmental activities (external visibility, management responsibilities/skills, administration/supplementary responsibilities)). You will be invited to attend the meeting before the panel considers its views. Any issues of concern will be raised with you.

Where concerns about your performance or conduct have been identified which might lead to an

extension of probation or non-confirmation of appointment, a formal probation review will be conducted. You will be informed about the appropriate arrangements as necessary.

Following the meeting, your Head of Department will send the Review Panel's recommendation to HR.

Where the recommendation is to confirm your employment, HR will send you a confirmation of probation letter.

GUIDANCE NOTE FOR ACADEMIC ADVISERS

Your Role

In conjunction with the new Lecturer's line manager you have a vital role to play during the Lecturer's probation. You will be an adviser, a "friendly ear" and help to oversee the Lecturer's progress.

Your role is to meet regularly with the Lecturer to offer guidance and advice on good teaching practice, curriculum development, the preparation of research applications, the management of research projects, the extent of clinical duties (where appropriate) and to provide information on systems and procedures.

As an Academic Adviser, you do not have managerial responsibilities for the Lecturer, and may be from a different Department to the Lecturer you are advising.

Lecturer (except Clinical Lecturer) and Senior Lecturer appointments are usually probationary for three years. Within Imperial College Business School, Assistant Professor⁴ appointments are probationary for three years. Clinical Senior Lecturers who commenced appointment prior to 1 April 2014 were probationary for five years. Clinical Lecturer appointments are usually probationary for one year.

Specific Duties

- a) To attend a regular number of lectures and seminars given by the Lecturer normally during their first two years of probation, as agreed with the new Lecturer's line manager;
- b) To give guidance on good and innovative teaching practice and provide constructive criticism where appropriate;
- c) To give guidance on curriculum development and course planning;
- d) To give guidance on the assessment of course work and the marking of examinations; to review a sample of the probationer's marking and to give advice accordingly;
- e) To advise the Lecturer on the preparation of research grant and contract applications and the management of grants and contracts;
- f) To advise on effective research student supervision and guidance on appropriate training and support
- g) To advise on the most effective methods of undertaking management and administrative duties which have been given;

⁴ Within Imperial College Business School Lecturers and Senior Lecturers are known as Assistant Professors

To keep the Lecturer informed of any systems, procedures, practices, or developments which may influence how they perform their duties;

h) To liaise with the line manager to ensure that the Lecturer undertakes the Faculty's learning and teaching development programme and any compulsory management and equality-related courses.

i) For Clinical Lecturers and Senior Lecturers only, to advise on the extent of clinical duties.

Formal Review

j) To keep a systematic record of progress and to discuss this openly and frankly with the Lecturer. To alert the line manager if issues of concern are identified;

k) To prepare reports for the line manager and Head of Department for the Mid-Probation and End of Probation Reviews and as requested during the probation period outlining your view of the Lecturer's performance in relation to your specific duties above;

l) For Clinical Lecturers and Senior Lecturers only, to prepare a report for the line manager and Head of Department prior to the Lecturer's Annual Review Conversation (ARC), which will inform the process;

m) In conjunction with the line manager and Head of Department, to be part of the Mid-Probation Review Panel. The Review Panel will assess the Lecturer's progress against the objectives set at the start of the probation period/previous formal review(s) and, if appropriate, amend existing objectives or set new objectives for assessment at the next review stage(s);

n) In conjunction with the line manager and Head of Department, to be part of the End of Probation Review Panel. The Review Panel will recommend if the appointment should be confirmed, the probation period extended or employment terminated.

APPENDIX C

MID-PROBATION/END OF PROBATION REVIEW SUGGESTED AREAS FOR DISCUSSION

The Lecturer's performance in post in relation to:

- Teaching Responsibilities (e.g. approach to student learning, delivery, design, assessment, materials)
- Approach to Research
- Progress in Relation to Publications
- Progress in Relation to Income Generation
- Supervision of PhD and Higher Degree Students including completion of the College's mandatory training requirements
- Clinical Responsibilities (Clinical Senior Lecturers & Clinical Lecturers only)
- External Visibility
- Management Responsibilities/Skills
- Administration/Supplementary Responsibilities
- Are there any factors that are preventing the full duties of the post being performed?
- Is the relationship with the Academic Adviser working satisfactorily?
- Has the Lecturer completed the Faculty's learning and teaching development programme and any compulsory management and equality-related courses?
- Have any other training requirements been identified as part of the probation review process?
- Is the Lecturer on track for confirmation of appointment or are there recommendations for any other actions?