

Education Probationary Review Scheme

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This scheme is applicable to new appointments under the terms of the Education Career Track (ECT). It operates in place of the Interim and Major Review processes for academic staff on the New Academic Career. The purpose of the Education Probationary Review Scheme is twofold; firstly, to support and develop new academic staff members on an educational career pathway at the School and, secondly, to provide a robust process to monitor and evaluate staff members for educational excellence and before confirming permanent employment.

2. Assistant Professors (Education)

- 2.1 Probationary periods will normally be **three years**.
- 2.2 Probationary periods will be automatically extended where periods of parental leave (i.e. maternity/paternity/adoption/shared parental leave) occur during the probationary review period. The extension will be equivalent to the length of the period of leave, up to a maximum of one year. Extensions on the grounds of incapacity due to long-term ill health or disability will be agreed on a case by case basis and the Head of Department should seek advice from their HR Partner in the first instance.

- 2.3 Probationary periods can be reduced at appointment stage where a candidate has considerable previous experience, by agreement between the Head of Department, Director of HR and Vice-Chair of the Appointments Committee (VCAC). The minimum probation period that can be agreed is one year. 'Considerable previous experience' may be evidenced by a sustained track record of teaching excellence, but also by evidence of innovations in teaching and/or of success in addressing pedagogical challenges over a shorter time period.
- 2.4 A probation period will always apply to employees new to LSE. A probation period may also apply to existing LSE staff, usually where the appointment is to a higher level than the current role, (e.g. appointment of an LSE Fellow) or from a non-career track post (e.g. Guest Teacher). Whether a probationary period applies to existing LSE staff will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Head of Department in conjunction with the Vice President and Pro-Vice Chancellor (Faculty Development).
- 2.5 Probation is for a specified period during which the employee develops the appropriate educational and management/leadership skills, with mentoring and other support from the LSE in doing so, and demonstrates their suitability for confirmation of appointment. The probationary period enables the performance of new appointees to be monitored regularly and allows for any shortcomings to be discussed and any problems to be dealt with, in a constructive and collaborative manner, at an early stage. It may also be a means of helping staff to decide that the School and/or post does not match their own career requirements and/or competencies.
- 2.6 All Assistant Professors (Education) on probation will be assigned a mentor. Under the mentoring scheme, the guidelines for which are in a separate document, colleagues receive informal, but structured, help and advice towards meeting their career goals. Moreover, the Education Probationary Review Scheme is focused not only on performance review but also on providing staff with substantive and detailed advice about developing their careers.
- 2.7 It should normally be the case that the appointment is confirmed at the end of the probationary period, but there may be cases where, despite the support provided, the required standard has not been demonstrated. In such cases, the appointment will not be confirmed (see the section 'Failure to pass probation (dismissal process)' for relevant procedure and notice periods).
- 2.8 The Education Probationary Review Scheme is to be followed during the initial stages of employment; it allows for fixed review points at 1 year, 2 years, and 2 years 9 months. Thereafter, those successfully confirmed in post will have access to the Education Career Development Review Scheme (the guidelines for which are in a separate document). Reports arising from Education Probationary Reviews (EPRs) are made available to the VCAC and the Vice President and Pro-Vice Chancellor (Faculty Development) in line with practice for the Education Career Development Review Scheme.

- 2.9 EPR meetings will normally be conducted by the Head of Department, but can be delegated to a representative, e.g. a Deputy Head of Department (Teaching).
- 2.10 The meetings should be developmental and supportive in nature. In addition, concrete and substantive advice about career development goals and objectives should be discussed. However, where the Head of Department, or their nominated representative, feels that there are concerns that may question confidence in the appointment, these should be made clear to the employee in writing and ways to improve performance should be discussed and recorded on the relevant paperwork.
- 2.11 Only matters formally recorded on the EPR form(s) will be seen and discussed by the final Probationary Review Panel. All other matters discussed between the two parties shall remain confidential.
- 2.12 Heads of Department should also ensure that concerns that arise outside of the formal review meetings should be raised with the employee promptly and be noted in the paperwork of the next EPR meeting.
- 2.13 Following the final review meeting at 2 years 9 months, the Head of Department will convene a Probationary Review Panel in the final term of probation. This panel will jointly determine whether the appointment should be confirmed. The panel will comprise:
- The Head of Department
 - Normally, the Vice President and Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education) or, alternatively, the Vice President and Pro-Vice Chancellor (Faculty Development) (Chair)
 - The VCAC
 - An additional Professor or Associate Professor nominated by the department, with a track record of excellence in teaching and/or with teaching or education related matters within their portfolio of duties (e.g. Deputy Head of Department for teaching or Head of Departmental teaching committee)
 - Director, LSE Eden Centre
 - A Professor (Education) who does not have a conflict of interest with the case
- 2.14 Human resources should be advised by the Head of Department of the Review Panel's convening and composition (by email to Hr.Reviewandpromotion@lse.ac.uk).
- 2.15 The Head of Department may request that the Review Panel meet as a paper (email) panel by emailing the Vice President and Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education), the VCAC, and the Eden Centre Director (with copy to Hr.Reviewandpromotion@lse.ac.uk).
- 2.16 Where the majority of the panel are male as a consequence of the required role holders, the professorial member should be female and/or the Head of Department (HoD) can exercise discretion in inviting a sixth member external to the department to sit on the panel.
- 2.17 The panel will make a decision based on the following documentation:

- The Candidate's CV which should have attached a detailed education contribution statement and a detailed education trajectory statement. Candidates are advised to apply the guidance provided in Section 4 of the Guidelines for Promotion of Assistant and Associate Professors (Education) when writing these statements.
- Head of Department's statement/recommendation
- The candidate's PGCertHE status. Normally the successful completion of the PGCertHE Full Fellowship Programme is a requirement for passing probation for staff under the ECT, although this requirement can be waived, in exceptional circumstances, for some individuals upon appointment. The Head of Department's Statement/recommendation should make clear the candidate's PGCertHE status for the panel.
- All complete EPR forms
- Teaching survey results
- Student endorsement letters, if available
- Teaching observation reports conducted by the Department and the LSE Eden Centre, if available
- Any further evidence submitted in support of the candidate's CV that serves to illustrate their contribution, e.g. relevant teaching materials and/or evidence of particular educational developments or innovations.

2.18 These documents should be sent to Human Resources (HR.Reviewandpromotion@lse.ac.uk) who will send them to the Review Panel. Human Resources may also be contacted for advice on the process and documentation required for a Probationary Review Panel.

2.19 As well as assessing performance, the Review Panel should satisfy itself that the employee has been given appropriate guidance and the opportunity to achieve satisfactory performance, e.g. through mentoring and/or opportunities to participate in training or development activities relevant to their role in the School. This evidence will largely be drawn from the completed EPR forms, the candidate's paperwork and the Head of Department statement. It is not expected that concerns regarding performance should be revealed to the Review Panel that have not previously been the subject of discussion with the individual; where this is the case, e.g. with a newly emerged concern, an extension to the probationary period may be considered (though the full range of options remain open to the Review Panel).

2.20 The Chair of the Review Panel is responsible for ensuring that the review and decision is free of any bias e.g. in relation to ethnicity, gender identity, disability, religion, sexual orientation, contract type, age, etc.; however, all panel members should be mindful of equality matters and play an active role in ensuring the review process is conducted in a fair and equitable manner.

2.21 The following outcomes are available to the panel:

- Confirmation of employment

- Extension of probationary period (normally by no longer than a year, but can be longer where parental leave, ill health, etc. have been a factor)
 - Termination of employment
- 2.22 Exploration of redeployment to a suitable alternative role, should there be an appropriate vacancy within the department; where this is of a lower grade, pay protection will not apply.
- 2.23 The Head of Department should confirm the outcome of the panel with the HR Division on the day of the decision, who will write to the employee within 5 working days to confirm the decision. The Head of Department should verbally confirm the outcome with the individual prior to this.
- 2.24 In the event the Review Panel believes that termination of employment is the right outcome, a dismissal process will be followed (see below).
- 2.25 In exceptional cases, the Head of Department can exercise discretion and call a Probationary Review Panel (PRP) at the end of the second year, where the performance and contribution of the employee has been outstanding. Advice should be sought from the Vice President and Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education) in the first instance. Where a PRP meets sooner than the end of the third year, if the panel considers the case to have been called too early, the probationary period will continue uninterrupted, with a second PRP called in line with the original schedule.
- 2.26 The VCAC will report to Promotions Committee annually on the (anonymised) outcomes of PRPs and on any themes and trends arising.

3. Associate Professors (Education)

- 3.1 The same process as above will apply, though the normal probation period shall be two years. Review points will be at 1 year and 1 year 9 months.
- 3.2 All Associate Professors (Education) should be assigned a mentor for the duration of their probationary period.

4. Professors (Education)

- 4.1 Professors (Education) will normally be offered a one-year probationary period.
- 4.2 At a nine-month Education Probationary Review – to be held by the Head of Department – the staff member and the Head should agree the appropriate evidence to be considered by a Probationary Review Panel, as relevant to the nature of the role. The same evidence and documentation should be provided as for all roles, though it is accepted that the shorter review period may mean that some elements are simply not available. This should be noted in the EPR form and alternative evidence offered where this is possible.

- 4.3 The Probationary Review Panel will meet as normal to continue the normal process.

5. Salary determination upon passing probation

- 5.1 ECT staff who pass their probation will normally have their salary increased by two increments on the salary scale, effective from the month following the month in which they passed their probation.

6. Failure to pass probation (dismissal process)

- 6.1 Should a Probationary Review Panel (PRP) decide that termination of employment is the correct outcome following probation, the member of staff will be advised of this decision in writing.
- 6.2 In such circumstances the member of staff will be invited to attend a formal hearing in writing to discuss the matter by their Head of Department.
- 6.3 The hearing will be chaired by a Vice President and Pro-Vice Chancellor (other than the Vice President and Pro-Vice Chancellor who Chaired the PRP), with the VCAC, the Head of Department and relevant HR Partner also present. This hearing will be to explain the circumstances, the decision of the PRP and to give notice of termination of employment.
- 6.4 Right to Be Accompanied
- 6.4.1 The member of staff may be accompanied at the hearing by a companion employed by the School or a trade union representative. This companion may speak on the member of staff's behalf but may not answer questions addressed to the academic member of staff.
- 6.4.2 It is the member of staff's responsibility to notify the chosen companion of the details of the hearing including the date, time and location of any hearings as well any relevant documentation relating to the case.
- 6.4.3 Members of staff are requested to give notice of the name and relevant details of any companion to the HR Partner at least 3 working days prior to a hearing under this procedure. If the companion is not available at the time proposed for the hearing, the member of staff may request that the hearing is postponed once to another reasonable time, not being later than 5 working days after the date first proposed for the hearing.
- 6.5 Procedure
- 6.5.1 The Head of Department will write to the member of staff setting out the reasons for the proposed termination of the employee's employment in line with the decision

reached by the PRP and invite the employee to a hearing. This will include a written report that details where the candidate has fallen short of the expectations of the ECT and will be the substantial basis of the explanation for the proposed dismissal at the following hearing.

6.5.2 The member of staff will be provided with copies of any relevant documentation to be considered at the hearing. The member of staff will be advised of the right to be accompanied by a companion employed by the School or a trade union representative.

6.5.3 At the hearing, the reason for the proposed dismissal will be explained to the member of staff, who will have the opportunity to respond before a final decision is taken. Following the hearing, the Chair will confirm the outcome in writing, normally within 5 working days of the hearing.

6.5.4 Should it be confirmed that the member of staff's employment will be terminated, the individual will receive notice of termination in line with their contract of employment. The School normally extends the staff member's end date of his or her existing contract by one year in order to allow the staff member time to find alternative employment. The staff member will also be advised of the right of appeal.

6.6 Right of Appeal

6.5.6 The procedure to be used by the member of staff is the appeals procedure contained in the School's Academic Annex. This is the final internal stage in the process.

Review schedule

Review interval	Next review due by	Next review start
Annual	June 2025	May 2025

Version history

Version	Date	Approved by	Notes
1	November 2016	JNCC	
2	January 2020	Appointments Committee	
3	September 2024	Appointments Committee	
4	December 2025	TBC	

Contacts

Position	Name	Email	Notes
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Communications and Training

Will this document be publicised through Internal Communications?	No
Will training needs arise from this policy	No
If Yes, please give details	