



Probationary Period

For: NonAcademic Staff

Subject: Resolving Staff Concerns

Number: 6.11.2

**Issued: 10/1/80 Revised:
01/30/2020**

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Applicability

A 90-calendar day probationary period is required upon initial employment as a regular, nonexempt¹, full-time or part-time staff member at Cornell University.

NOTE: See section below “Extension of Probationary Period” for circumstances where probation would exceed 90 calendar days.

Other nonexempt staff who are obligated to serve a probationary period include:

- staff who are returning to work from a break in continuous service,
- staff who are returning to work from a university leave, and
- temporary staff who are appointed to regular full-time or part-time positions

NOTE: Staff returning to work from layoff status, per Policy 6.12, Separations, will not automatically serve a probationary period. However, on a case-by-case basis, a probationary period may be established by the hiring supervisor as condition of hire from layoff status, based on business needs as determined by the hiring supervisor.

Nonexempt staff who are transferring from one regular position to another regular position without a break in continuous service are not required to serve a probationary period. When a staff member is transferring from a nonbargaining unit position to a bargaining unit position, clarification of probationary requirements should be obtained from the local hr representative or designee.

Purpose

The purpose of the 90-calendar day probationary period is to provide the staff member and the supervisor a means by which to evaluate the work situation.

¹ Staff classified in “-SP” job profiles are excluded from the 90 day probationary requirement. An “-SP” job profile encompasses part-time exempt employees who meet the duties to qualify for exemption, but are paid on the nonexempt payroll.

Supervisory Responsibility During the Probationary Period

During the first 90-calendar days of employment, the supervisor should carefully evaluate the staff member's performance, attitude, and potential for success in the job.

The supervisor should:

- explain the purpose of the 90-calendar day probationary period to the staff member on the staff member's first day of work;
- provide the staff member with a copy of the staff member's job description;
- explain the expectations regarding performance in the new position, and
- provide training which covers the specific duties and responsibilities of the position.

Since the probationary period is only 90-calendar days, supervisors should not expect 100 percent efficiency in the job, but rather demonstrated capacity to eventually perform the job.

90-Calendar DAY Probationary Review Procedures

The supervisor should obtain a 90-calendar day [Probationary Review Form](#) (pdf) approximately 30-calendar days before the expiration of the staff members probationary period. Upon obtaining the form, the supervisor should meet with the staff member to discuss performance and determine whether the staff member is performing satisfactorily during the probationary period.

The Probationary Review Form must be dated and signed by both the supervisor and staff member, with the department and the staff member each retaining copies. (Be sure to place a check mark in the 90-calendar Day Form box located at the top of the form.) The original must be sent to local hr representative or designee. This process must be completed prior to the end of the staff member's probationary period.

In the event the staff member terminates employment during the probationary period, the supervisor should return the Probationary Review Form to the local hr representative or designee with an explanation.

Note: Information regarding probationary periods that are applicable to bargaining unit staff can be found in the appropriate collective bargaining agreement [at hr.cornell.edu/about/employment-policy-practice/union-contracts](http://hr.cornell.edu/about/employment-policy-practice/union-contracts). The Probationary Review Form that is applicable to bargaining unit staff can be found at hr.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/2022-12/probationary_form_bargaining.pdf

Supervisory Concerns

If a staff member is proving unsuitable for the job, the supervisor should discuss the situation with the local hr representative or designee. This contact must be made as early as possible, but at least 14 calendar days prior to the end of the 90-calendar day probationary period, and before discussing it with the staff member.

The local hr representative or designee will provide information, advice and the appropriate procedure to follow in the event of an extension of the probationary period or termination.

Performance-Based Extension

With prior approval from the local hr representative or designee, the probationary period may be extended for up to 30-calendar days. The request for extension must be made at least 14 calendar days prior to the end of the 90-calendar day probationary period.

Even in cases when an extension is granted, the Probationary Review Form for the 90-calendar day probationary period must be completed, signed by the staff member and supervisor, and returned to the local hr representative or designee.

The supervisor is responsible for obtaining a Probationary Review Form which must be completed and distributed in the same manner as the 90-calendar day Probationary Review Form. (Be sure to place a check mark in the 30-Calendar Day extension box located at the top of the form.)

During the extension period, the supervisor will continue to instruct and support the staff member in areas where improvement is desired.

If performance remains unsatisfactory during the extension period, the supervisor should again contact a local hr representative or designee.

Absenteeism-Based Extension

Absences of 5 consecutive workdays or longer will pause the probationary period. Absences include, but are not limited to, periods of temporary layoff, disability and workers' compensation. Upon a staff member's return to work from the absence, the probationary period will re-commence. The supervisor should establish a new end date for the probationary period and inform the staff member. The new end date should reflect the balance of time that was remaining in the probationary period as of the date that it was paused. When the probationary review form is completed, the supervisor should ensure that the new end date is reflected on the form.

Termination of Employment

If the staff member proves unsuitable for the position, employment should be terminated prior to the end of the probationary period.

Probationary staff may not grieve a termination through the university's grievance procedure.

NOTE:

For Cornell University policy information, visit the [University Policy Office](#).