

Getting the Most From Probationary Periods

When taking on a new employee, the probationary period can be an extremely useful tool. However, it is important to manage this period effectively.

Insert A Probationary Clause In The Contract Of Employment

This clause should include the length of the probationary period, the notice required during probation, the possibility of an extension at the end of the period and state that the company's normal disciplinary process will not apply during the probationary period

Outline Standards From The Outset

The employee should be aware what standards are required. The use of measureable Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) is extremely useful in this regard. These KPI's should be SMART (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound).

Hold Regular Reviews

Set a timeline for reviews. Reviews will allow you to clarify goals, identify areas for training, review the employees performance and reinforce desirable behaviours. Where objectives are not met this should be discussed, and a plan of action put in place. All reviews should be documented.

Hold A Probationary Outcome Meeting

Never miss the deadline for the final probationary review: Set a reminder in your calendar to alert you just in case. The employee must be advised as to whether they have successfully completed their probation or otherwise. A probationary extension or contract termination should never come as a surprise. If extending, remember a probation cannot be extended past the 12 month mark.

Ensure Fair Procedures Are Followed If Dismissing

It is a common misconception that employees can be easily dismissed within their probationary period. However, fair procedures must still be followed. This includes making employees aware of where their performance has fallen below standard, holding regular review sessions and documenting these sessions, and providing the employee a reasonable chance to improve. They should also be given a chance to have their say before a final decision is reached. Only when fair procedures have been followed can an employee be dismissed within their probation.

For further advice please call 01-6622755 or contact HR@ISME.ie