

3. Probationary Periods

The probationary period is the final phase in the examination process. The purpose of the probationary period is to allow the employer to make a determination regarding the employee's ability to perform at a satisfactory level in all aspects of the job and to conform to acceptable norms of conduct.

It is important to provide employees who are in their probationary period with training, guidance, and counseling to assist them in reaching and maintaining a successful level of performance. It is also important to closely monitor the performance and conduct of probationary employees so that a determination can be made regarding conversion to permanent status.

It is especially important for the supervisor to regularly meet with a probationary employee, ideally on a weekly or at least biweekly basis, for supervision. This gives both the supervisor and employee an opportunity to discuss the employee's work performance/conduct.

A. Who serves a probationary period?

Employees who are appointed to a classified or unclassified position undergo a probationary period. Employees, who promote, demote, or transfer to another department may also serve a new probationary period. Temporary and seasonal employees DO NOT undergo a probationary period.

B. How long are probationary periods?

An employee's probationary period is made up of not less than ninety (90) days nor more than one (1) year dating from the first day of in-class employment (Rule V, Appointments, Section 4 – Probationary Period; Civil Service Rules & Regulations). The Civil Service Commission or Collective Bargaining Agreement determines the probationary period.

C. What are your supervisory responsibilities during a probationary period?

You are responsible for communicating performance and conduct standards and expectations to the employee, monitoring their performance and conduct against those standards, and providing timely feedback to him or her. You are expected to meet with all employees you supervise. The frequency of these supervision meetings will depend upon each employee and your training program. When conduct and/or performance issues arise, you need to address any concerns with the employee in private and promptly. If corrective action (verbal counseling) does not result in an immediate and sustained improvement by



the employee, you should consult with your Department Director and contact Human Resources for further guidance.

D. Can a probationary period be extended?

Yes, a probationary period can be extended to a total maximum length of 2,080 hours (one year of fulltime service). Probationary periods that are already established at 2,080 hours for the classification cannot be extended.

If a probationary employee is exhibiting conduct problems (e.g., discourtesy, has numerous unscheduled absences including tardies, misuses the Internet,) the recommendation is usually probationary rejection rather than extending the probationary period. Extending a probationary employee's probationary period is more appropriate when there are performance-related concerns that may be overcome with a longer period of training and observation by the supervisor to assess the employee's performance.

Unless collective bargaining agreement language specifies the probationary status/length of time, in order to extend a probationary period, the Department Director or designee requests concurrence for such an extension from the Civil Service Director/Civil Service Commission. The request should contain a basis for the extension. If the employee is covered by a collective bargaining agreement, it may be appropriate to document the extension with a memorandum of understanding with the union and the employee.

Ideally, the Civil Service Director should receive these written requests at least two pay periods prior to the end of the employee's probationary period. Please be aware that you cannot extend the probationary period once the employee has worked the requisite hours for his or her specific classification.

The requests may be sent via email to cspersonnel@hamilton-oh.gov.

[See sample Probationary Extension Request Letter](#)

E. How does an employee become permanent?

The preferred way for an employee to become permanent is for the supervisor to conduct a performance evaluation just prior to the end of the employee's probationary period, recommending that the employee be placed in a permanent status. However, know that absent any action from the supervisor or manager to extend the employee's probationary period or reject him or her during probation, the employee will automatically become permanent upon completion of the prescribed probationary period. This is important to note because if there are any issues or concerns that you have regarding the probationary employee, it is best to work on correcting the issues prior to the employee obtaining permanent status.



F. How are employees notified that they have failed to pass their probationary period?

The preferred way for an employee to be notified they are being rejected during the probationary period is via a letter from the Department Director or designee.

If this is the initial probationary period for an employee, the employee leaves City employment. The probationary employee may be given the option to change the probationary rejection to a resignation within a specified amount of time.

If this probationary period is being served due to a promotion, demotion or transfer, the employee may be entitled to return to their former classification (per Civil Service Commission Rules and Regulations or the appropriate Collective Bargaining Agreement). If the employee has the right to return to a previous classification the employee held with the City, the letter will also state the date and position to which the employee should report. If this is the case, contact the Human Resources Department for assistance.

Regardless, if the employee submits a letter of resignation or verbally submits his or her resignation (i.e. phone message), the manager should provide the employee with a letter acknowledging and accepting that resignation.

See sample [Probationary Period Rejection Letter](#) ***Before issuing this letter to an employee who is eligible to “bump back” into a previous position, please contact Human Resources if it’s an employee covered under a Collective Bargaining unit***

[See sample Resignation Form](#)

[See sample Acknowledgement & Acceptance Letter](#)

G. May an employee transferring to another department be required to complete a new probationary period by the supervisor of the new department?

Yes. When an employee is transferring from one department to another department and keeping the same classification, the supervisor of the incoming department may request that the employee be required to complete a new probationary period. The probationary period should be thirty (30) days. If the supervisor notices that the employee is not meeting the performance or conduct standards, the supervisor may decline the transfer allowing the employee to move back to the original department. Note: If the supervisor is requiring the transferring employee to complete a probationary period, the supervisor must provide the employee and the Director of Civil Service and Personnel notice that the employee will be on probationary status for [X] days.



Also, Section 1 of Civil Service Commission Rule VIII provides that employees may transfer from one position to another in their same classification.

[See Request for Transfer or Voluntary Demotion Form](#)

H. Can an employee grieve or appeal a probationary dismissal?

An employee cannot grieve a probationary rejection. An employee cannot appeal a probationary rejection to the Civil Service Commission.

I. Can a probationary employee take vacation time/PTO?

We recommend vacation/PTO requests in most cases be denied for new City employees who have not previously worked in any status (permanent or probationary) unless this has been prearranged prior to hiring. This action ensures that the supervisor can observe a new employee's performance during the full probationary period. Of course, if there is a special situation and vacation or PTO is approved during probation, the department may always opt to extend the probation by the length of the vacation to provide a full probationary period and advise the employee of this extension at the time the vacation request is approved.

If the supervisor authorizes the employee to take vacation or PTO during their probationary period, it is recommended that the supervisor meet with the employee and discuss as well as have the employee sign an agreement of understanding that if the employee separates prior to their accrual of the vacation or PTO, the City would deduct any leave that has been taken but not yet accrued.

[See Unaccrued Vacation/PTO request Form](#)