ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Department	HR
Policy	Probation Policy

1. Description of Policy/project

The Academy's Probation Policy (the Policy) establishes a fair and consistent process for assessing the suitability, capability, conduct, and performance of newly appointed employees during their initial period of employment. The Policy provides a framework for support, feedback, performance review, and decision-making regarding confirmation of employment. The purpose of the probationary period is to give a new employee and the Academy the opportunity to assess suitability for the role. The probationary period is three months for professional services staff and six months for teaching and academic staff. The line manager is responsible for ensuring that during this period the necessary training, support and guidance is provided to enable the employee to fulfil the requirements of the role. It is the employee's responsibility to demonstrate suitability for the post, taking responsibility for their own successful development into the role. During the probationary period, the notice period is reduced to one-week. During the probationary period, a shortened version of the disciplinary procedure will apply. This Policy applies to employees employed directly by the Academy, but does not apply to workers, contractors, or self-employed individuals.

The purpose of this assessment is to ensure that the Policy promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion, to identify any actual or potential adverse impact on individuals with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, and to identify any actions required to mitigate any adverse impacts.

Read the policy at:
Policy Repository - Human Resources - Current Policies - Human Resources

2. Could the Policy/project have an adverse impact on equality? Please consider this in relation to the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender re-assignment
- Marriage or civil partnerships
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

No, the Policy is compliant with, and upholds, the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and will not have an adverse impact on equality. However, the following risks should be taken into consideration when implementing the Policy:

- Age: Younger employees may have less workplace experience, whereas older employees may require additional support when changing careers or moving between sectors. Low risk: the Policy applies equally regardless of age and focuses on objective performance criteria.

- Disability: Employees with a disability may require reasonable adjustments to perform effectively during the probation period. Performance assessments could disadvantage employees if adjustments are not implemented. Low risk: the Policy specifically references a review of any reasonable adjustments that may be required.

- Gender Reassignment: Employees undergoing gender reassignment may require time off for treatment or appointments. Low risk: any such absences will be accommodated within the Policy where operationally possible.

- Pregnancy and Maternity: Employees may require maternity-related appointments or experience pregnancy-related sickness absence. Medium risk: such absences should not negatively affect the outcome of probation decisions.

- Religion or Belief: Employees may require flexibility for religious observance. Low risk: any such absences will be accommodated within the Policy where operationally possible.

No direct, or indirect, adverse impact identified for the Marriage or civil partnerships, Race, Sex or Sexual Orientation characteristics were identified.

Additional risk considerations include:

- Flexible Working and Caring Responsibilities: Employees with caring responsibilities may require flexibility in working arrangements. Managers should ensure that attendance and performance expectations are reasonable and are consistently applied during the probation period.

- Part-Time and Fixed-Term Employees: Such employees should be assessed against objectives proportionate to their working hours and contractual arrangements. The Policy should not disadvantage staff because of their employment status.

3. Does this Policy/project provide opportunities to make a positive impact on equality?

The Policy is clear, concise and transparent in detailing the probation process, explaining that:

- During the probationary period, line managers monitor an employee's progress, provide feedback and access the need for support at regular meetings. This could include a review of any reasonable adjustments that are agreed.

- If an employee's performance within the probationary period is in any way unsatisfactory, line managers must identify the issue(s) requiring improvement and set objectives with reasonable timescales for a period of review. Line managers should also review requirements for additional training and support.

- The probationary period can be extended, for a period of up to one month at the Academy's discretion. This could include instances where additional support may lead to performance improvement, or where an employee or a line manager has been absent for an extended period during the probation.

- Employees also have the right to appeal against any decision regarding probation, which must be submitted in writing to the Director of Human Resources within five days of receiving the decision, setting out the grounds for appeal.

4. What evidence has been considered? What consultation has been undertaken?

The following groups/organisations were consulted in the drafting of the Policy.:

- The Policy Review Group, which includes the Registrar and Director of Student Operations, Director of Finance and Director of HR,
- The HR team.
- The EIA sub-committee
- Brightmine (formerly Xpert HR)
- CIPD / People Management website
- HR Magazine / MA Business (webinars)

The following evidence informed the Policy:

- Good practice guidance on recruitment, probation, and performance management. In line with the changes to employment law - reducing the qualifying time period for employment tribunals from 2 years to 6 months.

5. What actions have been agreed as a result of this EIA?

This Equality Impact Assessment has identified that the Policy is intended to have a positive impact by providing a transparent and supportive framework for assessing the performance of new employees and is compliant with the principles of the Equality Act 2010. While no direct discrimination has been identified the risks detailed in 2 above should be taken into consideration when implementing the Policy. It is important that line managers involved in the probation process receive appropriate training to mitigate these risks.

Actions will be reviewed, and progress/completion reported to the Belonging Committee.

Action	Who	Timescale
Provide guidance and training for line managers on equality, diversity, unconscious bias, and probation management (to include the risks detailed in 2 above).	HR	Ongoing
Ensure reasonable adjustments are considered and implemented for employees on probation as appropriate.	HR & Line Managers	Ongoing
Review any complaints, grievances and employment tribunal claims relating to	HR	On an termly basis

probation.		
Monitor probation outcomes by the protected characteristic where data is available.	HR	On an annual basis

Received by the Belonging Committee
Date: 22/10/26