

Trial Period

- Authority** This Guide Memo was approved by the Vice President of Human Resources.
- Applicability** This policy applies to all regular employees as defined in [Guide Memo 23.1](#), Definitions. For policies that apply to employees covered by collective bargaining agreements, refer to the agreements between Stanford University and SEIU Higher Education Workers Local 2007 and Stanford University and the Stanford Deputy Sheriffs' Association. Agreements can be found at <http://elr.stanford.edu/documents.html>.
- Summary** Section headings are:
1. DEFINITION AND PURPOSE
 2. POLICIES
 3. GUIDE TO SUPERVISORS

1. DEFINITION AND PURPOSE

The trial period is an initial period of service during which the department assesses the performance of a newly hired regular employee to determine whether the employee meets the requirements and expectations of the position. A former employee who is rehired normally serves a new trial period. Human resources managers must approve any exceptions related to trial periods.

2. POLICIES

- a. **Length of Trial Period** — The trial period is an employee's first six months of service as a regular employee with the University. This includes service as a trainee. The trial period may be extended. An extension 1) requires approval of the human resources manager, 2) is for a specified period of time, normally not to exceed a total of two additional months, and 3) when feasible, must be communicated to the employee in writing by the department in advance of the extension. The trial period is automatically extended for the duration of any approved leave of absence.
- b. **Additional Trial Periods** — An employee who has completed a trial period is not required to serve an additional trial period when transferred, promoted, assigned to different duties within the University, or reinstated to the original hire date upon rehire. Exceptions: An employee reappointed following a layoff will serve a six-month retrial period (see 2.d), and an employee hired into a position that constitutes a career change (as opposed to a logical advancement of the employee's current career) may be required to serve a new trial period.
- c. **Completion of Trial Period** — The department should notify the employee by the last day of the trial period that the trial period has been completed or extended. When such notice is not given, the trial period is considered to have been completed. In extenuating circumstances, the human resources manager may determine that the trial period is not completed if timely notice could not be given.
- d. **Layoff Trial Period** — An employee will serve a layoff trial period for the initial six months in the new position when:
 - Hired into another position following permanent layoff, or
 - Given formal notification of permanent layoff, or
 - Given notice that layoff will result if the employee does not obtain alternative employment in the same department or administrative unit.

If the employee does not complete the layoff trial period successfully, then the employee may revert to layoff status and receive, as applicable, any benefits which accrue to that status. Reversion to layoff during the layoff trial period may be invoked either by the employee or by the department, and is not grievable under [Guide Memo 22.10](#), Staff Grievance Procedure. An employee may serve only one layoff trial period following any one layoff, and may invoke the option to revert to layoff status only once. If hired into a second job (either a subsequent or a simultaneous job), the employee does not serve a layoff trial period. Extension of layoff trial period or completion of layoff trial period is handled as described above for trial period.

- e. **Termination During Trial Period or Layoff Trial Period** — A department may terminate an employee who does not satisfactorily meet the requirements or expectations of the position during the trial period or layoff trial period with minimal advance notice. The human resources manager must approve such terminations.

3. GUIDE TO SUPERVISORS

- a. **Planning the Trial Period** — Departments are encouraged to establish performance expectations and communicate them to the new employee; actively assist the employee to learn the job by use of instructions and coaching; assess the employee's progress, keep the employee informed; and reach a decision during the trial period regarding the employee's capability to perform the job in a satisfactory manner.
- b. **Resolving Problems** — High costs of staff recruitment and employment make it necessary to reduce turnover and extend the length of service of employees whenever possible. Therefore supervisors should try to resolve problems during the trial period and should consult with their human resources manager about problems which could lead to a request for extension of a trial period, or in the termination of the employee during or at the end of the trial period.