

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEES UNION
STEP-BY-STEP PROBATION GUIDE

**The next couple
of months
could be the
most important
in your career:**

See this Probation Guide to learn why...



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CSUEU's Step-By-Step Probation Guide

You have been hired by the California State University. Now the CSU is putting you to one more test — whether you can actually do the work.

The probationary period is considered an extension of the hiring process. You must pass this test of performance to become a permanent CSU employee with security and the rights of permanent status.

Some new employees misunderstand the probation process. They take a wait-and-see attitude, instead of making a plan for passing probation from the very first day.

Do yourself a favor: Make good use of CSUEU's long experience in dealing with CSU employee concerns. The cautions and recommendations in this guide grow out of those experiences.

Review this *CSUEU Step-by-Step Probation Guide* and be sure to call on your CSUEU representative at the first hint of a problem. CSUEU contract sections are inserted parenthetically for reference.

The first step is to be sure you have an accurate, official job description which indicates exactly what your job duties are and the percentage of time spent on each one. This is the document that will be used to evaluate your performance. Obviously, you must know what these duties are if you are to carry them out satisfactorily.

If you did not receive a position description, take these steps at once:

1. Contact your supervisor and/or administrator to whom you are normally accountable.
2. Seek clarification of your duties and responsibilities. Such clarification shall be provided in writing. [Contract 17.8]
3. If a campus position description exists, the employee shall be provided with a copy. If one is to be altered or written up, the employee shall be provided with this position description at least seven (7) days prior to its effective date. Position descriptions shall reflect the employee's assigned duties and responsibilities. [Contract 17.9]
4. An employee may also request, in writing, a meeting with the appropriate administrator to discuss a position description, reassignment or work assignment. Such a meeting shall not be unreasonably denied. [Contract 17.10]

Your Performance Evaluation

As a probationary employee, you should be evaluated by the end of the third, sixth, and eleventh month of the probationary period [Contract 10.5]. Each report will cover your job performance, your personal conduct, and your ability to handle responsibility — measured against the standards of the position in which you are working [Contract 10.2].

The evaluator may be the supervisor, lead person, or the appropriate administrator, but in every case must be someone who is familiar with your job duties [Contract 10.14]. You are to be given a draft evaluation for your review, input and discussion [Contract

10.8]. You will have five calendar days to review the draft and provide input, if any, to your evaluator [Contract 10.9]. Your input will be considered by your evaluator in the five-day period in preparing the final performance evaluation, and prior to placing it in your official personnel file [Contract 10.10].

Upon request, you can meet with the evaluator [Contract 10.11], and if desired, you can meet later with the appropriate administrator [Contract 10.12]. If you still disagree with your evaluation, you have the right to submit a rebuttal statement and your evaluation will be reconsidered [Contract 10.13].

For the record

My date of hire is: _____

My probationary period ends: _____

My supervisor is: _____

My bargaining unit is:

- Unit 2, Health Care Professional
- Unit 5, Grounds and Custodial
- Unit 7, Administrative Support
- Unit 9, Technical Professional

My CSUEU steward is: _____

My CSUEU Labor Relations Representative is: _____

My Major Duties (Refer to this list frequently)

If you have a position description, use it as an everyday reference. However, if you have been unable to secure one within your first week on the job, record your major duties according to the instructions given to you by your supervisor or lead person.

The Early Weeks of Probation

First impressions count. Set work standards for yourself based on your assigned duties and the expectations of your supervisor.

Check this list frequently:

- 1. From time to time, I ask my supervisor how I am doing. I keep a written record of his/her comments for future reference.
- 2. I have requested an official position description. If one is not available, I will keep a record of duties I perform and the percentage of the day's time that I spend on each.
- 3. I ask my co-workers questions about the performance expected at my worksite and about standard training available.
- 4. I have found answers to these questions: Am I being trained the same as other employees? Do I have all the tools I need to be successful [such as reference books, cleaning supplies, equipment]? Is there a knowledgeable person available to me at all times to answer my questions?
- 5. I have acquired official information about sick leave policy and procedures; I have learned the procedure for calling in sick to the proper person at the proper time.
- 6. I keep personal phone calls to a minimum.
- 7. I am never tardy or AWOL.
- 8. I work every day to meet the unit's standards in quality and quantity.
- 9. I refer daily to the Qualification Factors [see below] on which I will be evaluated during my probation.

Your work performance will determine whether you obtain permanent employee status. Frequently review this list of the Qualification Factors on which you will be rated.

Qualification Factors

SKILL: Expertness in doing specific tasks; accuracy, precision; completeness; neatness; quantity.

KNOWLEDGE: Extent of knowledge of methods, materials, tools, equipment, technical expressions and other fundamentals of the job.

WORK HABITS: Organization of work; care of equipment; punctuality and dependability; industry; good practice of vehicle and personal safety.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE: Ability to get along with others; effectiveness in dealing with the public, other employees, and students.

LEARNING ABILITY: Speed and thoroughness in learning procedures, laws, rules and other details; alertness; perseverance.

ATTITUDE: Enthusiasm for the work; willingness to conform to job requirements and to accept suggestions for work improvement; adaptability.

First Evaluation on Probation (3 months)

This could be the most important evaluation you receive during your probationary period. By the time you receive your first probation report, the decision may have been made as to whether you are to be accepted or rejected during probation.

Date First Evaluation Received _____

- If I received any “improvement needed” or “below expectations” ratings, I have contacted my steward or CSUEU Labor Relations Representative for counsel, and will set up a meeting with the appropriate administrator to resolve concerns.
- I have determined what training I need to improve my skills. I have requested such training in writing, and I have kept a copy of this request.
- I have written a complete, documented rebuttal to the evaluation to be used in discussing my review with my appropriate administrator. If my review is not adjusted accordingly, I will request that the rebuttal be attached to my evaluation in my official personnel file.

First Evaluation Conference

Prepare for your first evaluation conference by reviewing these questions. You will want to ask these questions and record your answers if the evaluator raises areas of concern.

1. In which areas do I need improvement? _____

2. How can I improve in these areas? _____

3. By what specific date should I demonstrate that I have improved in these areas?

4. What additional training is available? _____

What if I Disagree with My Evaluation?

After the first evaluation has been completed, if you disagree with any aspect of it, you have the right to request that your written rebuttal be attached to the official copy of your review. You should go over the rebuttal with the CSUEU Labor Relations Representative prior to submitting it. You should include a request for training where improvement is needed, and you should include a plan of action to ensure passing the next evaluation.

Do not refuse to sign your evaluation. Your signature only indicates that you have received it, not that you agree with it.

Attendance Record

Abuse of sick leave is a common reason for rejection on probation. Tardiness is a serious threat as well.

You can enhance your record for good work by always arriving on time and by making good use of your time on the job.

Give yourself more time than you think you will need to travel to work. If you are sick, be sure to follow the official procedure of contacting the appropriate person.

A probationary employee shall not take vacation until completion of one (1) month in work status. [Contract 14.8]

Holidays

The CSU may observe holidays differently from campus to campus. Consult your human resources office to obtain the schedule.

Sick Leave

An employee shall be responsible for reporting all absences to the appropriate administrator as soon as possible. As a good employee, you will want to fulfill your obligations if you are unable to work. The CSU recognizes that extenuating circumstances may prevent you from calling in before the start of your shift, but you should make every effort to call in as close to the start of your shift as possible. [Contract 15.5]

Be sure you are familiar with department and campus policies for reporting sick leave, and that you comply with them.

Vacation

Generally, a request for scheduling vacation should be submitted in writing to the appropriate administrator at least thirty (30) days in advance. [Contract 14.9]

This is the official procedure* for calling in sick at my worksite: _____

For your protection, record your attendance in the space below:

DAYS ABSENT:

Date _____ Reason _____

Person Notified _____ Date/time _____

Date _____ Reason _____

Person Notified _____ Date/time _____

Date _____ Reason _____

Person Notified _____ Date/time _____

Date _____ Reason _____

Person Notified _____ Date/time _____

Date _____ Reason _____

Person Notified _____ Date/time _____

LATE FOR WORK:

Date _____ Arrival Time _____

Reason _____

Date _____ Arrival Time _____

Reason _____

Date _____ Arrival Time _____

Reason _____

Date _____ Arrival Time _____

Reason _____

Date _____ Arrival Time _____

Reason _____

* **Exempt classifications:** For exempt classifications, there are no fixed, minimum or maximum hours in a workday or workweek [Contract 18.7]. Absences are reported for full days only, not partial days [Contract 18.8].

Rejection on Probation

If you frequently review and act upon the information provided in this guide, you will greatly reduce your chances of rejection.

However, if you fail to measure up to required performance standards and you do not satisfactorily learn the job, you may be rejected on probation.

Once you have been rejected, you may return to your previous classification or skill level if you have already passed probation in another classification or skill level [Contract 9.21]. This is known as exercising “retreat rights” to your old classification. A steward or Labor Relations Representative can help explain this process. If you are a new CSU employee and you have not previously passed probation in another classification or skill level, you will be separated from CSU employment.

An employee employed more than six [6] months may utilize the complaint procedure beginning at Level II [Contract 8.13] to appeal the decision to reject during probation if any of the following are alleged:

- performance evaluation procedures required by the contract were not followed,
- discrimination is the cause for rejection,
- the decision to reject was arbitrary and capricious [Contract 9.35].

If the complaint is not resolved at Level II, the complaint shall be moved to Level III for review at the Chancellor’s Office [Contract 9.37]. If the complaint is not resolved at the Chancellor’s Office, it may be appealed to expedited binding mediation within ten (10) working days after the Level III response [Contract 9.39].

It should be noted that, unlike state civil service employees, the State Personnel Board has no jurisdiction over CSU employees rejected during probation.

Remember To:

- ✓ Check your position description on a regular basis.
- ✓ Check out training opportunities.
- ✓ Check often with your supervisor on how you are doing.

*CSUEU works every day, throughout the state,
for fair wages and benefits, employment rights
and safe working conditions for
California State University employees.*

*Although you are covered
by a CSUEU-negotiated contract,
your membership in CSUEU is not automatic.
Join today!*

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