

The Comprehensive Guide to Passing Your **Probationary Period** at Work

A clear framework for meeting expectations
and securing your role



Welcome

The start of a new job makes anyone a little nervous, even if you know you're perfect for the role. For many medtech employees, knowing how much the spotlight is on them during a probationary period can make the anxiety worse.

Probationary periods aren't a bad thing; they're an opportunity for both sides to decide if the match works in practice. Across the UK, the United States, and Australia, probationary periods have become a standard feature of employment.

Most last between three and six months, though many US companies still follow a 90-day model. The intent is simple: to give employers a chance to assess performance and fit, and to give employees space to decide whether the culture and pace are right for them.

Research shows this period carries real weight. In Australia, one in eight employees resign during probation. In the UK, the number can be as high as one in five. That's a clear sign that probation isn't just for employers, it's for you too.

Of course, leaders shape how a workplace feels, even when they don't try to. In the UK, hiring has slowed right down. It takes roughly eight weeks to fill a role now, compared with under five last year. That gap makes probation run a bit longer than expected.

This report is designed to help you move forward in those first months with confidence. It explains how probation works across regions, what rights you hold, and how to build the habits and relationships that turn a trial period into a strong start.



Understanding Probationary Periods in the Medtech Industry

Every new medtech job starts with a mix of excitement and uncertainty. You're learning names, systems, and routines while trying to make a good impression. The probationary period exists to make that time useful rather than overwhelming. It gives both you and your employer a chance to see whether the role fits as well in practice as it did on paper.

For managers, probation provides a safety net. It gives them a clear view of whether someone can meet expectations, take feedback well, and fit into the team's rhythm.

For new hires, it's a window into the real version of the job, the one that exists beyond the interviews. When probation is handled well, it gives both sides time to learn, adjust, and build confidence together.

How long does it usually last?

Most probationary periods last between three and six months. The details vary by country and sometimes by role.

In the United Kingdom, three months is common, though senior or public-sector positions can extend to six or more months. The government's planned Employment Rights Bill, expected around 2026–27, aims to provide greater clarity on these timeframes and strengthen protection from the first day of employment.

What Employers Notice and Employees Can Learn

Managers usually focus on a few steady themes: reliability, communication, curiosity and growth. They notice whether you keep promises, ask good questions and act on feedback. Small things matter too: being on time, replying promptly and following through.

Many medtech organisations log feedback in HR systems, but day-to-day behaviour counts more. A quick update when a task's done or a simple "thanks for the guidance" often says more than a dashboard score.

Probation isn't about being flawless; it's about learning. Managers expect mistakes and pay attention to how you handle them. The early weeks reveal a lot about the role and the team.

Use those first months to observe. Notice how your manager sets goals, how questions are handled, and how people behave under pressure. Make sure you have the tools and support you need.

If something feels off, ask early rather than guessing later. Culture will show itself quickly. Some teams move fast and expect independence; others prefer discussion. Neither is wrong, but fit matters.

How probation is changing

Work looks different now, and probation reflects that. In remote and hybrid teams, communication and initiative matter as much as technical skill. Managers look for people who stay visible, share progress and build trust from a distance.

Digital confidence matters more too. Nearly half of employers now recruit for data and digital skills, so showing these during probation gives you a clear edge.

Probation doesn't remove your rights. You're protected from day one against discrimination, unsafe work and unfair treatment. The main differences are usually shorter notice periods or delayed benefits.

It also works both ways. If the role or environment isn't right, you can say so. Probation is shared, and early, honest conversations can prevent bigger issues later.



Your **Rights** During Probation

Probation can sound harsher than it is. The word itself evokes being tested or watched. In reality, probation is just the first stage of employment. You're still an employee, and you still have rights.

In the UK, you're still protected by the 2010 Equality Act and the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act. If your employer decides to end the contract early, they need to give you a week's notice if you've been employed for a month.

Knowing What You Deserve

Probation doesn't freeze your benefits. You continue to accrue leave, receive regular pay, and are covered by workplace insurance. In most places, you'll also see pension or superannuation contributions from your first payslip. Some employers delay access to private health or bonus schemes, but your basic entitlements keep running quietly in the background.

Your medtech employer can't fire you because of your race, gender, age, or disability. They can't hold back your pay or ignore safety rules. If something feels off, say, bullying or unsafe work, tell someone. Talk to your manager or HR. You're not overreacting by raising it. You're protecting your right to feel safe at work.



Surviving Probation: Essential Strategies for Success

Starting somewhere new is awkward. You walk in wanting to do well, but half the time you're just trying to keep up. Everyone already knows the shortcuts. You're still figuring out who to ask when something breaks. That's fine, that's what this part is for.

First 30

Days

Laying the Groundwork

Those first few weeks are about building roots, not racing ahead. Everyone knows you're new. What they notice is how you handle it.

Get clear early

Have a short chat with your medtech manager about what matters most right now. Ask, "If I get three things right this month, what should they be?" You'll sound focused, not needy.

Keep a light plan

Sketch out rough goals for 30-60-90 days. Even just a page of bullet points. It gives you direction when everything still feels like alphabet soup.

Learn what the job actually is

The job description is only half the story. The real work shows up late on a Friday afternoon. That's when you see how decisions are made, who signs off on what, and what always seems urgent. Pay attention there; that's where the culture lives.

Meet people before you need them

Introduce yourself. Ask small questions. Listen. The person who explains the copier today might save your project next month.

Build good habits fast

Turn up on time. Keep your calendar tidy. Write things down. Reliability gets noticed.

Get to grips with the tools

Every workplace has its tech challenges. Shared drives that hide files, systems that freeze, passwords that never work right. Figure them out early so they stop slowing you down.

At the end of month one, your goal is simple: people should know you're organised, easy to work with, and genuinely trying to understand the place.

Days 31-60

Adding Value

By now, you've stopped asking where the meeting room is. This is the stretch where learning turns into contribution.

Start taking initiative

Look for small gaps and fill them. Maybe tidy a messy process, spot an error in a report, or take a routine task off someone's plate. Small wins count.

Ask for more to do wisely

Let your manager know you're keen to help more. A simple line works: "If a project needs an extra hand, I'm happy to help."

Days 61-90

Making It Count

Keep relationships warm

Check in with teammates. Share updates before they chase you. A short “I’ve finished that task; let me know if anything needs tweaking” does wonders.

Something will go wrong. Breathe. Explain the issue, suggest a fix, and move on. Managers remember who stays steady under pressure.

Ask for feedback, then act on it

You don’t need a formal review. A quick, “How’s my work landing so far?” works. Listen, take notes, and make one visible change. That’s how trust grows.

By the end of month two, people should see you as someone dependable, someone who doesn’t just learn, but contributes.

Now you’re part of the rhythm. You know names, systems, and the shortcuts nobody writes down. This is where you turn consistency into impact.

Deliver what you promised

Meet the goals you set at the start. Keep a list of what you’ve achieved: finished tasks, feedback received, things you’ve improved. You’ll need it for your review.

Bring one good idea

It doesn’t have to change the world. Maybe a simpler report, a quicker workflow, a tweak to a client email. Thoughtful suggestions show you care about the bigger picture.

Help someone else

If a new medtech starter appears, show them the ropes. Teaching a process out loud demonstrates that you understand it and builds goodwill quickly

Show you're in it for the long haul

Have a short conversation about what comes next: projects you'd like to try, skills you want to build. It signals to your manager that you're thinking beyond probation.

Prep for your review

Keep it honest. Talk about what's gone well and what you've learned. If something didn't work as expected, note what you changed. Growth matters more than polish.

By the time your first ninety days are up, the goal isn't just to "pass." It's to have people thinking, "I can't imagine the team without them." That's the real finish line.

Habits that help you through

A few habits make any probation period easier:

- Be on time. It shows respect for other people's time.
- Keep your word. If you promise something, deliver it.
- Ask when unsure. Guessing quietly costs more time than asking aloud.
- Stay calm. Everyone makes mistakes. The people who recover quickly earn trust.
- Be kind. The way you treat colleagues matters as much as what you produce.

These are habits that make you dependable, and dependable people always make it past probation.

Seeking and Incorporating Feedback

Feedback during probation is how you learn what's working and what isn't. Nobody gets everything right in the first few months, not even those who appear confident. People who request feedback settle in faster.

Your medtech manager's learning how you operate, and you're learning their style too. Feedback keeps you in sync. When you ask for it, you're really saying, "I care about doing this right." Managers pay attention to that attitude.

How to ask for it

The best feedback comes from specific questions. Broad ones like "How am I doing?" usually get vague answers. Narrow it instead:

- "Was my report clear, or should I format it differently next time?"
- "Did I handle that client call as you expected?"
- "What's one thing I could do better next week?"

These questions make feedback easier to give and easier to use.

When feedback comes, listen. Don't rush to explain or defend. If something isn't clear, ask for an example.

What matters most is what you do next. Make one visible change and tell your manager you tried it. A quick, "I used your suggestion on that report; it flowed better," shows you've acted on their input.

If you keep doing this, your probation review won't bring surprises. It will simply reflect what you've already discussed along the way.



Training and Development

Feedback tells you what to work on. Training is where you actually get better. Probation isn't only about proving yourself; it's the best window you'll get to learn fast and build the habits that last.

Sometimes the formal onboarding covers everything. Often, it doesn't. If it feels thin, ask something like: "Could we go over the main things I should be learning this month?" Most medtech managers appreciate someone who wants a bit of structure. It saves them the guesswork later.

Everyone has weak spots. Maybe you're fine on the technical side but shaky on the process. Perhaps you know the system yet still get lost when things move faster. Write those insights down. Seeing them on paper takes the sting out of it and gives you a starting point.

Every medtech company has old guides, recordings, or short courses hiding somewhere on the intranet. Dig a little. You'll find something useful. When you do, mention it: "That quick tutorial helped me sort the new report layout." It's not bragging. It's proof you care enough to figure things out.

Watch the pros who get things done. Ask how they do it, what shortcuts they've found, what they wish they'd known early on. That's the kind of training you won't find in a document. Sometimes it's a five-minute chat in the kitchen that saves you an hour next week.

Don't wait for a schedule or permission. Try something new each week: one tool, one task, one better way to explain something. Keep a small notebook or notes on your phone. Those tiny improvements pile up fast.



Building Relationships and Cultural Fit

People often think probation is about skills, and it's also about connection. Skills might get you hired, yet relationships keep you there. You can hit every target and still struggle if you never build trust.

In your first few weeks, you'll probably feel like an outsider. Everyone already has shorthand, routines, and unspoken jokes. You're still figuring out who to ask for what. Don't rush it. Spend that time watching how people actually work together.

Who speaks up in meetings? Who's the person everyone quietly turns to when things go wrong? Which conversations happen over coffee and which ones stay formal? Those clues tell you more about how a team functions than any handbook could.

Say hello to people you pass. Learn names. Make an effort to be part of the community.

Reliability is what people remember most. If you promise, deliver. If you don't know, ask. Nobody expects you to be perfect, but they do remember steady effort.

Listen more than you talk, especially at first. Give yourself a little time to understand how this particular medtech group solves problems, how they handle pressure, and what tone they use when things get tense. Matching that tone early helps more than you might realise.

Every company says it has a “great culture.” What that means in reality is how people behave when things aren’t going smoothly. That’s when the real culture shows up.

Pay attention to how feedback is given. Are mistakes treated as part of learning, or do they spark blame? Do leaders make space for questions, or do they prefer silence?

If you’re unsure how to fit, mirror the best parts of what you see: the helpfulness, the calm under pressure, and ignore what doesn’t sit right. You can adapt without losing yourself.

Culture fit doesn’t mean becoming someone else. It simply means demonstrating that you understand the values the team already upholds.

Good relationships grow from the small things. Check in with a teammate, say good morning, and follow up on promises. It doesn’t take much, just steady effort. Over time, that’s what builds trust.

If you’re remote, the connection takes more effort. Cameras on, clear updates, short, friendly messages, those small signals remind people you’re present. Silence in a remote setting is mistaken for disinterest.

Humour helps too, when used gently. Laughing at your own learning curve makes everyone more comfortable.



Common **Mistakes** to Avoid

Nobody walks in planning to fail probation, but it still happens. It's not usually about skill. It's the little things: missed messages, late replies, forgotten updates. They pile up. The good thing is, once you see those patterns, you can stop them before they grow.

Mistake 1 Going Quiet

If you disappear into your work and stop talking, people get nervous. Silence gets read as trouble. When your manager doesn't hear from you, they fill in the blanks, and not always kindly. You don't have to give a full report every hour, just small updates. A message to say you've wrapped something up or hit a snag keeps everyone calm. It shows you're present, and that matters more than sounding perfect.

Mistake 2 Treating feedback like criticism

Everyone gets feedback during probation. That's what it's for. Those who struggle often take it personally rather than using it. Managers know you won't get everything right. They're watching to see if you learn and adjust.

Mistake 3 Overconfidence/Overcorrection

Some people push too hard to prove themselves. They say yes to everything, stay late, and burn out halfway through. Others hold back too much, scared to overstep. Both can confuse your manager. Try to find the middle ground. Contribute steadily, follow through, and make time to rest. Managing your energy is a quiet strength that good teams respect.

Mistake 4 Avoiding difficult conversations

Unspoken problems turn into bigger ones. Managers might think you've checked out when you're just unsure. Bring it up early. Keep it calm. Even a short chat like "Can we talk about how things are going?" can reset everything.

Mistake 5 Forgetting the basics

The mistakes that cause trouble during probation are often tiny. Being late, missing messages, joining in on gossip, they seem small, but patterns form quickly. People notice reliability before they notice big wins. Showing up, following through, and being kind will get you further than you think.

The biggest mistake of all

The real danger during probation isn't doing something wrong. It's not learning from it. Everyone slips up; that's part of starting anywhere new. What matters is how you recover.

If you miss a deadline, own it and explain how you'll stop it from happening again. If feedback stings, take a breath, then act on what's useful.

You don't need to avoid mistakes completely. You need to show that you see them for what they are: chances to improve, not verdicts on your worth.



The Probation Review Process

The word review tends to make people nervous. It sounds formal, maybe even final. In reality, a probation review is just a conversation: a pause to look at how things are going. It's a chance to take stock before moving forward.

If your medtech manager has been giving you feedback along the way, there shouldn't be any surprises. The review is less about catching you out and more about checking how everything's working, for both sides. You're still deciding if the job fits you, too.

Before the review

Start prepping early. Take a quiet minute to think about your first day and what's changed since. Write down what you've learned, what you've finished, what you've figured out. Include the hard parts too: the things that went wrong and what they taught you. Managers notice when someone's honest about that.

During the review

When the meeting starts, take a breath. You don't need to perform. You need to talk about your work honestly.

Most reviews follow the same loose pattern: what's gone well, what needs focus, what happens next. When you describe your progress, use real examples: "In my second month, I started managing the supplier emails. At first, I needed help checking details, but now I can handle them independently."

If your manager gives feedback that's hard to hear, pause. Listen all the way through. Ask for an example if something's vague. When you get the chance, talk about what you want to develop next. Maybe you'd like to lead a small project or learn a system you've seen others use. It doesn't need to sound ambitious; it just needs to sound thoughtful.

The outcomes

There are usually three.

- **Passing.** The most common. This means your probation is complete, and you'll transition to permanent employment. You'll often receive a short letter confirming it, along with any changes to pay or benefits.
- **Extension.** This one can sting at first, but it's not necessarily bad. Sometimes a manager may need more time to review your work, especially if you joined during a busy period. Ask what they want to see in the next few months and how you'll be measured. That gives you control.
- **Ending the role.** It happens occasionally, usually when the job isn't the right fit on either side. If it does, you're still entitled to notice and pay for your work. Ask for written feedback if you can. You'll want it later, when you're ready to learn from the experience.

After the review

Take time to reflect before rushing ahead.

If you're staying, keep doing what worked: ask questions, show initiative, communicate. Those are the same habits that build long-term success.

If you've been extended, treat it like a second chance, not a setback. Now you know exactly what's being looked for.

If the opportunity ends, be kind to yourself. A medtech job ending during probation doesn't define your ability; it just means the match wasn't right. You'll carry the lessons into whatever comes next.

If your probation's confirmed, take a moment to breathe. It's an achievement. Then, turn your focus to the months ahead. Keep doing what worked: asking, listening, and steady follow-through. Those habits are what turn a good start into a lasting career.

If it's extended, don't treat it as a failure. It usually means your manager believes you can get there with more time. Ask what they want to see and set clear goals for yourself.

Probation feels like a test, but it's really time to learn how you fit. You're defining your role, what you need, and where you can grow. Most of the time, it comes down to five habits:

When you strip it all back, success in probation comes down to five things:

- Clarity: ask until you understand what's expected.
- Performance: do what you said you'd do, and do it well.
- Communication: keep people in the loop.
- Relationships: be kind, be fair, and work with people.
- Initiative: notice what needs doing and take action.

If you hold onto those, everything else falls into place. Remember, probation goes both ways. You've been watched, but you've also been watching. You've seen how people treat each other and how your manager leads. If it feels like the right place, give it your best. If not, apply what you've learned and find a better fit.

Probation ends, but growth doesn't. Every lesson from these months sticks with you. You've already done the hard bit. Now keep pushing forward, one day at a time.



MEDTECH

About Advance Recruitment

Advance Recruitment helps medtech and healthcare companies solve the hiring challenges that hold their business back.

Since 1997 we have specialised exclusively in medical sales and marketing recruitment. This gives clients and candidates deep market insight, long-standing relationships and a trusted, partnership-led approach.

We focus on the issues that have real commercial impact. Many organisations come to us because roles are hard to fill, time to hire is increasing, or they keep reaching the same limited pool of candidates.

Others need stronger processes, clearer employer branding, a better candidate experience or protection against costly hiring mistakes. Many simply need access to the hidden passive talent that makes up the majority of the market.

These challenges slow growth, increase pressure on teams and weaken competitiveness.

Our services are built around each client's needs. Our executive search solution suits business-critical leadership roles and niche, confidential or hard-to-fill positions that need a strategic, proactive approach.

We also support companies with long-standing vacancies that require a fresh methodology. For start-ups or growing organisations without internal HR or talent teams, we provide structured team-build support and a guided hiring process.

For businesses planning multiple hires, we offer a pricing model that helps with forecasting of hiring costs, as well as reduce cost per hire.

We support organisations undergoing change through our outplacement services which help their employees who are affected by redundancy, develop the skills and confidence to move forward into new roles.

For candidates, we provide tailored career development support for those preparing for their next step.

What sets us apart is how we work. Our values of empathy, collaboration, quality and responsiveness shape every interaction.

We listen carefully, act quickly and take ownership. Most importantly, we give clients confidence that their decisions are informed, objective and based on a full view of the talent landscape.

Our aim is simple. We want to remove the stress, uncertainty and hidden costs of inefficient recruitment processes, by offering a focused, supportive and highly effective partnership that helps our clients build strong teams which drive business growth.

Testimonials



Thank you Karen... you were a legend.

During my 24 years in the medical industry I have dealt with a number of different medical recruiters.. both as a active employee looking for their next move and as an RSM looking for a new position to be filled .. and to say that Karen excelled in her contact, conversation, communication and vibe is an understatement - she was simply outstanding. Karen I feel took the time to align me to the correct role and company culture for me which is huge. I'd strongly recommend Karen to anyone in my medical device community

- Ryan W



“From the initial contact about the opportunity proposed, Liv has been amazing. Always catching up to see how you're doing and answering any questions you may have. It was a pleasure working with Liv and she made the process of looking for a new opportunity a breeze

- Krzysztof S

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