

Surviving your first probationary period and appraisal

The prospect of a probation period in a new job can be daunting, as can an appraisal. So what are the key things you should know about these two things? Firstly – both of them are in place for your benefit as much as your employer's.

“Probation periods work both ways,” explain [Jobsite.co.uk](https://www.jobsite.co.uk). “For one, both employer and employee have the right to break free from the employment agreement within this allotted time – as such, it can offer unhappy employees an escape without having to comply to a lengthy notice period.”

The same can be said for an appraisal – this is not only a chance for your employer to review your performance but for you to ask questions and gain clarity on your career path.

To help understand how to tackle them both, we've provided a useful list of ways to impress during your probation and also how you can prepare for your appraisal, to make sure you get the most out of your situation.

Ways to impress during probation

Punctuality

Bad time-keeping accounts for 38% of the reasons that people fail their probation periods, according to [Thehrdirector.com](https://www.thehrdirector.com). Being punctual every day and being able to meet your deadlines is a basic requirement for most employers. If you think you will struggle with a deadline, and if it's unrealistic, it's always better to communicate this, rather than approach it unrealistically and fail.

Make sure you are familiar with your objectives

It's important to be clear about what your employer expects from you from the very beginning. Thehrdirector.com also concluded that poor performance is the most common reason employees fail their probation period so make sure you understand what is expected from you in order to successfully meet the criteria.

Willingness to take part

An article on [Jobs.ac.uk](https://www.jobs.ac.uk) highlights that “if volunteers are sought for particular projects or responsibilities, show that you are willing to take part.” This helps assure people that you are a team player and that you have a vested interest in the company.

Familiarise with processes

Each company has different processes and like things done in a certain way. Make sure you make yourself familiar with how your company works and which processes you should be following. They will really value that you've taken the time to understand how they work.

How to prepare for your appraisal meeting

1. Make a list of your achievements

Make a list of achievements and ways you have gone over and above your job role to meet your objectives. Having this in front of you during your appraisal will give you confidence to discuss your career progressions and highlight your worth to the company.

2. Make a list of where improvements can be made

Showing self awareness is a great trait and will reassure your employer of your willingness to progress and improve. Be careful not to under sell yourself, but show awareness of your weak points and proactive ways that you can address them.

3. Think about questions you would like to ask

Sometimes it's easy to forget all the questions you would like to ask your employer so make a note of them before you go in to your appraisal. It's never a bad thing to come across as prepared or interested in your future or the future of the company.

4. Make a wish list

It's important to have an idea about what you want to gain from your appraisal. Think about it carefully – are you looking for a salary increase, a clearer idea of where you are progressing to or perhaps where there might be opportunities to learn and gain new qualifications in your role?

5. Follow up

As much as it's good to prepare, following up is just as important. Make sure you make notes and have an action plan for work afterwards. Not only is this good for you to keep coming back to, to make sure you're meeting your targets, but it's solid material to prepare for the next one!