

2011



Rensselaer

Employment Separation Guide

The Employment Separation Process
at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

employer
of choice

This Employment Separation Guide is provided by the Division of Human Resources to provide supervisors with instructions and forms to use in managing the employment separation process. Any questions about this information should be forwarded to:

Division of Human Resources
21 Union Street
Troy, NY 12180
Phone: 518-276-6302 or 518-276-6303
Fax: 518-276-6370
<http://www.rpi.edu/dept/hr/>

The mission of the Division of Human Resources is to create a collaborative partnership with each division that will enable people to achieve excellence and job satisfaction in their work environment.

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I. Introduction

Individuals terminate their employment for various reasons, voluntary or involuntary. This guide will detail the required steps for the various types of employment separations identified below. The steps to follow for a complete employment separation process are essentially the same for several conditions and are listed in this guide. Forms and templates are provided to assist you in the separation process.

II. Types of Employment Separations

1. Voluntary Resignation
2. Non-renewal or Early Termination of Fixed-term Appointment
3. Discharge
4. Position Elimination
5. Retirement (age 55 and 5 years of service)
6. Death

1. Voluntary Resignation

- a. Upon receipt of an employee's voluntary resignation, the supervisor should respond to the employee using an Acknowledgement of Resignation Letter.
- b. The supervisor provides the employee with the employee section of the Separation Checklist. The supervisor completes the portfolio administrator section of the Separation Checklist, signs, and sends the completed Separation Checklist to the Division of Human Resources.
- c. The supervisor originates the Employment Transaction Form, routes it for all required signatures, submits it to the Division of Human Resources; and notifies all relevant campus and external constituents of the employee separation. The supervisor submits the employee's time sheet so that the final paycheck can be generated.
- d. Upon receipt of the Employment Transaction Form and Separation Checklist, the Division of Human Resources authorizes payment of the final paycheck, invites employee to participate in an exit interview, and provides departing employee with information about group insurance conversion options and other pertinent benefits.

2. Non-renewal or Early Termination of Fixed-term Appointment

- a. The Division of Human Resources notifies supervisors sixty (60) days before the end date of employee's fixed-term period. To end the fixed-term period, the supervisor sends the Non-renewal/Early Separation Letter to the employee.
- b. The supervisor provides the employee with the employee section of the Separation Checklist. The supervisor completes the portfolio administrator section of the Separation Checklist, signs, and sends the completed Separation Checklist to the Division of Human Resources.
- c. The supervisor originates the Employment Transaction Form, routes it for all required signatures, submits it to the Division of Human Resources; and notifies all relevant campus and external constituents of the employee separation. The supervisor submits the employee's time sheet so that the final paycheck can be generated.
- d. Upon receipt of the Employment Transaction Form and Separation Checklist, the Division of Human Resources authorizes payment of the final paycheck, invites employee to participate in an exit interview, and provides departing employee with information about group insurance conversion options and other pertinent benefits.

3. Discharge

- a. The supervisor and an HR representative meet with the employee at the separation meeting after the Vice President for Human Resources has approved the employment separation. They deliver the following items to the employee: Relevant Separation Letter, as prepared and signed by the Division of Human Resources, and the Separation Checklist.
- b. The supervisor originates the Employment Transaction Form, routes it for all required signatures, submits it to the Division of Human Resources; and notifies all relevant campus and external constituents of the employee separation. The supervisor submits the employee's time sheet so that the final paycheck can be generated.
- c. Upon receipt of the Employment Transaction Form and Separation Checklist, the Division of Human Resources authorizes payment of the final paycheck and provides departing employee with information about group insurance conversion options and other pertinent benefits.

4. Position Elimination

- a. The Vice President for Human Resources and the appropriate Portfolio Owner identify the position(s) to be eliminated.
- b. The Division of Human Resources and the supervisor meet with the affected employee and follow the Position Elimination Worksheet; they notify the employee in writing of the position elimination and the salary/benefit continuation period.
- c. The supervisor provides the employee with the employee section of the Separation Checklist. The supervisor completes the portfolio administrator section of the Separation Checklist, signs, and sends the completed Separation Checklist to the Division of Human Resources.
- d. The supervisor originates the Employment Transaction Form, routes it for all required signatures, submits it to the Division of Human Resources; and notifies all relevant campus and external constituents of the employee separation. The supervisor submits the employee's time sheet to prepare final paycheck.
- e. Upon receipt of the Employment Transaction Form and Separation Checklist, the Division of Human Resources authorizes payment of final paycheck and provides departing employee with information about group insurance conversion options and other pertinent benefits.

5. Retirement

- a. Upon receipt of employee's notice to retire, the supervisor should respond to the employee with an Acknowledgement of Intent to Retire Letter. The employee schedules a meeting with the HR Representative to discuss retirement benefits.
- b. The supervisor provides the employee with the employee section of the Separation Checklist. The supervisor completes the portfolio administrator section of the Separation Checklist, signs, and sends the completed Separation Checklist to the Division of Human Resources.
- c. The supervisor originates the Employment Transaction Form, routes it for all required signatures, submits it to the Division of Human Resources; and notifies all relevant campus and external constituents of the employee separation. The supervisor submits the employee's time sheet to prepare final paycheck.
- d. Upon receipt of the Employment Transaction Form and Separation Checklist, the Division of Human Resources authorizes payment of the final paycheck and provides departing employee with information about group insurance conversion options and other pertinent benefits.

6. Death

- a. Upon the death of an employee, the supervisor originates the Employment Transaction Form, routes it for all required signatures, submits it to the Division of Human Resources; and notifies all relevant campus and external constituents of the employee's death. The supervisor submits the employee's time sheet so that the final paycheck can be generated.

- b. Upon receipt of the Employment Transaction Form, the Division of Human Resources authorizes payment of the final paycheck and provides deceased employee's covered dependents with information about group insurance conversion options and other pertinent benefits.

Acknowledgment of Resignation Letter
(May be sent via email)

[Letterhead of Relevant Portfolio]

<Date>

<Name>

<Address>

<Address>

Dear <Name>:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your resignation notice, effective <date>. Your last day in the office is <date>. You should contact the Division of Human Resources to schedule an Exit Interview.

Thank you for the contributions you have made during your employment at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

Sincerely,

<Supervisor's Signature>

cc: <HR Representative Name/Title>

RENSSELAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE
Division of Human Resources
Separation Checklist

The following checklist is provided to employees to ensure that all items related to employment with Rensselaer are closed. It also provides the Portfolio Administrator a process to collect Rensselaer property and to maintain the security of the physical and intellectual property of the organization.

This checklist should be completed when an employee separates employment by resignation, involuntary separation, retirement, death, or non-renewal of fixed-term appointment. All items may not apply to a given individual. For example, in cases where a person terminates one type of employment but begins another type employment, some checklist items will not apply.

SEPARATION CHECKLIST
PORTFOLIO ADMINISTRATOR SECTION

The portfolio administrator should provide this checklist to employees separating employment; discuss any items requiring resolution; and sign/forward the completed checklist along with the Employment Transaction Form (ETF) to the Division of Human Resources. Contacts are listed for topics that may require special assistance.

Equipment/Property

- Arrange for the return of university property (see examples listed in employee section)
- Determine applicable equipment reassignment (e.g., computers, vehicles, etc.)

Financial

- Check for personal charges on credit cards, personal calls on phones, etc.
- Obtain reimbursement by check made payable to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
- Obtain petty cash fund and provide notification of new custodian
- Remove employee's name from signature authority cards in Accounting
- Terminate "direct bill" travel authorization and Corporate Travel Card through the Purchasing Office

Safety and Security

- Contact Division of Human Resources - Benefits Section for employee who was in ongoing workers' compensation and leave of absence programs
- Notify Division of Human Resources - Environmental Health & Safety Section of termination of employee who participated in required training safety programs, so that participation lists will be current, and unnecessary reminders will not be generated
- Determine presence of any laboratory or hazardous chemicals, gas cylinders, biological materials (e.g., animal tissue, diagnostic specimens, microorganisms, and cultures), bio-hazardous materials (e.g., infectious substances and CDC Select Agents), radiological materials, controlled substances, and/or hazardous wastes in the applicable work areas. Review disposition of them with the employee. For assistance, contact Division of Human Resources - Environmental Health & Safety.
- Ensure that all research-related materials that will remain at Rensselaer, are properly labeled, and are in approved containers
- In accordance with release procedures, ensure that all equipment (including fume hoods, freezers, refrigerators, bio-safety cabinets, centrifuges, and incubators) is cleaned and decontaminated
- Review whether unit Disaster Response Plan needs to be adjusted. For assistance, contact the Division of Human Resources - Environmental Health & Safety
- Determine continuation arrangements for existing research projects/grants
- **Assure that research notebooks will remain with Rensselaer and arrange for the transition of notebooks for ongoing research. (Contact the OTC if advice or guidance is needed.)**
- Determine presence of undisclosed inventions or other intellectual property. **If present, notify and refer the employee to the OTC.**
- Determine presence of film, negatives or other original data from research settings that may be property of the university
- Identify any transition issues related to human subjects. For assistance, contact the Office of the Vice President for Research

Data Systems/Records

- Ask employee to return any Rensselaer records (e.g., paper, electronic, email) held in his/her work area or home office/computer to his/her supervisor
 - a. In particular, prevent employee from retaining, copying, or removing in any way protected health information, as defined under HIPAA. This includes, but is not limited to, any and all medical records. Review these records for possible transfer to other staff member or archiving (e.g., paper or email communications related to federal grants)
- Obtain password rights to any administrative database, software application, information system, etc., for which employee possesses the sole access rights, and that is necessary for program administration or operations
- Retrieve Rensselaer ID card for mainframe systems access

- Notify Administrative Computing Systems about employee's departure, so that data systems access and Rensselaer email accounts can be terminated

Data Systems/Records (continued)

- Delete employee access to data systems, email servers, voice mail systems, email lists, etc.; remove any passwords or file protections (file access passwords) unique to the departing employee
 - a. Immediately delete employee access to any protected health information, as defined under HIPAA. This includes, but is not limited to: access to the electronic medical record system and to any email and server systems on which protected health information is communicated or maintained
- Delete authorization for internet access
- Change codes on door entry systems; deactivate building/area access; notify Department of Public Safety to deactivate security/proximity card, where appropriate
- Provide for continuing security of confidential records (e.g., personnel, research records, etc.)
- Change safe combinations, if applicable
- Change building directories and phone number listings
- Change names on subscriptions, institutional memberships, etc.
- In cases of involuntary termination, access to the above items should be discontinued as of the time notice of termination is given. Particular attention should be given to data systems, health information, offices, network systems (voice mail, email, etc.), and restricted areas.

Termination Processing

- Send an Employment Transaction Form (ETF) to the Division of Human Resources in advance of the termination (to avoid overpayment)
- Obtain the employee's forwarding address; share with units needing future contact, e.g., Alumni, Development, Office of Intellectual Property, HR, etc.
- Confirm leave usage and accuracy of final check/deposit notification; mail to employee

Portfolio: _____

Portfolio Unit: _____

Employee: _____

Reason for Separation: _____

Supervisor Name/Title: _____

Supervisor Signature/Date: _____

SEPARATION CHECKLIST EMPLOYEE SECTION

Return all Rensselaer property, including:

- Keys (building, office, desk, files, vehicles, lockers, etc.)
- ID card(s) *Note: A new ID card will be issued when there is a change in position type, i.e., faculty, staff, student*
- Parking decal/gate card - send to Disbursement Operations (Payroll) to stop parking deduction
- Cell phones/pager; computer/laptop/palm pilot or other peripheral equipment (e.g., printer, camera)
- Records (documents, files, correspondence, etc.)
- Research/data notebooks
- Credit/procurement/travel/calling cards, and related receipts
- Petty cash fund
- Library books, CD texts, periodicals
- Access cards
- Uniforms/gear/tools/instruments/job accessories

Electronic Records

- Retrieve or delete any personal files/information on your office/home PC, office/department server, lab server, central file space, etc.
- Retrieve any university email files, or files on other university email servers and systems, that you wish to retain. *Note: a. Files are purged when your email account is closed. b. You must have the permission of the appropriate portfolio owner to copy any Rensselaer files or records*
- If you will remain within Rensselaer and have a new email address, make arrangements for your email to be forwarded
- Return (transfer, copy, etc.) to the appropriate unit and/or portfolio any data files, electronic documents and records, etc. that are stored in your personal server file spaces
- If you possess sole access rights to an administrative database, software application, information system, etc., that is necessary for program or unit administration or operations, transfer the passwords to the appropriate unit administrator, or arrange for a unit administrator to be given the access needed to assure continued operations
- Delete or return any Rensselaer-owned/licensed software that is contained on a home computer. For assistance, contact the DotCIO staff that provides support to your portfolio

Financial - Settle outstanding accounts, including:

- Charges owed to your department
- Charges owed to other departments (e.g., Library, Parking, Student Accounts)
- Reimbursements owed to you (e.g., travel expenses)

Personal

- Remove personal items from work areas
- Provide forwarding address to your supervisor or through Employee Self-Service
- The Division of Human Resources will send you a letter about termination/continuation of applicable benefit programs (COBRA)
- The Division of Human Resources will send you an exit interview questionnaire. If you prefer to schedule an exit interview, call Human Resources at 518-276-6302

Miscellaneous

- If you were responsible for any laboratory or hazardous chemicals, gas cylinders, biological materials (e.g., animal tissue, diagnostic specimens, microorganisms, cultures), bio-hazardous materials (e.g., infectious substances and CDC Select Agents), controlled substances, radiological materials and/or hazardous wastes, provide evidence of consultation with Environmental Health & Safety or your supervisor regarding the disposition of these materials
- Foreign National faculty/staff should contact the Office of International Students and Scholars or Division of Human Resources to determine if there are other requirements related to their status

Portfolio: _____

Portfolio Unit: _____

Date of Separation: _____

Reason for Separation: _____

Employee Name/Title: _____

Employee Signature/Date: _____

Non-renewal/Early Separation Letter
[Letterhead of Relevant Portfolio]

<Date>

Hand Delivered

<Name>

<Address>

<Address>

Dear <Name>:

This letter is provided to you as thirty (30) days notice that your fixed term appointment as <Title> in <Portfolio> with Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute will be terminated effective <Date>. The termination of your employment is in accordance with the provisions of your letter of appointment dated <Date>.

You are required to return all Rensselaer property; your Rensselaer identification card; and any keys you have to Rensselaer property, to me. In addition, you are required to collect your personal items and vacate the property of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute no later than <Date>.

If applicable, your notification for continuation of benefits (COBRA notification) will be mailed to you at your address of record. If you elect to continue medical benefits, you must return the election form to Human Resources within 60 days of receiving the notice along with the appropriate payment for each month from the inception of this coverage continuation. If you have any questions concerning the continuation of benefits, please contact Human Resources at 276-6303.

Thank you for the contributions you have made during your employment at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. We sincerely hope that your efforts to find new employment will be successful.

Sincerely,

<Signature of Portfolio Owner>

Pc: <Supervisor Name/Title>

<HR Representative Name/Title>

Position Elimination Worksheet

[Script for Supervisor]

Despite our best efforts, it has become apparent that economic conditions and programmatic consideration leave us no choice but to reduce our work force. Unfortunately, you are one of those directly affected by this cutback. This meeting is to formally give you notice that your last day of active employment with Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute is (date).

This decision to abolish the position you occupy was based on a combination of factors. It was made collectively by myself and members of senior administration and reviewed with the Vice President for Human Resources.

We have looked to see if you could be reassigned, however there is no other position to which we can reassign you.

We have prepared a package that details your benefits. A member of the Human Resources' staff will meet with you when we are done talking to make sure that you fully understand your benefits.

[Allow employee time to read their letter]

By (date), I will need to collect your keys and any other Institute property that you have. I will be available by phone if you have any questions later in the week or you can call (HR Rep Name) in the Division of Human Resources at extension (direct line).

I want to express my appreciation for the contributions you have made here and sincerely regret the necessity of this action. Do you have any questions for me at this time?

As a Manager, you should:

Be visible and available. Don't worry if you can't explain everything yourself; your visibility is reassuring. If you go into hiding, employees may misinterpret the situation.

Be open and provide information. Especially when rumors are flying, it is important to give employees as accurate a picture as possible of what is happening and why. If you can't answer a question, honestly state that you don't have that information, but you will try to find out the answer. Work at maintaining your employees' trust and confidence in your department.

Don't breach confidentiality. Show respect for your company by not divulging communications from senior management unless told to do so, even as you endeavor to communicate openly with employees.

Show respect for feelings and concerns. Show respect for your employees' feelings, even if they seem irrational. Loss of a job is stressful—and frightening. Don't discuss individuals' situations with others.

Avoid legal problems. Refrain from making statements that could be used as evidence of bias in layoffs. Do not discuss why certain individuals or departments were scheduled for termination. Do not speculate on the company's motivations in downsizing or restructuring.

Provide endings. Encourage upper management not to ignore these major changes. Allow employees to react and say goodbye. Help employees plan for their future as much as possible. Showing that you care will help maintain good will in the community and morale for the remaining employees.

Acknowledgement of Intent to Retire Letter
(may be sent via email)

[Letterhead of Relevant Portfolio]

<Date>

<Name>

<Address>

<Address>

Dear <Name>

This is to acknowledge receipt of your notice of intent to retire from employment as <title>, effective <date>.

Your last day in the office is <date>. You should contact the Division of Human Resources to discuss your retirement benefits in advance of your scheduled retirement date; and to conduct an Exit Interview.

Thank you for the contributions you have made during your employment at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

Sincerely,

<Supervisor's Signature>

cc: <HR Representative Name/Title>

Log #: _____

Position #: _____



Rensselaer

Employment Transaction Form

This form must be completed, **including signatures**, before any action regarding an employee's status can take effect.

Section I: Employee Information

_____ Last Name	_____ First Name	_____ Middle Initial	_____ RIN (SSN--new hires ONLY)
_____ Permanent Street Address	_____ Apartment #, Route #, etc.	_____ City	_____ State _____ Zip
_____ Telephone w/Area Code	_____ Date of Birth	_____ US Citizen	(Yes or No - If no, complete immigration information)
_____ Country of Origin	_____ Date of Entry Into USA	_____ Visa Type & Work Authorization Expiration Date	

Section II: Transaction Information (ALL Information MUST be completed)

Effective Date: _____	From: _____	To: _____	SEPARATIONS*:
Hires:	Changes:	Leaves of Absence:	Voluntary Resignation <input type="checkbox"/>
New Hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Transfer <input type="checkbox"/>	Leave Type: _____	Involuntary Resignation <input type="checkbox"/>
Re-Hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Extended Appointment <input type="checkbox"/>	LOA w/Pay <input type="checkbox"/>	Discharge <input type="checkbox"/>
Retiree Re-Hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Promotion <input type="checkbox"/>	LOA w/partial pay <input type="checkbox"/>	Position Eliminated <input type="checkbox"/>
	Salary Adjustment <input type="checkbox"/>	LOA w/o pay & w/ benefits <input type="checkbox"/>	Retirement (Age 55+5 YOS) <input type="checkbox"/>
	Change in Work Schedule <input type="checkbox"/>	LOA w/o pay & w/o benefits <input type="checkbox"/>	End of Contract <input type="checkbox"/>
	Other Type of Change <input type="checkbox"/>	Return from Leave <input type="checkbox"/>	Death <input type="checkbox"/>

Comment: _____	* LAST DAY WORKED: _____
	* SEPARATION DELEGATE NAME: _____

Employee's Current Status	Proposed: New Hires, Re-Hires, Changes to Employee Status
Position Title _____	Position Title _____
Department _____	Department _____
Hours per Day _____ Hours per Week _____ Months per Year _____	Hours per Day _____ Hours per Week _____ Months per Year _____
Supervisor's Name _____ Position # _____	Supervisor's Name _____ Position # _____
Person Replacing _____ Position # _____	Person Replacing _____ Position # _____
Pay Rate: \$ _____ Per: Hour <input type="checkbox"/> Year (12 month) <input type="checkbox"/> Lump Sum <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Year <input type="checkbox"/> Contract Period <input type="checkbox"/>	Pay Rate: \$ _____ Per: Hour <input type="checkbox"/> Year (12 month) <input type="checkbox"/> Lump Sum <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Year <input type="checkbox"/> Contract Period <input type="checkbox"/>

Section III: Position and Labor Distribution Information

Fund	Org.	Account	Program	Activity	Location	Percent
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						

Home Org. _____ Budgeted \$ _____ Position FTE _____

Section IV: Human Resources/Payroll Information (For HR/Payroll Use ONLY)

Position Number _____	Pay Type _____	Position Class _____	Employee Class _____	Adjusted Service Date _____	Job Change Reason _____
Prim/Sec/Overload _____	Job FTE _____	Seniority Date _____	Emp. Status/Code _____	Position Group _____	Exempt/Non-Exempt _____

Comments: _____

Section V: Required Signatures

_____ Originator	_____ Dean/Dir/Dept Chair	_____ Cabinet Member	_____ Human Resources
_____ Date	_____ Date	_____ Date	_____ Date

Instructions for Completing the Employment Transaction Form

The Employment Transaction Form (ETF) should be used for the request, approval, and processing of changes to an individual's employment status. Every ETF must be completed in full to avoid processing delays, including the Position Number at the top of the form. Completion of the form does not guarantee approval of the request. All questions regarding the ETF should be directed to the Division of Human Resources.

Section I: Employee Information

Employee Information should be completed in full by the individual's department, including date of birth, address, and citizenship information. Rensselaer ID Number (RIN) is required for all current employees. New employees will not yet have a RIN, so Social Security Number should be indicated instead.

Section II: Transaction Information

Effective Date – The date the change becomes effective. To ensure timely processing of transactions, ETFs should arrive in Human Resources at least 10 days prior to the effective date of the change. THIS IS THE LAST DAY OF EMPLOYMENT AS AN EMPLOYEE FOR THOSE WHO ARE SEPARATING FROM SERVICE AT RENSSELAER.

From/To – A date range is only required for appointments that will end as of a certain date. The "From" date should match the effective date.

New Hire – an individual who has not ever worked for Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute as staff or faculty. Individuals who were previous student employees are considered new hires.

Re-Hire – a previous employee who has been separated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute for 90 days or more.

Separation – termination of the employment relationship for any reason –LAST DAY (ACTUALLY) WORKED and SEPARATION DELEGATE NAME

Transfer – a lateral move from one department on campus to another, with no change in status or pay

Extended Appointment – an extension of the end date for an appointment, with no change in status or pay.

Promotion – a change in title to reflect an increase in responsibilities and often pay. A promotional transfer, which involves movement between departments on campus and a change in title, should be recorded as a promotion.

Salary Adjustment – a change in pay with no change in title or employee schedule. May include merit adjustments and market adjustments

Leave of Absence – must be approved by supervisor and Division of Human Resources. A leave of 90 days or longer must be processed on an ETF. Leave Type may include Military, Parental, Sabbatical, Personal, Disability, or FMLA.

Return from Leave – should be processed on an ETF to ensure the employee is reinstated properly on the payroll

The Employee's Current Status and the Proposed status blocks should be completed in full, including work schedule, supervisor, and appointment classification information.

Section III: Position and Labor Distribution Information

Funding information must include the Fund, Org, Account, Program, and Activity codes. When listing multiple funding sources, also include the percentage to be charged to each.

Home Org. – Indicate the number of the department to be used as the employee's primary department. This may be different than the Org. that funds the employee's position.

Budgeted \$ - Indicate the total dollars budgeted for the position. This may differ from the salary to be paid to the employee.

Position FTE – Position Full-Time Equivalent is 1.0 for an employee working 40 hours per week. Calculate the employee's FTE by dividing his/her total number of hours scheduled for the year by 2,080 hours.

Section IV: Human Resources/Payroll Information

For Human Resources and Payroll use only

Section V: Required Signatures

Each ETF must be signed and approved by the appropriate Dean/Director/Department Head and Cabinet Member prior to being forwarded to the Division of Human Resources. ETFs that are generated as the result of an approved Position Approval Form (PAF) only require signatures from the Originator and a representative of the Division of Human Resources.