

## **1600.1 Staff Performance Management Tool**

**Purpose** The Performance Management Tool is a comprehensive document designed to systematically improve the knowledge, skills and abilities of Rensselaer staff by defining duties and responsibilities of the position, outlining competencies, establishing goals, providing performance feedback, and establishing the minimum qualifications for the position.

**Definitions** The Performance Management Tool (PMT) is a comprehensive document representing a performance management system that includes the position description and the following components:

- Duties and Responsibilities
- Core Competencies
- Employee Goals
- Career Development or Performance Improvement Plan
- Performance Evaluation
- Position Minimum Qualifications and Essential Functions
- Position Working Conditions and Physical Demands
- Required Training for the Position

Performance Evaluation refers to the process by which employees receive performance feedback.

The Position Description refers to elements of the Performance Management Tool that includes the Position Summary, Duties and Responsibilities, Core Competencies, Minimum Qualifications and Essential Functions of the position.

The Initial Period of Employment is a time during which staff employees receive extra feedback while they learn a new job.

The Career Development/Improvement Plan is a planning tool designed to strengthen and develop employee skills and improve employee performance.

**Policy** Regular, full-time exempt and non-exempt staff are required to undergo a written evaluation of performance at least annually, following the completion of the initial period of employment.

Performance appraisals may be conducted at times other than as set forth above when requested by the employee and/or deemed necessary or appropriate by supervisors.

The job duties and responsibilities, core competencies, which include

standards of conduct and attendance, areas for development, areas for improvement, and the achievement of goals will be the basis for rating the performance level of staff.

During the performance management process, Rensselaer preserves an at-will employment relationship with employees—that is, an employment relationship that either the employer or the employee can terminate at any time, with or without cause or notice.

This policy applies to all staff and members of the President's Cabinet.

**Procedure** The performance evaluation is a continuous process of employee assessments through Rensselaer's performance management system.

The performance evaluation process is an opportunity for leaders to provide each direct report with a formal evaluation in relation to their assigned job duties and responsibilities annually. The performance evaluation is expected to provide clear and honest performance feedback regarding: duties and responsibilities; core competencies; areas for improvement; areas for development; career advancement opportunities; and goals and expectations for the next rating period.

The Division of Human Resources notifies each Portfolio Owner when annual evaluations are due. Supervisors are responsible for completing performance evaluations annually, at the completion of the initial period of evaluation and/or under other circumstances as indicated above.

The supervisor shall inform the employee that a performance appraisal will be conducted and recommend that the employee complete a self-appraisal in preparation for the appraisal interview.

Performance appraisals are a function of evaluating employees on the basis of their performance and behavior in relation to their job requirements. Supervisors are responsible for conducting thorough, impartial, and timely performance appraisals with employees that report directly to them.

Performance Management Tools are intended to assist supervisors in recording their assessments of an employee's performance and behavior and in communicating with the employee as follows:

- Performance in each factor should be rated independently of other factors.
- Employees and supervisors should be encouraged to make comments for the record.

The supervisor shall prepare the performance appraisal and review it with the next level of supervision before reviewing it with the employee.

The supervisor shall conduct the appraisal interview with the employee on or before the scheduled review date during an uninterrupted meeting. Performance appraisal discussions should closely interface with assigned duties, responsibilities, and performance expectations, and be used to guide employees in their development. The supervisor shall invite the employee to comment on the performance appraisal.

If there are significant changes to the original appraisal, the supervisor will review those changes with the next level of supervision. The employee shall sign and return the final appraisal form to the supervisor to be retained in the employee's official personnel file maintained by the Division of Human Resources. The employee signature on the evaluation form indicates he/she has received the performance evaluation, and does not necessarily connote agreement with the evaluation.

Should an employee disagree with the performance evaluation, the employee may discuss the differences with the supervisor in an effort to come to a resolution. The supervisor may make changes in the performance evaluation after discussion, or may leave the performance evaluation unchanged. If the employee and his/her supervisor are unable to achieve a resolution, the employee should discuss the appraisal with the next level of supervision, up to the Portfolio owner, who will seek a resolution.

If a resolution cannot be reached, the employee may prepare a written statement of the reasons for dissenting from the departmental appraisal. This statement will be attached to the performance appraisal and sent to the Division of Human Resources. The Division of Human Resources will review all the information, and if necessary, may discuss the matter with the supervisor and employee in an attempt to reach a resolution.

#### Initial Period of Evaluation

Regular, full-time exempt staff generally receive an initial period of evaluation during the first six (6) months of employment in any new position. Regular full-time non-exempt staff generally receive an initial period of evaluation during the first three (3) months of employment in any new position. The initial period of evaluation is automatically extended for any absences except holidays and bereavement leave. The extension of time is equal to the number of days absent during the initial period of evaluation.

The immediate supervisor is encouraged to complete a formal performance evaluation at the completion of the initial period of evaluation in accordance with the provisions indicated above.

The initial period of evaluation is a time during which employees receive extra feedback while they learn a new job. After completing the initial period of evaluation, an employee gains the same rights

and benefits as other employees, including access to the peer review appeals process, and consideration for transfer and promotion to other positions. All exceptions must be reviewed and approved by the Vice President for Human Resources or his/her designee.

A management decision to terminate employment during the initial period of employment or to extend the initial period of employment **must** be reviewed and approved by the Division of Human Resources.