



Appraisal Policy



Policy Details

Person Responsible for this Policy

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Quality Assurance Moderator

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Policy displayed on website

YES

CEO Signature

Angela Ransby

Trust Board Signature

Alan Whittaker

Updates Made

Date

1 Scope

This policy applies to all members of staff across the Raedwald Trust.

The policy does not apply to staff employed for less than one term; those on probationary or induction programmes; those who are subject to a formal capability procedure; or those on government employment schemes, who are subject to other performance management arrangements.

This policy may be modified or suspended in respect of staff with long term ill-health, absence, special leave, suspension, or in any other relevant circumstances.

2 Purpose

The Raedwald Trust is committed to ensuring its students have the best opportunity to realise their aspirations.

To this end, the Trust's Appraisal Process helps sustain and enhance quality in all areas of work, by supporting staff in realising their full potential. It enables staff to carry out their responsibilities effectively in the context of the Trust's Strategic Plan. As well, this policy supports development by establishing a consistent framework to assess the contribution and performance of all staff. The policy also includes information on the initial support arrangements that will apply when there are legitimate concerns about any aspect of an employee's work or performance.

In doing so, the policy ensures that all staff:

- Understand what is expected of them, appreciating that these expectations may evolve over time, as shaped by the individual and the changing needs of the Trust;
- Are accountable for their performance in their role and the contribution they make to the Trust, its students, and to the wider Raedwald community;
- Contribute to the realisation of the Strategic Plan in their setting, department and the wider Trust;
- Take personal responsibility for their own professional development, and are actively engaged in effective and sustained Staff Development and Training;
- Are entitled to necessary support, challenge and feedback about their work, including regular discussion with their line manager about their performance, achievements, areas for development, and support needs;
- Can expect their personal and professional development to be supported appropriately by the Trust, including their consideration of their job satisfaction;
- Are treated with Respect, and can anticipate a "healthy work-life balance", as detailed in the Raedwald Trust Charter.

3 The Appraisal Period

The Appraisal period, or cycle, encompasses the twelve months from 1st September until 31st August. As the process is contiguous, the annual Appraisal Review Meeting will be used to close one Appraisal cycle *and* to open the next Appraisal period.

The cycle commences in September, with the annual Appraisal Review Meeting, at which objectives for the coming year are agreed between Appraiser and Appraisee, and any necessary training, development or support requirements are identified. It is important that staff request their training and development needs at this point in the academic year (rather than later) to inform the Staff Development Training Plan. Please refer to **Section 8.1** for more detail on **Setting Appraisal Objectives**, and **8.2** for guidance on **Establishing Training and Development Needs**.

At the Interim Review Meeting, which takes place in the Spring Term (normally in March), Appraisers assess whether an Appraisee is on track to meet their objectives, re-evaluating the necessity for any support needs. See **Section 8.3** for further explanation of the **Interim Review Process**.

If necessary, formal **Performance Concerns** should be raised at the Interim Appraisal Review Meeting, if they have not been highlighted before. See **Section 9** for more information.

Lastly, during the annual Appraisal Review Meeting in September, it is essential to conduct a final review of Appraisee's progress towards the objectives from the prior Appraisal period, before establishing new targets for the next Appraisal cycle. Please refer to **Appendix 1** for the **Appraisal Process Timeline**, and to **Section 8.4** for detailed guidance on the **Final Appraisal Review**.

Whenever possible, objectives should be revised if an Appraisee experiences substantial changes to their role during the Appraisal cycle (see **Section 3.1**, below).

3.1 Accommodating New Staff

New staff should experience an Induction Period, where they receive appropriate support and development.

Thereafter, new and newly-promoted staff, or those with substantial changes to their role, should complete a six-month probationary period to establish their suitability for the post. Suitability will be evaluated at an Initial- and Final-Review Meeting, which will take place at two and six months, respectively. If suitability cannot be established during this period, the probation period may be extended by up to six months, unless other measures are considered necessary.

The probationary period runs in parallel with the Appraisal Process, meaning staff will enter the Appraisal Process on the successful completion of their probation.

4 Standards

The CEO's objectives will be agreed by the Trust Board, in consultation with the Quality Assurance Moderator or external adviser.

With the exception of those qualified by virtue of Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status, all teaching staff must be assessed against the "Teachers' Standards", published in July, 2011. The Trust has its own standards for Support Staff and for Teachers qualified through QTLS status, which have been incorporated into job descriptions, as appropriate.

Standards will be reviewed annually at the Appraisal Review Meeting but should not be used as a 'checklist', against which performance is measured. Whilst objectives can be set in relation to Trust data, these should not be used in isolation, and other factors will also be considered when making decisions about outcomes or pay progression. The expectation is that all staff perform at a high level, and in line with the expectations of the Raedwald Trust, unless there is evidence to the contrary.

Generally, the Trust's CEO and Leadership Team will establish three broad areas of focus in each Appraisal cycle, which contribute to the Trust's Strategic Plan for improving educational provision and performance. Appraisees should consider objectives which reflect these broad areas, in agreement with their Appraisers. These foci will be communicated to all staff at the earliest possible opportunity during each new Appraisal cycle, most often during the PD allocation at the start of the academic year.

As per its Charter, the Trust has a responsibility to respect the "healthy work-life balance" of all staff, and the agreed objectives should reflect this duty. To enable this, objectives should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound), and should be appropriate to the staff member's role and level of experience. Whenever possible, the Appraisee and Appraiser should agree the objectives in any Appraisal cycle, but the Appraiser can determine an Appraisee's objectives in the rare circumstances where this is not possible.

5 Pay

The Appraisal Process supports the Trust in making fair, consistent and effective decisions in respect of the pay and progression for all staff. No individual measure is used as the single arbiter of performance for pay purposes, and a range of evidence will be used to support these judgements, including data; completion of individual objectives; completion of Trust CPD Modules or, where agreed, external training; contribution to Academy objectives; and effectively meeting the appropriate standards.

6 Appointing Appraisers

The Trust's CEO will be appraised by the Trust Board, supported by a suitably skilled and experienced external adviser, who may be appointed by the Trust Board for that purpose.

For all other staff, the Appraiser will be a relevant line manager or other suitable person designated by the Trust's CEO and Leadership Team, who will coordinate the Appraisal cycle in agreement with the Appraisee. If an Appraisee has more than one line manager, the Trust's CEO or Leadership Team will determine who should take responsibility for their annual review cycle, ensuring that the other manager has opportunities to contribute to the process.

If appropriate, the Trust's CEO or Leadership Team have the discretion to re-allocate Appraisees between Appraisers, if a staff member commences a new role; to balance workload between line managers; due to the prolonged absence of an Appraiser; or for any other procedural reason. In such cases, whenever possible, the new Appraiser should be at a peer level or higher than the Appraiser being replaced.

If an Appraisee experiences a change in Appraiser, whenever possible, the review of previous year's performance should be conducted by the former Appraiser, to ensure continuity and accountability. The Appraisee and the new Appraiser should then commence the objective setting process in the new academic year, under the new Appraisal cycle.

If a member of staff believes that their designated Appraiser is professionally unsuitable for the role, (s)he may write to the HR Officer to request a change in Appraiser, stating their reasons in full. Reasonable consideration will be given to such requests, after which – where the appeal is not deemed appropriate – the Appraisee will receive a full, written response, explaining why it was considered unnecessary to change their Appraiser in this instance. Consideration may also be given to other arrangements, for example, support during the annual Appraisal Review Meeting.

To ensure the quality and consistency of decisions relating to the Appraisal process, an independent, Quality Assurance Moderator will be appointed to assess the objectives of all Trust staff, and to oversee the equity of decision-making process relating to their later review. These processes will occur after the annual Appraisal Review Meeting, when objectives are agreed between Appraiser and Appraisee.

7 Appraising Performance

The Appraisee is responsible for maintaining familiarity with their objectives and the required standards against which their performance will be discussed (described in **Section 4**, above). To this end, Appraisees should periodically check their progress against their agreed objectives and standards throughout the Appraisal cycle.

The Appraiser is responsible for agreeing an Appraisee's objectives, reviewing their performance (including annual recommendations for pay progression), and for agreeing any arrangements that may support an Appraisee's continued professional development. To this end, Appraisers should provide opportunities for periodic discussion with their Appraisee(s), including at the Interim Appraisal Meeting, to assess an Appraisee's progress through the cycle, offering support where appropriate.

The Quality Assurance Moderator will certify the consistency of the Appraisal process, by ensuring that agreed objectives are sufficiently 'SMART' to allow their equitable evaluation. An Appraiser's line manager will be responsible for ensuring that year-end Appraisee evaluations are robust, fair and effective. In support, the

Quality Assurance Moderator will also facilitate a moderation process for all Appraisal outcomes, to ensure consistency in the decision making of the Trust.

8 Procedure

Please see the **Appendix**, below, for further guidance on the **Appraisal Process Timeline**. For more information on setting SMART Appraisal Objectives, please refer to the associated **Appraisal Review Guidance** document.

8.1 Setting Appraisal Objectives

Appraisees should consider new Appraisal objectives that adhere to the areas of focus nominated by the Trust, *and* which support their own professional development aspirations. Appraisees may wish to discuss their suggested objectives with their Appraiser or line manager, informally, before the Appraisal Review Meeting.

Appraisees should complete **Section A** of the Appraisal Review documentation at least 24 hours before the meeting, by describing each Objective, their Proposed Strategies, and the associated Success Criteria. Appraisees should also describe any training and development requests that go beyond the Trust CPD Modules.

The Appraiser and Appraisee should discuss the objectives at the Appraisal Review Meeting, agreeing the phrasing of each Proposed Strategy and their Success Criteria. Training needs should also be discussed. The Appraiser and Appraisee may agree alterations to the content or phrasing of Appraisal Objectives, and time should be given for the Appraisee to update their record following the meeting.

Amendments to **Section A** of the Appraisal Review Form (for the new Appraisal cycle) must be completed within ten working days (two weeks) of the Appraisal Review Meeting having taken place.

Once submitted, the Quality Assurance Moderator may contribute to the redevelopment of an Appraisee's objectives, in liaison with their Appraiser, to ensure objectives are SMART: Specific; Measurable; Achievable; Relevant; and Time-bound.

8.2 Establishing Training and Development Needs

The Raedwald Trust encourages a culture in which all staff take responsibility for improving their performance through appropriate professional development and training.

All training activities must be linked to the Trust Improvement Strategy and to the ongoing professional development needs of individual staff. As such, training and development needs will be prioritised within available budgetary constraints and in line with the key priorities for the Trust.

It is recognised that not all development activities require financial resources, as there are many forms of development such as Project Management, Coaching and Mentoring. In the first instance, staff are expected to access the Trust CPD Modules, located on RT Staff Hub, which have been developed in line with the Trust's ethos and strategic priorities. However, if the available modules do not meet their training needs, the Appraisee should investigate external training opportunities before discussing their rationale and cost with their line manager. Again, this should be identified in the Training and Development Requests section of the Appraisal Review documentation at least 24 hours before the meeting.

Approval for external training can only be made when the request meets the demands of the Staff Development Training Plan. In the case of competing demands on the Staff Development budget, a decision on relative priority will be made by considering the extent to which the requested CPD supports the Appraisee to meet their objectives, and enables the priorities identified in the Trust Improvement Strategy.

Having undertaken any development and training, staff are expected to share their newly-acquired knowledge within their team, and to provide evidence of improvement in the work they undertake.

8.3 Interim Appraisal Review

Appraisees should complete **Section B** of the Appraisal Review documentation at least 24 hours before the Interim Appraisal Review Meeting. In this section, they should evaluate their progress towards the objectives described in Section A, considering the evidence they may use to support their outcomes.

The Appraiser should reflect on the Appraisee's self-evaluation in advance of the Interim Appraisal Review Meeting and, if preferred, may record their initial commentary in advance.

During the meeting, both parties should jointly discuss the Appraisee's progress, agreeing strategies for support (if required), and suggesting amendments to the comments already recorded. Views may be adapted following this discussion, which must be reflected in the written record of the meeting.

Amendments to **Section B** of the Appraisal Review Form (for the current Appraisal cycle) must be completed within ten working days (two weeks) of the Interim Appraisal Review Meeting having taken place.

8.4 Final Appraisal Review

Appraisees should complete **Section C** of the Appraisal Review documentation at least 24 hours before the Appraisal Review Meeting. In this section, Appraisees should evaluate their progress towards the objectives described in Section A, highlighting the sources of evidence used to support their written review.

The Appraiser should reflect on the Appraisee's self-evaluation in advance of the Appraisal Review Meeting and, if preferred, may record their initial commentary in advance.

During the meeting, both parties should jointly discuss the Appraisee's progress, considering any relevant sources of evidence. As well, it is important for both parties to reflect on the Appraisee's wider performance, by considering the year's successes, challenges and sources of pride. Views may be adapted following this discussion, which must be reflected in the written record of the meeting.

Amendments to **Section C** of the Appraisal Review Form (for the previous Appraisal cycle) must be completed within ten working days (two weeks) of the Appraisal Review Meeting having taken place, so that recommendations for Pay progression can be made by the Appraiser.

As the process is contiguous, **Section C** of the prior Appraisal cycle should be discussed in the same Review Meeting as **Section A** of the new Appraisal period.

9. Performance Concerns

All staff should receive constructive feedback on their performance throughout the Appraisal cycle.

If a member of staff falls short of expected standards during the Appraisal cycle or probationary period, such shortfalls will be addressed in the day-to-day managerial discussions, and/or the periodic discussions relating to Appraisal (or probationary) process itself. In most cases, concerns are likely to be highlighted – and should be addressed – during the Interim Appraisal Meeting.

Where concerns exist, an Appraiser will meet with an Appraisee to:

- Provide clear feedback about the nature and severity of the concerns;
- Offer the opportunity to comment and discuss these concerns;
- Agree any support to address the specific concerns (e.g. coaching, mentoring, observation of the work environment; and so on);
- Establish how, and by when, the Appraiser will review the Appraisee's activities to overcome the specific concerns and their renewed progress to meet their Objectives;
- Clarify that significant improvement will be expected by the end of the review period, and explain the implications if insufficient improvement is made;

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- Make it clear that any improvement must be sustained.

It is important to allow sufficient time for improvement to be realised. Whilst the time given to the Appraisee should reflect the severity of an Appraiser's concerns, it is anticipated that reasonable progress should be shown during the Appraisal cycle itself. However, in rare circumstances, it may be appropriate to revise the Appraisal Objectives to meet the needs of the Appraisee. At every stage, the Appraiser should ensure the Appraisee's line manager is informed of the actions taken and of the timeline for review.

When progress is reviewed, the Appraisal process may continue as normal if the Appraiser is satisfied that the member of staff has made sufficient and sustained improvement. Although any remaining issues may be addressed through the Appraisal process, if necessary, concerns may again be raised in the manner described above.

10. Transition to Capability

If a member of staff demonstrates serious or continued underperformance, and has not responded to the support provided within the Appraisal Process, they will be notified in writing that the Appraisal system will no longer apply and that their performance will be managed under the Capability Procedure.

11. Appeals Against Appraisal Assessment Outcomes

Individuals have the right to appeal against the outcome of an Appraisal report.

The aim of the appeal should be to resolve the issue informally, through professional dialogue between the Appraiser and Appraisee. If this is not possible, an appeal should be placed in writing to the Appraiser, who will share its content with relevant Leadership staff, as appropriate. As only one appeal will be allowed per Appraisal cycle, it is important to include reference to all the points that the Appraisee would like to address.

12. Linked Documents

- Capability Policy
- Pay Policy
- Probationary Procedure
- Grievance Policy
- Mental Health Procedure
- Raedwald Trust Charter.

Appendix 1 Appraisal Process Timeline

Leadership Review

July

Weeks 37-39

The Appraisal Policy and associated documents should be reviewed.

The Trust's CEO and Leadership Team will establish three broad areas of focus for the coming Appraisal cycle, considering the Trust's Strategic Plan.

Appraisal documentation will be confirmed and populated.

Training & Development

September

Week 01

The three broad areas of focus for the new Appraisal cycle will be communicated to all staff at the earliest possible opportunity, most likely during the PD allocation at the start of the academic year.

Induction Processes will include Staff Training and Development to ensure awareness of Appraisal Processes amongst new staff.

Appraisal Review

September - October

Weeks 01-05

Appraisees should complete the Appraisal Review documentation at least 24 hours before their Appraisal Review Meeting, sharing this with their Appraiser.

Appraisers should jointly evaluate the Appraisee's progress towards their previous objectives, and should discuss the objectives for the new Appraisal period by agreeing their Proposed Strategies and Success Criteria. Training needs should also be discussed.

The Appraiser and Appraisee may agree alterations to the content or phrasing of the Appraisal Review documentation.

Amendments

October

Weeks 06-07 (or before)

Amendments to **Section C** of the previous Appraisal Review Form, and **Section A** for the new Appraisal cycle must be completed within ten working days (two weeks) of the Appraisal Review Meeting having taken place.

Moderation

October

Week 08 (or before)

For the previous Appraisal Period: The Quality Assurance Moderator will facilitate a moderation process for all Appraisal outcomes, to ensure consistency in the decision making of the Trust.

For the new Appraisal Period: The Quality Assurance Moderator may contribute to the redevelopment of an Appraisee's objectives, in liaison with their Appraiser, to ensure objectives are SMART: Specific; Measurable; Achievable; Relevant; and Time-bound.

Approval for external training requests should be considered, relative to the Development Training Plan and Trust Improvement Strategy.

All Appraisal documentation must be completed by 31st October.

Interim Review

March

Weeks 23-26

Appraisees should complete **Section B** of the Appraisal Review documentation at least 24 hours before the Interim Appraisal Review Meeting, sharing this with their Appraisees.

Appraisers should jointly evaluate the Appraisee's progress towards their agreed objectives, considering the evidence that may be used to support their outcomes, and agreeing strategies for support (if required).

Amendments to **Section B** of the Appraisal Review Form must be completed within ten working days (two weeks) of the Interim Appraisal Review Meeting having taken place.

All Interim Appraisal documentation must be completed by 31st March.