

Royal Northern College of Music

Staff Performance and Development Policy

Policy & Procedure

Department: Human Resources

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Human Resources**

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1. Introduction and Context

This Policy sets out the RNCM's approach to Performance and Development Review (PDR). PDR is a reflective, forward-looking process that supports individual contribution, professional development, and organisational effectiveness.

The RNCM recognises that academic and professional services roles have different purposes, expectations, and career pathways. Accordingly, while the underlying principles of PDR are consistent across the institution, different processes, review cycles, and documentation may apply to:

- Full time and Fractional Academic staff
- Professional Services staff
- Part-time hourly paid Academic staff

A suite of PDR forms and guidance materials is available to enable Schools, Departments, and teams to select the most appropriate format for their context, while remaining aligned to this Policy.

2. Purpose of the PDR Process

The PDR process is designed to:

- Support meaningful dialogue between staff and their reviewer about performance, development, workload, and wellbeing;
- Align individual objectives with the RNCM's strategic priorities and School/Departmental plans;
- Recognise achievement and contribution, including how objectives are met as well as what is achieved;
- Identify development needs, career aspirations, and opportunities for progression;
- Support continuous improvement in teaching, research, professional practice, and service delivery;
- Provide an evidence-based framework that informs, but is distinct from, other processes such as reward, promotion, probation, and capability.

The RNCM is committed to ensuring that the PDR process is inclusive, fair, and applied consistently, in accordance with the Belonging, Equity and Diversity Policy.

3. Principles

The PDR process is underpinned by the following principles:

- **Development-focused:** PDR is primarily developmental, however whilst performance concerns will be discussed at your review, any concerns about sustained underperformance should be addressed separately through appropriate policies.
- **Proportionate:** The process should be appropriate to role, contract type, and career stage.
- **Flexible:** Different PDR forms and approaches may be used to meet school or department needs.
- **Collaborative:** The review is a shared conversation, not a one-way assessment.
- **Transparent:** Expectations, outcomes, and next steps should be clear to both parties.
- **Confidential:** Information is handled in line with data protection legislation.

4. Scope

All employees of the RNCM are expected to participate in the PDR process.

Different arrangements may apply as follows:

- **Full time and Fractional Academic staff:** PDR will typically address teaching, research/scholarship, knowledge exchange, leadership, with recognition of varied workload profiles.
- **Professional Services staff:** PDR will focus on role delivery, service improvement, professional effectiveness, and development aligned to operational objectives.
- **Part-time hourly paid Academic staff:** A streamlined PDR process may be used, with frequency and scope proportionate to the nature of the role. Where employees have an allocation of less than 40 hours in the academic year, completion of the PDR will not be mandatory, however, the Head of School or the employee may request a review meeting regardless of the number of hours.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Executive Committee, Heads of School/Programme, Heads of Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champion effective performance and development practice; • Ensure appropriate PDR arrangements are in place; • Monitor completion rates and address areas of risk or non-compliance.
Reviewers (normally line managers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct PDRs in line with RNCM guidance; • Prepare appropriately and facilitate constructive, inclusive discussions; • Agree realistic objectives and development actions with reviewees; • Complete PDR documentation accurately and within agreed timescales; • Undertake mandatory PDR training as required
Staff (Reviewees)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage constructively with the PDR process; • Prepare in advance of the review meeting; • Reflect on achievements, challenges, and development needs; • Take shared responsibility for agreed actions
Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide policy guidance, standard frameworks, and a range of approved PDR forms; • Support managers and staff in applying the process appropriately; • Monitor institutional completion patterns and themes; • Facilitate training and continuous improvement of the PDR framework.

6. Reviewer Allocation

The Head of School/Department is responsible for ensuring that each member of staff has an allocated reviewer, normally their line manager.

Alternative reviewer arrangements may be agreed where:

- A line manager has an exceptionally large span of control;
- There is a potential conflict of interest;
- The nature of the role would benefit from academic or professional peer input.

- Requests for an alternative reviewer should be considered sensitively and without detriment.

7. PDR Cycle and Timing

The PDR review period is between 1 September and 31 August each year, reviews may be completed at any point during this period to suit the requirements of the school or department.

The census date for completion reporting purposes is 31 August.

Full time and Fractional Academic staff	Annual
Professional Services staff	Annual
Part-time hourly paid Academic staff with more than 40 hours allocation in the academic year.	Minimum of once every 3 years

New staff will normally participate in PDR within 12 months of successful completion of probation.

8. PDR Documentation and Forms

The RNCM provides a range of PDR forms designed to support different roles and contexts, including. Schools and Departments may select the most appropriate form for their teams, provided that:

- The core principles of this Policy are met;
- Objectives and development actions are clearly recorded;
- Records are submitted to human.resources@rncm.ac.uk.

All forms and guidance for both reviewers and reviewees are available within the HR 'forms' section of the staff intranet.

9. Review allowances scheme (Part-time hourly paid academic staff)

Any part-time member of academic staff, nominated as a Reviewer, will be entitled to one hour for each staff review undertaken and up to two hours for any mandatory PDR training. Payments will be at a rate approved by the College and differs from the hourly rate approved for tutorial activities.

Part-time hourly paid academic staff will be paid one hour for participation in the PDR process at the approved participation rate.

10. Related Policies

- [Belonging, Equity and Diversity Policy](#)
- Probation Policy ([Academic](#) and [Professional Services](#))
- [Capability Policy](#)
- [Grievance Procedure](#)
- [Reward and Recognition Policy](#)
- [Academic Staff Grading Review](#)
- [Job Evaluation and Grading Review](#)

ROYAL NORTHERN COLLEGE OF MUSIC

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Approvals

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