

Disciplinary Actions

Date

8/17

The University believes that employees need to know what is expected of them in order to satisfactorily perform their jobs. However, occasionally, an employee may not be performing the job satisfactorily or may violate University rules.

Disciplinary actions are intended to correct substandard work performance and/or rule violations, not punish the employee. The disciplinary process is based on the concepts of just cause, fairness, equitableness and reasonableness. It is the University's policy and practice that discipline be progressive in nature, beginning with the least severe action necessary to correct the undesirable situation, and increasing in severity only if the condition is not corrected. In addition to being progressive in nature, it is important that the degree of discipline be directly related to the seriousness of the offense and the employee's record.

Generally, an informal reminder may be all that is necessary for an employee to correct a behavioral or job performance problem. However, if informal counseling is not successful in correcting the problem or if the problem is severe, formal disciplinary steps may be warranted. These steps may include, but do not necessarily have to include, the following:

- verbal warning/counseling
- written warning
- suspension with/without pay
- termination

There are no set standards of how many oral warnings must be given prior to a written warning or how many written warnings must precede termination, or if in fact a verbal or written warning must precede termination. It is generally recommended that all steps be taken; however, some problems may be so serious in nature that early steps may be eliminated. The Human Resources Department will provide assistance in determining the appropriate action based on the infraction(s).

A. Verbal Warning

A verbal warning is normally the first indication of a performance problem or rule violation. The purpose of the verbal warning is to eliminate any possible misunderstanding concerning the rules, clearly state the expectations for behavior/performance, and point out the consequences of further infraction(s). An informal record of the verbal warning is made and kept by the supervisor.

B. Written Warning

A written warning is issued to an employee to document that the employee has been officially advised of the precise nature of his misconduct or substandard performance. The written warning must contain a corrective action plan and timetable for action, giving the employee an opportunity to improve performance. Additionally, the written warning must notify the employee of the consequences if adequate corrective action is not realized. A written warning may be used without the verbal notification, if warranted by the severity of the infraction.

The employee should sign the warning, acknowledging its existence and the identified corrective action. The employee also has the opportunity to make a written statement regarding the warning. The supervisor must contact the director of Human Resources prior to issuing a written warning.

C. Suspension

A suspension is a period in which the employee is not to report to work and may or may not be paid based on the nature of the suspension. In the case of disciplinary suspensions, the employee will not be paid; the employee may receive pay during the period of an investigatory suspension.

During a suspension, the employee is relieved of his job assignments because of serious or repeated instances of misconduct and shall forfeit pay lost as a result of the suspension. In situations where there is not a specific instance of conduct that is so unacceptable to justify termination, but a pattern of conduct exists where the employee has continually engaged in one minor infraction of the rules after another and has received a documented verbal and/or written warning for rule infractions, an employee may be suspended.

The director of Human Resources and the appropriate vice president must approve all suspensions.

D. Termination

If corrective action has not resolved substandard performance issues or continued rule infractions, termination of employment may be necessary upon the recommendation of the supervisor and department head. Prior to termination, the Human Resources Department must review all termination documentation to ensure that termination is warranted.