



## HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

Area: Employee Relations	Number: 2572
Subject: Progressive Discipline	Issued: 2/24/2011
Applies To: All employees	Revised:
Sources:	Page(s): 1 of 4

### 1.0 Purpose

To provide a hierarchical process for supervisors to be consistent and fair when disciplining employees.

### 2.0 Procedure for Progressive Discipline

#### Employee Discipline

Georgia Southern University recognizes that positive discipline is a corrective process designed to give employees the opportunity to overcome work-related shortcomings, strengthen work performance and achieve success, while maintaining standards of performance and minimizing disruption to the educational environment and University.

Employees shall perform their assigned duties and responsibilities and obey University and Board policy and the law. The immediate supervisor, unit administrator and Human Resources will administer appropriate disciplinary action resulting from misconduct by employees. Such action will be fair and consistent and in accordance with established personnel procedures.

Each violation of employment policies, procedures or standards will be dealt with on an individual basis considering all the circumstances involved in the incident. In determining a level of discipline to be imposed, the supervisor should consider factors including but not limited to:

- The individual circumstances;
- The seriousness of the offense and/or performance deficiency;
- The impact on students, co-workers and the community, as well as the general image of Georgia Southern University;
- The prior discipline and/or performance record of the employee; and
- The treatment of other employees in similar circumstances (Human Resources can serve as a reference in determining equitable punishment across the university for similar infractions).

In individual cases, repeating a level, skipping a level, or even moving to immediate recommendation for termination of employment may be appropriate. In other circumstances, the procedures listed below will be followed.

#### 1. Informal Discussion/ Counseling

An informal discussion is a discussion between the supervisor and the employee to address potential or minor performance and/or conduct deficiencies, and/or to clarify relevant policies, procedures or practices.

The supervisor may document the Informal Discussion with a memo to the supervisor's file. The memo should contain the date of the discussion, a brief summary of the facts discussed, the supervisor's expectations, and the employee's response. A memo to the supervisor's file is always recommended.

If performance and/or conduct deficiencies persist, the supervisor may repeat this level of discipline or utilize another level of discipline.

## **2. Formal Oral Discussion**

A formal oral discussion is between the supervisor and the employee to address repeated or more serious performance and/or conduct deficiencies. A Formal Discussion may also be used where a prior Informal Discussion/Counseling failed to resolve the issue.

The supervisor must document the formal discussion with a memo to the employee, with a copy to the employee's personnel file in the department, and one sent to Human Resources. The memo should include at a minimum, the date, a clear description of the performance and/or conduct deficiency that prompted the discipline, and any prior discipline, the action taken by the supervisor, how the employee's conduct or performance must change, and the consequences of continued deficiencies up to and including termination.

If performance and/or conduct deficiencies persist, the supervisor may repeat this level of discipline or utilize another level of discipline.

## **3. Written Reprimand**

A written Reprimand formalizes the discussion between the supervisor and the employee regarding repeated or more serious performance and/or conduct deficiencies. The Written Reprimand communicates to the employee the urgency of correcting the performance and/or conduct deficiency.

The Written Reprimand should include at a minimum, the date, a clear description of the performance and/or conduct deficiency that prompted the discipline, a reference to any policy, procedure, or performance standard implicated, a description of any prior discipline, the action taken by the supervisor, how the employee's conduct or performance must change, the consequences of continued deficiencies up to and including termination and the supervisor's signature. The Written Reprimand may include a final warning. The supervisor should have the employee sign and date the Written Reprimand acknowledging receipt. A copy of the Written Reprimand must be forwarded to the employee's personnel file in Human Resources. A similar copy should be retained in the employee's personnel file in the department.

If performance and/or conduct deficiencies persist, the supervisor may repeat this level of discipline or utilize another level of discipline.

### **Progressive Discipline Intervention**

In situations when the employee's performance or behavior is not what is expected, the supervisor may create an opportunity to improve the behavior/performance by completing a Performance Expectation Plan (PEP). A PEP should be discussed and agreed upon with the employee to ensure that an employee has had ample time to change or correct their inappropriate behavior or performance. The PEP is an alternative tool used to document an employee's performance/behavior prior to suspending or terminating an employee. The PEP can also be used in conjunction with a Written Reprimand in hopes of improving the employee's behavior or performance.

#### ***Performance Expectation Plan (PEP)***

Determination of placement in this program and the length of time of involvement will be made by the Chief Human Resources Officer or Associate Director for Human Resources in consultation with the appropriate administrative staff. The PEP should not be less than sixty (60) calendar days and no more than three (3) months; the PEP can be extended due to extenuating circumstances.

Notification of placement shall be given orally and in writing. A copy signed by the employee will be placed in the employee's official personnel record in Human Resources in addition to the employee's personnel file in their department.

Specific recommendations to reach acceptable levels of performance will be in writing. A time schedule will be included to determine progress. This progress will be reviewed with the employee throughout the performance development experience.

Within five days prior to the conclusion of the plan period, the supervisor will prepare a written evaluation which will be discussed with the employee. The evaluation will be forwarded to the Department of Human Resources with one of the following recommendations:

1. The employee has successfully completed the PEP; or
2. The employee should be suspended or terminated from employment, since the employee failed to successfully complete the PEP.

#### **4. Suspension**

For major offenses or where prior positive discipline failed to correct the performance or conduct deficiencies, a recommendation for Suspension Without Pay may be appropriate.

Before preparing such a recommendation, the supervisor **Must** consult with the Chief Human Resources Officer or Associate Director of Human Resources who are both authorized to suspend an employee pending an investigation of charges against the employee or for disciplinary purposes. Suspension without pay for an appropriate amount of days may be used for disciplinary purposes provided no termination proceeding has been initiated.

It shall be within the discretion of the Chief Human Resources Officer, Associate Director of Human Resources and the respective Vice President to suspend any employee with or without pay.

If performance and/or conduct deficiencies persist, the supervisor may repeat this level of discipline or recommend terminating the employee.

## **5. Termination**

Before any employee will be terminated from the University, a meeting between the supervisor and the person who is empowered to make the decision to terminate the employee, and the Chief Human Resources Officer or Associate Director of Human Resources **Must** be held to review the recommendation. Since Human Resources is responsible for providing equitable treatment of employees throughout the University and has a broad-based knowledge of similar infractions and sanctions, the supervisors are highly encouraged to consider HR's recommendation.

### **Appeals (Terminations, Suspensions or Demotions Only)**

An employee who disagrees with their Demotion, Suspension or Termination may pursue an appeal pursuant to the Appeals Policy and Procedure #2520.