

**WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY
GUIDELINES FOR SUPERVISORS
REGARDING
DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS INCLUDING DISMISSAL OF STAFF EMPLOYEES**

1. Reference

Human Resources Policy and Procedures Manual, Section XII-1, Disciplinary Actions and Dismissal of Staff Employees.

2. General

- a. Nothing in the policy or its implementation in any way alters or limits the employment at will relationship which exists between the University and its employees (in which employment may be terminated by either party, at any time and for any reason that is not discriminatory.) The discipline policy provides employees and supervisors with direction as to instances in which disciplinary actions might be taken by supervisors against staff employees. Disciplinary actions in accordance with this policy will generally be imposed either for unsatisfactory job performance or for unacceptable personal conduct.
- b. Reasons for which an employee may be disciplined generally falls within either of two categories: (1) unsatisfactory job performance and (2) unacceptable personal conduct. Unsatisfactory job performance occurs when, in the supervisor's reasonable opinion, an employee fails to satisfactorily meet job requirements, either as set forth in the employee job description or as directed by the employee supervisor. Unacceptable personal conduct occurs when an employee engages in conduct for which no reasonable person should expect to receive prior warning such as theft, insubordination, falsification of documents, misuse of property, etc.

3. Guidance on Imposition of Discipline

- a. **Supervisors are to consult with the Employee Relations Manager from the Department of Human Resources prior to imposing disciplinary action consisting of suspension without pay, demotion, or discharge.**
- b. If a supervisor decides to take administrative action, rather than disciplinary action for unacceptable personal conduct, the supervisor may consider whether to counsel the employee about the conduct, issue a written admonition, or issue a written reprimand to the employee (*see* Attachment 1 for Sample Written Admonition/Reprimand).
- c. When a supervisor imposes disciplinary action for unsatisfactory job performance, the supervisor should usually follow a progressive disciplinary process that normally includes a Written Warning and, if necessary, a Final Written Warning (*see* Attachment 2 for Sample Written Warning/Final Written

Warning).

- d. **When a supervisor intends to take disciplinary action resulting in demotion, suspension without pay, or discharge, the supervisor is to first communicate such intention to the Employee Relations Manager, and should have available for the Employee Relations Manager review a copy of all relevant documentation pertaining to the specific circumstances upon which the intended action is based.**
- e. A supervisor may, on his or her own initiative or with the concurrence of the Employee Relations Manager, determine that an employee should be placed on administrative leave with pay, for a period not to exceed five (5) working days, pending a final determination of appropriate disciplinary action to be taken, in order to avoid disruption of the workplace and/or to protect the safety of persons or property, or to fully investigate allegations of performance or conduct deficiencies justifying the imposition of disciplinary action.
- f. The Employee Relations Manager is available to consult with and advise supervisors with respect to the imposition of employee discipline, and will assist in evaluating proposed courses of action and the potential effects of such contemplated actions on the interests of the University and of the employee. Such advice can be especially helpful in the consideration of the most serious levels of discipline, **and is considered important in fostering positive employer-employee relations.**
- g. All written warnings to employees will be considered to have an “active life” of 18 months from the date of issuance to the disciplined employee. However, a written warning may be made inactive at any time deemed appropriate by the disciplined employee supervisor and department head.

4. Referral

Questions regarding these guidelines may be referred to the Employee Relations Manager, Department of Human Resources, Room 116, Reynolda Hall at 758-4814 or mclaugda@wf.edu.

Attachments:

- Sample Written Admonition/Reprimand
- Sample Written Warning/Final Written Warning
- Sample Notification of Intent to Impose Disciplinary Action
- Sample Notification of Discharge/Suspension/Demotion

ATTACHMENT 1 – SAMPLE WRITTEN ADMONITION/REPRIMAND

DEPARTMENT LETTERHEAD

MEMORANDUM

TO: Employee's Name
Job Title

FROM: Supervisor's Name (Signature)
Job Title

DATE:

SUBJECT: Written Admonition – Unacceptable Personal Conduct **OR**
Written Reprimand – Unacceptable Personal Conduct

The purpose of this memorandum is to (**admonish/reprimand**) you for your behavior on (**date/time**) when you (**description of the unacceptable personal conduct**).

Specifically, (**detailed description of what occurred**). Your behavior was (**rude, unprofessional, etc.**) Your behavior (**explanation of how the unacceptable personal conduct affected the safety, efficiency, or order of the work unit**).

Any recurrence of this type of behavior will result in disciplinary action.

A copy of this memorandum will be placed in your personnel file for 18 months. If you demonstrate to my satisfaction an appropriate change in behavior sooner than 18 months, I will consider removing it at an earlier date.

cc: Human Resources (Employee Relations)

ATTACHMENT 2 – SAMPLE WRITTEN WARNING / FINAL WRITTEN WARNING

DEPARTMENT LETTERHEAD

MEMORANDUM

TO: Employee's Name
Job Title

FROM: Supervisor's Name (Signature)
Job Title

DATE:

SUBJECT: Written Warning – Unsatisfactory Job Performance **OR**
Final Written Warning – Unsatisfactory Job Performance

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you that you are failing to satisfactorily meet the job requirements of your position. Specifically, **(description of unsatisfactory job performance)**.

(In this section, state specifically what has occurred; include when, where, how, etc. Be very specific, and avoid statements like, "I believe" or "I feel". State what actually happened!)

(In this section, state the supervisor's expectations, making sure that they are clear and reasonable).

(In this section, the supervisor must state a specific and reasonable length of time for improvement to occur, and the consequences of failure to improve the performance).

I would like to review your progress at a follow-up meeting on **(date/time)**. I encourage you to contact me personally whenever you feel you need information, assistance, or support in meeting the expectations outlined above. If there is no improvement in your performance in the meantime, I will take further disciplinary action up to and including termination of your employment.

If you desire to respond in writing to this written warning, please do so within 24 hours. I would be happy to meet with you to provide further explanation of the information contained in this memorandum.

Written Warning – Unsatisfactory Job Performance
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(Supervisors may prefer to have the employee comment on the written warning letter rather than responding in writing within 24 hours, as the previous paragraph states. If that is preferred, the supervisor may include an “Employee Comments” section as the last paragraph in the Written Warning)

Employee Comments:

cc: Human Resources (Employee Relations)

ATTACHMENT 3 – SAMPLE NOTIFICATION OF INTENT TO IMPOSE
DISCIPLINARY ACTION

DEPARTMENT LETTERHEAD

MEMORANDUM

THRU: Department Head's Name (Concur: Signature)
Job Title

TO: Employee Relations Manager

FROM: Immediate Supervisor's Name (Signature)
Job Title

DATE:

SUBJECT: Notification of Intent to Impose Disciplinary Action

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you of my intent to impose disciplinary action against **(Employee's Name)**, **(Job Title)** for **(unsatisfactory job performance/unacceptable personal conduct)**. I intend to **(demote/suspend without pay/discharge)** **(Employee's Name)** on the basis of **(provide a specific statement describing the conduct or performance for which the supervisor is basing this decision)**.

I have attached a copy of all pertinent documentation for your review. I may be reached at **(extension)**.

ATTACHMENT 4 – SAMPLE NOTIFICATION OF
DISCHARGE/SUSPENSION/DEMOTION

DEPARTMENT LETTERHEAD

MEMORANDUM

TO: Employee's Name
Job Title

FROM: Immediate Supervisor's Name (Signature)
Job Title

Concur: Department Director's Name (Signature)

Note: Required if the supervisor imposing the discipline is not the
Department/Office Head

DATE:

SUBJECT: Notification of (**Discharge from Employment**) (**Suspension Without
Pay**) (**Demotion**)

The purpose of this Memorandum is to notify you that after careful consideration of the information you presented during our meeting held on **date**, and with the concurrence of **Department/Office Head**, I have decided to (**terminate your employment/suspend you for ___ days/demote you from _____ to _____**) due to your (**misconduct/unsatisfactory job performance**) to wit:

(Include a clear carefully prepared paragraph summarizing the basis for the disciplinary action).

The effective date of your **discharge/suspension/demotion** is **date**.

(In Cases of Termination)

You are requested to contact the Human Resources Department (x 4945) to schedule an exit interview, at which time you will be given information regarding health insurance and other benefits.

cc: Human Resources (Employee Relations)