



Policy Chapter: Chapter 5 Human Resources

Policy Number and Title: 05.033 Staff Employee Discipline and Discharge

I. Policy Statement

University of North Texas employees are expected to perform their job responsibilities and conduct themselves in a manner that instills the highest confidence in the abilities and integrity of public servants. Discipline may be used to address employee performance and conduct that does not meet the work standards or expectations of the University.

II. Application of Policy

All regular staff.

III. Policy Definitions

A. Approving Official

“Approving official” means an employee in a management position above the level of the individual taking the termination action and supervises the area in which the terminated employee worked.

B. At-Will Employment

“At-Will Employment” means an employment relationship of indefinite duration that may be terminated by either party, at any time, without cause or for any reason except one that is unlawful.

C. Disciplinary Actions

“Disciplinary Actions” mean actions taken by supervisors to address and correct employee performance and conduct that does not meet work standards and expectations up to and including termination of employment.

D. Suspension

“Suspension” means an interruption of work, without pay, for a specific number of days.

E. Management Position

“Management Position” means a position that has supervisory responsibilities and authority to hire and terminate one or more regular staff employees.

F. Progressive Discipline

“Progressive Discipline” means the process of using increasingly serious actions to address employee performance or conduct that does not meet work standards or expectations.

G. Regular Staff

“Regular Staff” means an individual who is employed part-time, full-time, or in a temporary capacity. “Regular Staff” does not include faculty or individuals who are required to be a

student as a condition of employment.

H. Retaliation

“Retaliation” means taking an adverse employment action against an employee for exercising a right protected by the First Amendment of the United States or Texas Constitution, reporting or causing to report unlawful discrimination, reporting or causing to report suspected wrongdoing, or participating in an investigation of unlawful discrimination or suspected misconduct or a related proceeding.

I. Work Standards

“Work Standards” mean policies, procedures, needs of the unit, standards of performance, and conduct expectations established by the University or the employing department.

IV. Policy Responsibilities

A. General

1. Basis for Disciplinary Action

Employees are expected to perform work standards for their specific job. An employee who does not fulfill the responsibilities and expectations of the position is subject to disciplinary action.

2. Supervisor Responsibility

Supervisors are responsible for informing employees when their performance does not meet work standards and for complying with the procedures set out in this policy.

3. Review by Human Resources Department

Human Resources (HR) must be consulted prior to any disciplinary action being taken against an employee, excluding verbal warnings. HR shall review all information regarding the requested action and advise accordingly. HR is responsible for creating and publishing all forms used to document disciplinary actions or for approving requests to use an alternate document.

B. Disciplinary Actions Other than Termination & Post-Action Review

Progressive disciplinary steps, as outlined below, are encouraged when a supervisor believes it is in the best interest of the department. However, any of the following actions may be used without prior disciplinary measures having been imposed:

1. Verbal Warning

A verbal warning is a documented discussion in which the supervisor notifies an employee that the employee’s performance is not meeting work standards or conduct expectations, and identifies steps the employee must take to correct the deficient performance or conduct or to prevent a further occurrence.

2. Written Warning

A written warning is a formal notification in which the supervisor identifies one or more areas of an employee's performance that do not meet work standards or conduct expectations. The written warning places the employee on notice that more severe disciplinary action will be taken, including termination, if sustained improvement in performance or conduct does not occur.

3. Suspension

Suspension is an interruption of work, without pay, for a specific number of days.

- a. A suspension must be presented to an employee in writing and include, at a minimum, the reason(s) for suspension and the dates the suspension begins and ends.
- b. Suspension of exempt employees may be imposed for one or more full days for violation of a major safety rule or for a serious infraction of workplace conduct rules, including but not limited to violation of the sexual harassment, workplace violence, and drug and alcohol policies; and violation of state or federal law. Disciplinary suspension of exempt employees for any other reason must be in full work-week increments.

4. Review of Disciplinary Actions

An employee who disagrees with a verbal or written warning or a suspension may file a grievance in accordance with the [Employee Grievance policy](#).

C. Involuntary Termination (Discharge)

An employee may be terminated as a disciplinary action or without cause and with or without warning, except a termination shall not be based on an unlawful reason, including retaliation, or for another reason in violation of a specific federal or state law.

1. Review of Termination by Human Resources

All involuntary termination actions shall be reviewed by Human Resources before the action is considered by an Approving Official.

2. Prior Approval by Approving Official

A termination action must be approved by an Approving Official before a staff employee is discharged. Prior approval is not required for an employee who reports directly to the President.

3. Notice of Involuntary Termination

Employees must be informed in writing of the involuntary termination and reason(s) at the time of the discharge. The termination is effective immediately upon delivery of the notice of termination.

4. Final Decision

Termination decisions made in accordance with this policy are final and are not subject to any additional review or to a grievance.

D. At-Will Relationship

No provision of this policy confers any right that is contrary to the employment-at-will relationship.

V. References and Cross-References

[UNT Regents Rule 5.1000, Grievance Process](#)

[UNT System Regulation 3.1000, At-Will Employment Relationship](#)

[UNT Policy 05.042, Grievance](#)

VI. Revision History

Policy Contact:	Asst VC & Chief HR Officer
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