UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina

Student Affairs and
Academic Support

Guide to Corrective Actions for Student Employees

This document provides guidance on disciplinary action and termination for cause for student employees within the Division of Student Affairs & Academic Support. Developed by the Division's Human Resources team, it serves as a recommended framework to ensure consistency in addressing student employee misconduct or inappropriate workplace behavior. The goal is to assist supervisors in applying corrective action fairly and uniformly across similar situations.

A. Division of Student Affairs & Academic Support student employees are expected to perform their work efficiently and effectively. Supervisors are expected to set an example by their own conduct, attitude, and work habits.

B. Human Resource Assistance

1. Supervisors and employees are encouraged to seek resolution of workplace disputes through their supervisors first; however, if that option is not realistic given the elements of the dispute, both supervisors and employees are encouraged to contact the SAAS Shared Services HR Team for assistance with student employee relations matter.
2. Student employees and supervisors may not be forbidden or discouraged from contacting the Division of Student Affairs & Academic Support Human Resources, nor may any retaliatory action be taken against any employee or supervisor for that reason.

C. Corrective Action

1. Disciplinary action should be conducted by progressive and constructive measures for the correction of employee misconduct or inappropriate workplace behavior, and prior to a request for termination.
2. Whenever practical, coaching and counseling should precede any disciplinary action.
3. For just cause, any student employee may be counseled, warned, reprimanded, put on probation, or terminated whenever such action is considered necessary by the authorized supervisor or higher-level administrative official within the employee's line of supervision.
4. The circumstances surrounding misconduct or inappropriate workplace behavior will normally suggest what disciplinary action should be taken. Circumstances to be considered include the severity of the misconduct or behavior, the number of times it has occurred, and any previous counseling or disciplinary actions taken. The Division of Student Affairs & Academic Support has two distinct circumstances that warrant different disciplinary actions.
5. Any communication sent to a student regarding corrective action must include stuhire@mailbox.sc.edu in the cc line.

D. **Stages of Corrective Action**

1. **Verbal Warning:** A verbal conversation between a supervisor and an employee about a minor action(s) that does not meet job expectations, the actions that need to take place to address the behavior and reiterate job expectations. Further actions that fail to meet job expectations could result in written reprimand, probation, or termination. Verbal warnings must be followed up via email recapping the conversation.
2. **Written Reprimand:** Corrective action status that is more escalated than a Verbal Warning resulting from a minor action(s) that does not meet job expectations. Further actions that fail to meet job expectations could result in probation or termination.
3. **Probation:** Corrective action status that results from continuous or escalated action(s) that do not meet job expectations. During the time of probation, further actions that fail to meet job expectations could result in termination.
4. **Termination:** Corrective action whereby employee is separated from employment with the University of South Carolina due to the frequency or nature of job expectations not being met. With termination, the employee will lose their compensation and any other perks associated with the position.
5. Any disciplinary action beyond a written reprimand should include the steps in the **Procedures – Corrective Action (G)**.

E. **Procedures-Corrective Action**

1. The chart of Causes for Corrective Action and Recommended Outcomes (Appendix A) contains the recommended uniform outcomes for instances where job expectations are not met. The chart is to be used as a guide to ensure that all supervisors are being consistent in carrying out corrective action with employees involved in similar situations. It is not inclusive of all actions that do not meet job expectations.
2. At the occurrence of any instance where an employee does not meet job expectations, the supervisor is expected to perform the following tasks:
    i. Gather all facts needed to prepare for a conversation with the employee.
    ii. The employee's direct supervisor will follow up with their supervisor to confirm the most appropriate corrective action status and activity (if applicable) that will need to be completed by the employee.
3. Every attempt should be made to schedule a conversation within ***two business days*** of being notified of the employee not meeting expectations. If the supervisor is not available, then the most appropriate full-time staff member will step in place of the supervisor.
    i. The first conversation with the employee should be to find out the circumstances that created the situation possibly requiring corrective action.
4. Conduct a conversation with the employee as follows:
    i. The supervisor shares their understanding of what action or inaction(s) took place by the employee that led to job expectations not being met. The supervisor will share how the expectations were relayed (i.e., Training, during staff meeting, or via email) if necessary.

ii. The supervisor outlines specific job expectations that were not met by the employee.

iii. The supervisor allows the employee to share their account of what happened and give appropriate context related to actions or inaction(s) that led to the employee not meeting expectations. The supervisor asks clarifying and follow-up questions to get a complete understanding of what took place.

iv. The supervisor shares the importance of why job expectations need to be met. The supervisor should incorporate the negative impact on the department & University of South Carolina that ensures the employee understands the consequences of the action(s) or inaction(s) taken.

v. The supervisor allows space for the employee to share anything that is misunderstood and addresses any misunderstandings as needed.

vi. The supervisor shares potential corrective action status as well as explore activities the employee will complete to make sure job expectations are being upheld, if applicable.

5. A formal letter will need to be acknowledged by the employee as follows no more than one business day:
    i. Print the letter, sign it and have the employee sign it.
    ii. Scan the signed letter.
6. The supervisor will send the letter as follows:
    i. Verbal Warning or Written Reprimand
        1. To: Student
        2. CC: co-supervisor (If applicable), Direct supervisor, stuhire@mailbox.sc.edu
    ii. Probation or Termination
        1. To: Student
        2. CC: co-supervisor (If applicable), Direct supervisor, Assistant Director, Director, stuhire@mailbox.sc.edu

F. Resolution of Disputes

1. Student employees involved in a dispute should seek resolution at the unit level first. Supervisors should also notify the SAAS HR team of any dispute within 24 hours.
    i. Students must bring concerns about their employment to the attention of their supervisor as soon as possible.
    ii. Supervisors are expected to make good faith efforts at fair and equitable resolution which includes informing the student of their decision.
    iii. If resolution cannot be reached, assistance will be provided to both the student & supervisor by the SAAS HR team.
2. Grievance Policy

    STAF 6.27 outlines the student grievance policy for Non-Academic matters.
3. Appeals
    i. The appeal process for graduate assistants is described in ACAF 4.00

and the Graduate Bulletin.

ii. For all other student employees, decisions at the unit level are final and there is no appeal process.

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APPENDIX A

Causes for Corrective Action and Recommended Outcomes

	OFFENSE	FIRST OCCURRENCE	SECOND OCCURRENCE	THIRD OCCURRENCE	NOTE
General	Any accumulation of three offenses, within an academic semester, where the 1st offense calls for Verbal or written reprimand	Probation to dismissal	Dismissal		
	Any accumulation of three offenses, within an academic semester, where the 1st or 2nd offense calls for written reprimand	Dismissal			
	Any accumulation of three offenses, within 30 calendar days, where the 1st or 2nd offense calls for written reprimand	Dismissal			
	Substandard job performance	As determined by review of job performance with supervisor and Director			

	OFFENSE	FIRST OCCURRENCE	SECOND OCCURRENCE	THIRD OCCURRENCE	NOTE
Attendance and Leave (American with Disabilities Act (ADA))	Abandonment of position	Employees who voluntarily fail to report to work for three (3) consecutive workdays and fail to contact appropriate leadership during the time period will be considered to have voluntarily resigned			
	Excessive absenteeism (More than 3 times in an academic semester)	Verbal warning	Written reprimand to probation	Dismissal	
	Excessive use/abuse of switching shifts (more than 5 times based on reasons)	Verbal warning to written reprimand	Written reprimand to dismissal	Dismissal	
	Habitual tardiness or failure to observe scheduled work duties; included but not limited to job duties, meetings, scheduled tasks, hall events	Verbal warning	Written reprimand to dismissal	Dismissal	
	Leaving workstation without authorization	Verbal warning to written reprimand	Written reprimand to dismissal	Dismissal	
	Medical procedure that requires employee to be out more than 2 weeks or unable to perform their duties	Contact Shared Services HR			
	Unexcused absence from training, 1-on-1 with Supervisor, or any scheduled meeting responsibility	Probation (Academic Semester)	Dismissal		
	Missing an assigned shift	Verbal Warning (30 day increments)	Probation	Dismissal	

	OFFENSE	FIRST OCCURRENCE	SECOND OCCURRENCE	THIRD OCCURRENCE	NOTE
Misconduct	Conviction of a felony which adversely reflects on an individual's suitability for continued employment	Dismissal			
	Conviction of a misdemeanor such that the employee's presence on the job could or would be harmful to the employee or others such that the employee's fitness to perform assigned duties is affected	Written reprimand to dismissal	Dismissal		
	Criminal charges such that the employee's presence on the job could or would be harmful to the employee or others such that the employee's fitness to perform assigned duties is affected	Probation to dismissal	Dismissal		
	Failure to pass an alcohol or drug test required by Federal or State law, regulation, or policy	Probation to dismissal	Dismissal		Action must be in accord with the state statute on alcoholism 8- 11-110 SC code of laws
	Refusal to submit to an alcohol or drug test required by Federal or State law, regulation, or policy	Probation to dismissal	Dismissal		Action must be in accord with the state statute on alcoholism 8-11-110 SC code of laws
	Reporting to work under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drugs	Probation to dismissal	Dismissal		Action must be in accord with the state statute on alcoholism 8- 11-110 SC code of laws
	Drinking alcoholic beverages on the job	Probation to dismissal	Dismissal		Action must be in accord with the state statute on alcoholism 8- 11-110 SC code of laws
	Stealing or misappropriation of university assets	Dismissal			
	Using, possessing, or selling illegal drugs on the job	Dismissal			
	Willful acts that would endanger the lives or property of others	Dismissal			

	OFFENSE	FIRST OCCURRENCE	SECOND OCCURRENCE	THIRD OCCURRENCE	NOTE
Misuse of University Property	Reporting to work under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drugs	Probation to dismissal	Dismissal		Action must be in accord with the state statute on alcoholism 8- 11-110 SC code of laws
	Drinking alcoholic beverages on the job	Probation to dismissal	Dismissal		Action must be in accord with the state statute on alcoholism 8- 11-110 SC code of laws
	Stealing or misappropriation of university assets	Dismissal			
	Using, possessing, or selling illegal drugs on the job	Dismissal			
	Willful acts that would endanger the lives or property of others	Dismissal			

	OFFENSE	FIRST OCCURRENCE	SECOND OCCURRENCE	THIRD OCCURRENCE	NOTE
Negligence	Failure to follow established safety precautions, or failure to use safety equipment	Written reprimand to Probation	Probation to dismissal	Dismissal	
	Gross negligence	Written reprimand to dismissal	Dismissal		
	Negligence in the performance of job duties	Verbal warning to written reprimand	Written reprimand to dismissal	Dismissal	
	Sleeping or appearing to sleep while performing job duties and/or job requirements	Written reprimand to dismissal	Probation to dismissal	Dismissal	
	Willful violation of written rules, regulations or policies	Written reprimand to dismissal	Probation to dismissal	Dismissal	

	OFFENSE	FIRST OCCURRENCE	SECOND OCCURRENCE	THIRD OCCURRENCE	NOTE
Unauthorized Actions	Acceptance, without prior approval, of work assignment or compensation that is found to be a conflict of interest	Written reprimand to dismissal	Dismissal		
	Unauthorized distribution of written or printed material of any kind on university premises	Written reprimand	Probation to dismissal	Dismissal	
	Unauthorized overtime worked by a non-exempt employee	Verbal warning	Written reprimand to dismissal	Dismissal	
	Unauthorized release of records or information contained therein	Written reprimand to dismissal	Probation to dismissal	Dismissal	
	Unauthorized sales or solicitation on university premises	Written reprimand	Probation to dismissal	Dismissal	

	OFFENSE	FIRST OCCURRENCE	SECOND OCCURRENCE	THIRD OCCURRENCE	NOTE
Falsification	Failure to provide accurate, truthful, and complete information	Written reprimand to probation	Probation to dismissal	Dismissal	
	Falsification of records (including employment application)	Written reprimand to dismissal	Probation to dismissal	Dismissal	
	Willful false statements to a supervisor	Probation to dismissal	Dismissal		

	OFFENSE	FIRST OCCURRENCE	SECOND OCCURRENCE	THIRD OCCURRENCE	NOTE
Insubordination	Insubordination or refusal to accept a reasonable and proper assignment from an authorized supervisor	Written reprimand to dismissal	Probation to dismissal	Dismissal	
	Refusal to cooperate with an official university investigation	Written reprimand to dismissal	Probation to dismissal	Dismissal	

	OFFENSE	FIRST OCCURRENCE	SECOND OCCURRENCE	THIRD OCCURRENCE	NOTE
Inharmonious Behavior	Failure to maintain satisfactory and harmonious working relations with the public, students, and/or employees	Verbal warning to dismissal	Written reprimand to dismissal	Dismissal	
	Fighting (other than reasonable defense to an unprovoked attack)	Probation to dismissal	Dismissal		
	Inappropriate aggressive workplace behavior or bullying; including verbal or physical threats towards another employee	Written reprimand to dismissal	Probation to dismissal	Dismissal	
	Malicious use of profane or abusive language to others	Verbal warning to written reprimand	Written reprimand to dismissal	Dismissal	
	Sexual harassment	Written reprimand to dismissal	Probation to dismissal	Dismissal	See Policy EOP 1.02 Sexual Harassment
	Trespassing on the home of any state official or employee or student for the purpose of harassing or forcing dialog or discussion	Written reprimand to dismissal	Dismissal		
	Unauthorized possession of firearms or lethal weapons on the job	Dismissal			

	OFFENSE	FIRST OCCURRENCE	SECOND OCCURRENCE	THIRD OCCURRENCE	NOTE
Other	Acceptance of gifts in exchange for favors or influence	Probation to dismissal	Dismissal		
	Engaging in work stoppages, slowdowns or strikes	Written reprimand to dismissal	Dismissal		
	Failure to obtain or maintain a license or certificate as a condition of employment, or as required by law	Verbal warning to dismissal	Written reprimand to dismissal	Dismissal	
	Guilty of gross misconduct or conduct unbecoming a university employee that substantially affects the reputation of the institution.	Written reprimand to dismissal	Probation to dismissal	Dismissal	
	Horseplay or loafing	Verbal warning to written reprimand	Written reprimand to dismissal	Dismissal	
	Interference with another employee's work	Verbal warning to written reprimand	Written reprimand to dismissal	Dismissal	

The above indicated range of corrective actions in response to specific offenses is to be used as a guide and is not intended to be all-inclusive. At the occurrence of any of the listed offenses, or any that are not listed, the appropriate corrective action shall be determined after the particular circumstances of the case have been carefully considered. The state and federal laws referenced above are not all-inclusive in administering discipline.