



Employee Relations

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Policy Content

It is a goal of Trinity University that supervisors and employees feel free to have open and informal discussions when complaints and problems arise. The supervisor should encourage his/her employees to discuss their problems freely and openly. The Director of Human Resources is available to assist any individual or group of employees and the supervisor in finding resolution to a problem.

The supervisor is responsible for establishing and maintaining an atmosphere within which employees can improve their job performance and develop self-discipline. Continued emphasis on developing correct work habits through effective orientation, training, performance evaluations and on-going, meaningful communication is essential to achieve the goals of the University.

The provisions in this chapter and in this Handbook shall not be construed to be a modification in any way of the “at will” employment doctrine described in Sections 1.4 and 1.5 heretofore. Nothing in this Chapter shall be, or shall be construed as, a contract or other commitment that the University must have good cause or any cause for disciplinary action or for discharge of any classified Employee. The University retains the final decision in any matter pertaining to disciplinary action or discharge.

To promote consistency throughout the University in connection with acceptable standards of work performance and conduct on the job, the University has established reasonable rules for employees to know, understand and observe. When any of these rules are violated, and where the University in its sole discretion elects not to effectuate immediate termination of employment, corrective action may be initiated by the supervisor to bring the employee's job performance and/or job conduct up to the expected standard. However, whenever possible, counseling and other non-punitive procedures should be used before formal corrective action is taken because counseling is a fundamental part of supervisory responsibilities in dealing with employees.

1. When job performance does not meet expectations, or when mistakes or rule infractions become chronic, deliberate or of a serious nature, formal action by the supervisor is required. In instances where the University in its sole discretion elects not to effectuate immediate termination of employment, corrective action, depending upon the nature of the situation and/or the degree of the violation, may be taken in any of the following forms: oral counseling, written warning, withholding merit wages or salary increases for a period of time, disciplinary suspension from work when appropriate, change to lower grade, or other disciplinary action.
2. When misconduct does occur, and the University in its sole discretion elects not to effectuate immediate termination of employment, supervisors should take action to redirect the employee. This is done through a progressive corrective disciplinary procedure. The degree and severity of the violation should dictate when and how the corrective discipline will be imposed. Corrective progressive discipline, to offer clarification, does not apply to serious acts of major misconduct, insubordination, gross negligence, gross disregard of the employee's obligation to Trinity University or to instances where a decision has been made to effectuate immediate termination of employment. Major violations will subject the employee to discharge on the first offense. Progressive corrective disciplinary action applies to less serious offenses where the University has elected not to generally effectuate immediate termination of employment. The procedure involves increasingly severe penalties each time an employee is disciplined. An example of a sequence of progressive corrective disciplinary action is as follows:
 1. Formal warnings either oral or written may be issued. Oral warnings are reminders to employees that a rule infraction has occurred or might occur should the employee persist in whatever course of action he/she is taking. The oral warning also serves to advise employees that the supervisor is aware of an unacceptable situation and that formal (written) warnings may ensue if self-corrective action is not taken. The supervisor should maintain an informal counseling record of the oral warnings which records the date, problem and expectation for resolution.
 2. Written formal warnings are issued to identify the specific problem cause, to cite what specific corrective action must be taken by the employee being disciplined, and to specify what further corrective action will ensue should the rule(s) violation(s) continue.
 3. Employees may be asked to sign a copy of the written warning. The employee's signature indicates only that the employee being disciplined is aware of the warning, and not that he/she is necessarily in agreement with the warning. Should any employee refuse to sign a written warning, it would be advisable to have a witness (other than the supervisor) sign to the effect that the employee did see the warning but refused to sign it. The supervisor will also sign the same copy of the written warning as did the employee, and this signed copy will be forwarded through the appropriate administrative channels in the division and then to the Director of the Human Resources Office for inclusion in the employee's personnel file. A second copy of the written warning will be given to the employee(s) who has/have been warned.
 4. The last written warning prior to discharge from employment should be labeled as the final written warning. This final warning should indicate, along with the problem and corrective action(s) previously initiated, that the employee has not appreciably improved

and any further rule violation(s) will result in immediate discharge. In the event that an employee has been issued a final warning and another infraction occurs, another final warning should not be initiated. In most instances, at this point the employee should be discharged.

Though not a requirement, in the event that an employee is charged with a serious rule violation, the employee may be immediately placed on administrative leave with pay until a full investigation has been completed. Actions such as this should be closely coordinated with the Director of Human Resources.

Employees involved with rule violations, whether given written warnings, suspensions or a discharge, still may proceed with the University Grievance Procedure (see Section 12) to the extent which they are eligible.

Individual counseling, warnings and possible corrective actions are desirable steps for employees to improve their conduct and job performance. It is equally important that full recognition be given employees who do make real and successful efforts to correct their deficiencies.

All written warnings will become a part of an employee's personnel file.

Employees who have received oral and /or written warnings are encouraged to discuss their future performance frequently with their supervisors to be aware of their progress toward correction of previous deficiencies.

Revision Management

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