

STAFF HIRING AND EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

CAUSES FOR DISCIPLINE

Any action by a staff employee that interferes with the proper operation of the university may result in discipline. Personnel Services is available to advise departments when behavior occurs that necessitates discipline. The availability of progressive discipline does not alter the at-will nature of employment at the university. Employment and compensation of staff employees are at-will and therefore can be terminated, with or without cause, at any time without prior notice, at the employee's option or the university's option. In the event of a discrepancy between these policies and procedures and a collective bargaining agreement, the terms of the collective bargaining agreement will govern.

Prior to initiating any action to terminate a staff employee, a department must contact Personnel Services. No staff employee may be involuntarily terminated from the university without a request to terminate being reviewed by Personnel Services. The department must receive authorization from Personnel Services before proceeding.

Some behaviors and actions that may result in discipline, and which may result in termination include, **but are not limited to**, the following:

Attendance—includes, but is not limited to, unauthorized or unapproved absences; failure to abide by departmental procedures regarding notification of or requests for leave; habitual tardiness and chronic absenteeism; patterns indicating abuse of leave policy; falsification of timekeeping records; and failure to return from an approved leave of absence or job abandonment.

Breach of Confidentiality—includes, but is not limited to, unauthorized access, use, release or retention of confidential or proprietary information concerning the university and any affiliated entities, their operations or their personnel (including, but not limited to, payroll, personnel, student, alumni, donor, patient, financial, business, research and teaching records) whether with intent or inadvertent.

Causes Harm to the Health or Wellbeing of a Patient—refers to any action or omission that directly or indirectly causes or has the potential to cause harm to the health or wellbeing of a patient, including, but not limited to, medication errors, gross negligence, improperly performed medical procedures or performance of medical procedures which the staff employee has not been trained and/or is not licensed to perform, falsification of medical records, failure to report abnormal findings and/or failure to follow up on abnormal findings, allowing others to harm a patient by failing to report or failing to properly supervise.

Code of Ethics Violations—refers to any conduct in violation of the university code of ethics. This includes, but is not limited to, acts of dishonesty or unfairness; disrespect for the rights and dignity of others; harassing, belittling, harming, or taking unfair advantage of others; and conflicts of interest that compromise the integrity of the individual or that of the university. For details of the university code of ethics, refer to www.usc.edu/policies.

Computing Resources Use—includes, but is not limited to, a staff employee violating the university's policy on use of computing resources (including transmitting intimidating, harassing, or threatening electronic communication and/or forging electronic communication; unauthorized use of e-mail, which includes, but is not limited to, mass e-mailings inconsistent with the goals of the institution, unsolicited junk e-mail, and the propagation of chain e-mail; advertising by external agencies on university web

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Conflict of Interest—includes, but is not limited to, a staff employee's failure to disclose to his or her immediate supervisor a situation or proposed activity that may constitute an actual conflict of interest or a potential conflict of interest (including, but not limited to, participating in any transaction between the university and a business entity in which the staff employee or his or her family member has a personal or financial interest); supervising or hiring a family member or person with whom the staff employee has an intimate relationship unless such relationship is properly disclosed and managed; accepting employment with a supplier or competitor or other such employer that he or she might reasonably expect would impair his or her independence of judgment in the performance of university duties; accepting gratuities, gifts or special favors from university suppliers or prospective suppliers, unless such gift is of nominal or minor value [e.g., isolated invitations to lunch or dinner]; disclosing confidential information acquired by reason of his or her university position or using such information for his or her or another's personal gain or benefit). For details about Conflict of Interest and Ethics Policy, refer to www.usc.edu/policies.

Discrimination or Harassment—includes, but is not limited to, conduct which constitutes discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, marital status, physical disability, mental disability, age (over 40 in employment issues), status as a disabled veteran, veteran of the Vietnam era, denial of family care medical leave, denial of pregnancy leave, or retaliation related to any of the above. Prohibited discrimination or harassment also refers to sexual harassment, which includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal and physical conduct of a sexual nature, or threats, attempts to retaliate, or retaliation against a person filing a complaint, a participant in the complaint process, or a person who disputes the allegations. For details about Discrimination and Harassment or Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures, refer to www.usc.edu/policies. Failure to complete mandatory training programs provided by the university shall be grounds for discipline, which may include termination.

Dishonesty—includes, but is not limited to, providing false or fraudulent information; knowingly providing inaccurate information on employment applications, payroll, benefits or other personnel documents or financial, expenditure, or procurement documents or during a university investigation or audit or complaint process, or accounting, internal accounting controls or auditing matters; the misappropriation of information or property belonging to others. Dishonesty includes making bad faith allegations of wrongdoing. Bad faith allegations include those that are knowingly false, capricious, maliciously motivated or intentionally dishonest or made with reckless disregard for or willful ignorance of facts that would disprove the allegation.

Drugs and Alcohol—includes, but is not limited to, the inappropriate use or unlawful manufacture, distribution, or possession of controlled substances; the abuse or misuse of prescribed medication; being under the influence of drugs or alcohol during work hours. The university has the right to take reasonable steps to determine if an employee is working under the influence of drugs or alcohol,

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including requiring non-invasive testing. Employees with a substance abuse problem are urged to discuss the problem with their supervisor and seek assistance from the USC Center for Work and Family Life. The full text of this policy is available in the "USC Drug Free" brochure or from the Office of Contracts and Grants at (213) 740-7762.

Failure to Report Improper Work Practices or Wrongdoing—refers to failure to report any action which interferes with or has an adverse impact on work operations and failure to report suspected wrongdoing, inappropriate behavior, or policy violations, including the employee's own actions or those of others; condoning or supporting such actions and behaviors by others. Such a report may be made to either the employee's own supervisor or the appropriate university office.

Gambling—includes, but is not limited to, gambling conducted on university property either during, before or after work hours, while on university business regardless of location, and offsite at functions and events related to the university.

Guns or Other Weapons at Work—Possession of any firearm (excludes permitted staff in the Department of Public Safety) or other weapon while at work or on university property is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to rifles, shotguns, pistols, ammunition, explosive compounds, bomb-making material, BB guns, pellet guns, bows and arrows, stun guns, knives (except silverware and knives used by authorized personnel as part of their job duties [e.g., in food service, facilities, maintenance, etc.]), and martial arts weapons.

Impeding an Investigation—impeding the university's investigation of complaints. Employees must cooperate fully with any university investigation. This includes, but is not limited to, investigations into complaints about research misconduct, auditing matters, violence, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or retaliation, and any employment-related matter. Employees are obligated to be immediately available to investigators and to be truthful and forthcoming. Supervisors must make employees available and may not discourage participation.

Inappropriate Behavior—refers to conduct which is unprofessional and unacceptable in a work environment, including inappropriate attire and appearance and behavior which may adversely affect morale in a department.

Inefficient/Unproductive Work Practices—refers to the failure to carry out job responsibilities and perform the essential functions of the job as described in the job description, failure to meet requirements of the job (e.g. maintaining required licenses and certifications), the failure to perform work in a productive or cost-effective manner, or the failure to perform work with an error rate within reasonable limits, including any conduct having an adverse impact on the efficient or orderly conduct of work.

Insubordination—refers to an employee refusing to follow a reasonable order or instruction, whether written or verbal, from a supervisor or any other university employee with apparent authority, including Department of Public Safety Officers in the discharge of their duties, or following an order or instruction only after complaining about or resisting that order or instruction.

Misappropriation of University Assets—refers to the unauthorized use of university assets which results or could have resulted in a financial loss to the university, including, but not limited to, theft, embezzlement, fraud or conflict of interest; or a staff employee failing to report known or suspected misappropriations, regardless of magnitude, to his or her immediate supervisor, manager, department head or dean; or supervisors, managers, or department heads failing to inform the Offices of Audit

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Services of possible misappropriations. For details about Misappropriation of University Assets Policy, refer to www.usc.edu/policies.

Obscene, Abusive or Pornographic Material—It is a violation of university policy for staff employees to use computing or other university resources to download, store or send obscene, abusive, or pornographic documents, images, e-mails, videos, music, or links to any Web site featuring sexual, pornographic, or obscene messages or images, unless there is a legitimate business need to do so. It is also a violation of university policy to download, access, view, or maintain on a university computer pornographic, sexual, or obscene messages (including jokes), documents, files, or images, without a legitimate business need. Staff employees who receive such material inadvertently and/or unsolicited should report the receipt to their system administrator or the Office of Information Security and also should take steps to avoid offending others with the received material (for example, by not forwarding or displaying it). Staff employees who deal with such material in the course of their work (i.e. as part of the academic curriculum, research or as part of a disciplinary investigation) are exempted, but must disclose such usage in advance to their supervisor.

Safety—refers to a staff employee failing to follow safe work practices or failing to report others for failing to follow safe work practices, failing to immediately file accident reports or report safety hazards to a supervisor or to the university's Office of Risk Management and Career Services. For details about Safety policies, refer to www.usc.edu/policies.

Unauthorized or Inappropriate Use of University Equipment or Resources—includes, but is not limited to, the use of the following for any purpose other than university business: university or departmental supplies, equipment, services, vehicles or other resources or property. Examples of equipment or resources include, but are not limited to, office supplies; letterhead; proprietary property such as logos and trademarks; tools; computer equipment; software, files, and other materials stored on or transmitted by computer equipment; telephones; copier equipment; fax machines; mailing services and human resources. Inappropriate use of human resources would include staff or students who are being paid for hours worked by the university using that time to instead do their own personal tasks or being assigned by another employee to do non-university work.

Violation of a Departmental Policy—a staff employee failing to comply with any departmental policy or procedure may be subject to disciplinary action which may result in termination. A staff employee should contact his or her supervisor to obtain copies of departmental policies and procedures.

Violation of a University Policy—a staff employee failing to comply with any university policy or procedure may be subject to disciplinary action which may result in termination. The body of university policies may be found at www.usc.edu/policies.

Violation of Federal, State, Local or Administrative Laws and/or Regulations Governing the Institution—a staff employee failing to comply with any federal, state, local or administrative law and/or regulation governing the institution may be subject to disciplinary action which may result in termination.

Violent Behavior—includes, but is not limited to, acts of violence, threats of violence, intimidation, or inappropriate aggression conducted on university property at all times, both during, before or after work hours, while on university business regardless of location and at offsite locations at functions and events under the auspices of the university. For details about Violence in the Workplace Policy, refer to www.usc.edu/policies.

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