

STAFF HIRING AND EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

1.10 GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE

Following are the criteria and guidelines for assessing evaluating and administering discipline to staff employees. Excluded are faculty and those claiming student status (including teaching and research assistants). Nothing in the following guidelines is intended to create any contractual rights or alter the at-will nature of the employment relationship.

The following should be considered when applying discipline:

1. Consistency in the application of discipline is important. Although different situations involving different staff employees and circumstances call for discretion in determining appropriate disciplinary action, similar offenses should be met with approximately equivalent discipline.
2. Discipline should be applied in proportion to the magnitude of the offense. In most cases, discipline should consist of a series of disciplinary actions. These disciplinary actions may include oral warnings, written warnings, and/or disciplinary administrative leave. Immediate termination may be initiated for the most serious offenses.
3. All discipline should be fully documented. Verbal warnings should be documented with a notation to the department personnel file at the time the warning takes place.

Personnel Services is available to advise departments when behavior occurs which necessitates discipline. Departments should notify Personnel Services of any disciplinary action being taken. The staff employee should be advised of inappropriate behavior and given an opportunity to correct that behavior. The following guidelines may be used when disciplinary action becomes necessary, but departments are encouraged to contact Personnel Services for guidance.

Oral Warning - The staff employee is advised of behavior that needs correction and instructed that it be corrected. Oral warnings should explain why the staff employee's behavior is unacceptable and describe the possible consequences of further or repeated violations.

Written Warning - If oral warnings have not corrected the behavior, a written warning should be issued which specifies the inappropriate behavior using examples where appropriate, refers to the previous warnings and details the required corrections and suggests training or other tools that will assist in the success of the staff employee. Written warnings should explain what will happen if behavior is not corrected, including the possibility of termination. All written warnings should include a place for the staff employee to sign, verifying that the document was discussed and a copy received.

Disciplinary Administrative Leave - If the staff employee's behavior has not been corrected, despite oral and/or written warnings within a reasonable period of time or if the behavior is egregious, the staff employee may be placed on unpaid or paid disciplinary administrative leave. The department should contact Personnel Services prior to putting a staff employee on disciplinary administrative leave. Notification of disciplinary administrative leave should be in writing, explaining what will happen if the behavior is not corrected, including the possibility of termination. All written warnings should include a place for the staff employee to sign, verifying that the document was discussed and a copy received.

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 the request to terminate first being reviewed by Personnel Services. The department must receive authorization from Personnel Services before proceeding.

Questions regarding this policy should be directed to Personnel Services on the University Park campus at (213) 821-8111 or on the Health Sciences campus at (323) 442-1010.