

Pennsylvania College of Technology

Policy Statement

Title: Performance Improvement (Formally Disciplinary Action) **Number:** P 3.04.01

Approved by:
Presidential Action

Approved Date: 04/1983
Effective Date: 04/1983
Last Review Date: 10/2023
Last Revision Date: 10/2023

Persons/Departments Affected:
Staff Employees

Responsible Department:
People & Culture

Policy:

- I. Pennsylvania College of Technology has established standards of work performance and personal conduct which all employees are expected to meet. Employees who fail to meet these standards are subject to a performance improvement processes, including termination from employment. In addressing those occasions when an employee fails to meet the College's standards, the College may choose to use forms of discipline which are less severe than termination, which may be, but are not always, applied on a progressive basis.
- II. The principal purpose of the improvement measures outlined in this policy, other than termination, is to remediate the performance or conduct problem and to prevent its reoccurrence, not to punish the employee. It is the College's policy, when such measures are required, to apply them in a fair and consistent manner.
- III. The types of performance improvement, which may occur, depending on the severity of the problem and the number of occurrences, include the following progressive actions that are listed below in general order of increasing formality and seriousness:
 - A. **Verbal Notice** – A discussion between the supervisor and the employee to call the employee's attention to the unsatisfactory conduct or performance and to address steps for improvement.
 - B. **Employee Success Plan (ESP)** – A structured and encouraging process initiated by a supervisor to aid an employee who may not meeting job expectations or performance standards, proving clear guidance on how the employee can achieve success. It outlines specific areas where the employee's performance is lacking and provides a plan for improvement. It will typically include goals, performance expectations, timelines, and any

necessary resources or support. The intention is to give the employee an opportunity to meet the required performance standards, with the ultimate goal of success and retention.

-OR -

Written Warning – An official communication issued by a supervisor to an employee who has engaged in intentional or careless behavior that constitutes a violation of policy or standards. It is a formal notice that documents the concerns and informs the employee that their actions are not in alignment with the college’s expectations or policies. A Written Warning typically includes details about the specific issue, any previous discussions related to the matter, the consequences if the behavior continues, and steps for improvement. It serves as a clear indication that the employee needs to correct the issue to avoid further disciplinary actions, including termination of employment.

- C. **Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)** – An employee may be placed on a PIP to address serious misconduct, performance concerns, or repeated offenses. Employees who are on a PIP or who are under consideration for placement on a PIP are not considered employees in good standing of the College and are not eligible for salary increases or consideration for internal position openings. The length of the PIP period will vary depending on the circumstances, but will normally not be less than thirty (30) days. The employee will be given a written notice specifying the deficiencies in work performance or conduct and the corrective action required of the employee, establishing the term of the PIP and informing the employee that failure to improve will result in more serious disciplinary action, including termination.

An employee who satisfactorily corrects the deficiencies in work performance or conduct during the PIP period and does not experience any related or unrelated problems involving work performance or conduct during the PIP period will normally be removed from the PIP at the end of the specified period. If an employee does not demonstrate satisfactory improvement during the PIP period or there are related or unrelated incidents involving work performance or conduct, the period may be extended by the College or the employee may be subject to more severe discipline, i.e., suspension or termination, during and/or at the end of the PIP period.

- D. **Suspension** – An employee may be suspended, i.e., required to remain off of work, for a specified period of time for disciplinary purposes to address serious misconduct or repeated offenses. The length of the suspension will vary depending on the circumstances. Except in cases of immediate suspension, the employee will be given a written notice specifying the

deficiencies in work performance or conduct, the corrective action required of the employee, the length of the suspension and whether the suspension is with or without pay and informing the employee that failure to improve will result in further disciplinary action, including termination.

Employees are subject to **immediate suspension**, without prior written notice, when the College determines that the employee's immediate removal from the work place is warranted. Such a suspension may occur pending termination, when a supervisor determines that the employee's work performance or conduct warrants termination, but has not been able to obtain the necessary reviews or approvals. Employees are also subject to immediate suspension where the College has determined that the employee's presence in the work place would be dangerous to the employee or other persons or would be detrimental or otherwise inappropriate during an investigation of a matter, when circumstances seriously impair the employee's effectiveness on the job, or when the College otherwise determines that circumstances warrant the employee's immediate removal from the work place. In cases of an immediate suspension, the employee will be given a verbal notice and requested to leave the work place immediately, with written notice to follow as soon as practicable.

The suspension may be with or without pay. Salaried exempt employees are not subject to suspension without pay for a period of less than a full workweek, except for a serious safety related infraction.

- E. **Termination of Employment** – This is the most severe step in the performance improvement or disciplinary process. It is used in cases where previous measures have not resulted in satisfactory improvement in work performance or conduct. It may also be used where a termination of the employment relationship is otherwise determined to be appropriate by the College, such as a very serious violation of policy or other very serious offense. Progressive discipline is not required prior to a termination.
- IV. The procedures described above may be applied as progressive action, beginning with an oral or written communication, depending on the seriousness of the incident, and proceeding to termination. However, the procedures described above are not always applied as progressive action. Depending on the College's determination of the seriousness of the incident, one or more steps may be bypassed and an employee may be suspended or terminated, with or without prior warnings or probation. In each situation, the College will decide if immediate termination or a lesser form of disciplinary action is warranted, based on the circumstances.
 - V. The progressive procedures may be applied based on related or unrelated incidents to an employee who is experiencing a series of related or unrelated problems involving work performance and/or conduct. Infractions of multiple rules or policies will result in a more severe application of disciplinary action.

- VI. Although the College may, in its discretion, elect to use a less severe form of disciplinary action, a violation of any one of the following will normally result in immediate termination of employment:
- A. Possession or use of firearms or other weapons (as defined in [Policy 7.20](#)) in the workplace, except for College Police and other exceptions noted in Weapons and Fireworks on Campus, [Policy 7.20](#).
 - B. Dishonesty, including falsification of records or making false statements when applying for employment, as well as during employment.
 - C. Fighting, physical violence or disorderly conduct or threatening physical violence.
 - D. Disclosure, misuse or unauthorized removal of confidential information relating to the College, employees or students.
 - E. Destruction, theft, abuse, misuse or removal of college property or the property of another employee or a student.
 - F. Possession or use of illegal drugs on college property or while engaged in the performance of the employee's duties.
 - G. Repeated absence from work without proper notice.
 - H. Disruption of the work force.
 - I. Soliciting or accepting a bribe.
 - J. Conduct on- or off-duty that harms the College's interest or reputation, including outside employment that creates a conflict of interest.
 - K. Conviction of a felony or the conviction of a crime other than a felony which the College determines affects the suitability of continued employment.
 - L. Repeated or flagrant insubordination.
 - M. Use of alcohol or illegal drugs during work hours or reporting for work while under the influence of same.

- N. Colleges and universities who accept these federal funds must remain compliant with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act, which means that use and/or possession of cannabis, in any form, or possession of any paraphernalia, will not be tolerated on campus.
 - O. Intentional, unintentional, or cyber bullying, stalking, hazing, or any action intended to produce physical or emotional harm in another.
- VII. The College reserves the right to terminate employees for conduct not included in the above list.
- VIII. This policy applies to Staff employees. Full-time Teaching Faculty, Counselors and Librarians are governed by the Agreement between Pennsylvania College of Technology and Penn College Education Association, PSEA/NEA.

Revision History:

- Date: 10/2023 Title Changed from Disciplinary Action to Performance Improvement. Department name, addition of the Employee Success Plan, change from HR to P&C.
- Date 12/2021: Addition to comply for Drug-Free Schools and Community Act.
- Date: 02/2019 Addition of conduct on- or off-duty to the items that could prompt disciplinary action
- Date: 11/2012 Change: VII Added Bullying language
- Date: 08/2012 Change: VII phrase changed and added illegal
- Date: 03/2012 Change: VII phrase added for clarification; IX omission of Agreement dates
- Date: 03/2008 Change: VII, Letter A, reference to [Policy 7.20](#)
- Date: 10/2004, 03/1999, 01/1992, 06/1987

Cross References:

- Weapons and Fireworks on Campus Policy and Procedure, [P 7.20](#) and [PR 7.20](#)
Performance Improvement Procedure; [PR 3.04.01](#)