

Student Employment Disciplinary Procedures



Progressive Discipline

Students are employees at will and progressive discipline is a useful management technique that is not a de facto guarantee of employment during good conduct. The following steps are a guideline and not a procedural guarantee. Progressive discipline is not appropriate for serious misconduct which should and does result in summary dismissal without notice or stated causes.

1. **Verbal Warning:** A verbal warning lets your student employee know about problems with his/her performance. This is a critical step and should be done as soon as you realize there is a problem. If you fail to issue a verbal warning, the student employee is unaware of the problem and misses the opportunity to change his/her behavior and you miss the opportunity to coach the employee.

Let's use the example of a new student employee who has been late there out of five days in his/her first week. At the end of the first late day, you spoke to the employee about his/her tardiness. At the end of the week, you realize it's time to begin documenting dates and times when the employee is late and address the issue in a structured manner. The following are key components of the verbal warning:

1. Meet with the employee privately to discuss his/her tardiness and convey the seriousness of the behavior.
2. Try to determine the reasons for the tardiness. This meeting presents an excellent opportunity to coach the employee and, if possible, direct the employee to helpful resources.
3. Inform the employee that if his/her behavior continues, the next step is a written warning.

Be sure to document the date, time, and results of this meeting. Continue to document dates and times if the employee continues the behavior. If appropriate, advise your manager of the meeting.

2. **Written Warning:** A written warning needs to be issued if the problem behavior continues. Returning to the previous example, let's say another week has passed and your documentation indicates that the student employee's tardiness persists. Now it's time to arrange a meeting with the student and issue a written warning. The written warning process is as follows:

1. Provide the student's directory information, department name, your name as supervisor, and the reason for the disciplinary process. In this example, you would state the problem as tardiness, list the supporting dates and times, and the date, time, and results of your previous meeting when the employee was issued a verbal warning.
2. Advise the student that if the tardiness continues (specify exactly what you mean – for example, two (2) times in the next week), the next step is termination.
3. Sign the written warning – both the student employee and supervisor.

Continue to document dates and times of the unwanted behavior; if appropriate, update your manager about the warning.

3. **Termination:** If the progressive discipline process has been used correctly, termination should not be a surprise to the student employee. The student knows that his/her performance has failed the job requirements and has acknowledged the consequences in writing.

In the example of the habitually late student employee, the tardiness continues and the employee violates the condition stated in the written warning. It's now time to terminate the student employee. Use the following steps to proceed in the termination:

1. Schedule a meeting with the student employee and discuss the termination with your manager; he/she may want to attend the meeting.
2. Before the meeting, prepare a brief letter stating only the effective date of the termination. Because the student employee is an at will employee, do not state a reason.
3. Save a copy of the letter with your student's file and one for Human Resources.
4. At the meeting – Briefly summarize the dates and steps of the progressive discipline process and then give the student employee the termination letter.
5. Have the student employee sign his/her final timesheet.
6. Have the student return all keys and university property.
7. Fax the timesheet, the termination letter and the Separation form to Human Resources immediately. **Federal law states that the student employee must be paid within 24 hours of termination.**
8. Answer and questions that student employee may have at this time.