



Policy Title: Staff Disciplinary Actions

Policy Number: BU-PP 807

Date Issued: January 15, 2007

**Responsible Executive: Vice President & Chief
Human Resources Officer**

Date Last Revised: February 27, 2026

Responsible Office: Human Resources

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Policy Statement

Baylor University requires employees to follow university policies and to meet performance and behavioral expectations. Supervisors are required to hold employees accountable for performance and behavior in the workplace. When performance and/or behavior fails to meet expectations, disciplinary action should be both positive and corrective in nature.

Reason for the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on when and how disciplinary actions are to be taken. It is the policy of Baylor University to encourage fair, efficient, and equitable solutions when an employee fails to meet certain standards of performance and/or conduct. The progressive disciplinary action steps below shall generally be followed by all supervisors. They may be modified and/or steps eliminated depending upon the nature and severity of the allegations and/or conduct. Human Resources will assist and review the determination of appropriate corrective actions steps before such action is taken.

Individuals/Entities Affected by this Policy

All Staff Employees.

Exclusions

Some types of conduct violations require coordination with or may be superseded by other regulations, policies, and/or departments (e.g., Title IX Office, Civil Rights Coordinator).

Related Documents and Forms

University Policies and Documents

[BU-PP 024 – Code of Ethics and Personal Conduct](#)

[BU-PP 028 – Baylor Civil Rights Policy](#)

[BU-PP 804 – Staff Performance Appraisal and Planning Process](#)

[BU-PP 822 – Staff and Student Employee Grievances](#)

[BU-PP 833 – Staff Separation](#)

Employee Job Description

Forms and Tools

Managers should contact Human Resources for appropriate forms and tools.

Definitions

These definitions apply to terms as they are used in this policy.

Corrective Action	A process of communicating with the employee to improve attendance, unacceptable behavior, or performance.
Disciplinary Action Document	A form agreed between each party that states the employee's name and the area that needs development.

Contacts

Subject	Contact	Telephone	Office email/web site
Policy Questions	Human Resources	254-710-2000	askHR@baylor.edu

Responsibilities

Employee	Understand and comply with established disciplinary procedures and workplace expectations.
Supervisor	Understand and follow the disciplinary action procedures. Consult with Human Resources at least one week prior to initiating disciplinary action or to confirm successful completion of a Performance Improvement Plan. Partner with Human Resources to ensure disciplinary steps are applied consistently, fairly, and in accordance with policy.
Human Resources	Provide guidance and oversight throughout the disciplinary action process. Ensure procedures are applied consistently and in alignment with policy, employment laws, and organizational standards. Maintain appropriate documentation and support supervisors as needed.

Principles

All Baylor University staff are responsible for acquainting themselves with performance criteria for their particular job, along with rules, procedures, and standards of conduct established by the institution and their department and maintaining standards of conduct

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suitable and acceptable to the work environment. A staff member who does not fulfill the responsibilities set out by such performance criteria, rules, procedures and standards of conduct may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Nothing in this policy creates a contractual obligation on Baylor nor does it alter the “at will” status of any staff member. Baylor may terminate an “at will” staff member at any time with or without cause and with or without advance notice.

Disciplinary Actions Overview

Disciplinary action typically follows one of two paths:

- Reprimand Path (Behavior or Conduct-Based)
- Performance Improvement Plan (Performance-Based)

Both approaches are intended to address concerns in a fair, consistent, and corrective manner; however, they serve different purposes based on the underlying issue.

Reprimand Path

A documented reprimand is a formal warning issued when a staff member violates University policies, division and/or departmental rules, or behavioral expectations. Reprimands are corrective in nature and are intended to clearly identify the concern, communicate required expectations, and emphasize that the behavior or conduct must be corrected to prevent further disciplinary action.

Performance Improvement Path

A Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) is a structured, time-bound plan used when a staff member is not meeting job performance expectations related to the essential duties of their role. PIPs focus on performance, skills, productivity, and development, not misconduct, and are designed to provide the staff member with clear expectations, support, and measurable improvement goals.

In some circumstances, disciplinary action steps may include a Performance Improvement Plan when the concern involves ongoing or significant performance deficiencies rather than solely misconduct.

Disciplinary Action Steps

Baylor University’s policy of disciplinary action consists of procedural steps which are generally administered in progressive order. **In some cases, one or more steps may be modified and/or eliminated depending upon the nature and severity of the allegations and/or conduct.**

Documented Conversation

When a problem is identified, generally the supervisor will provide a warning to the staff member through a documented conversation. The document will encourage the staff member to improve the performance and/or behavior concerns and ensure the staff member is aware that additional performance and/or behavioral issues may result in corrective action. If performance and/or behavioral concerns do not improve, or if additional issues arise, corrective action will be taken. The supervisor should notify HR regarding this conversation and provide a summary of dialogue. Many times, this conversation is a catalyst for the change needed to meet expectations.

First Level Warning & Initial Improvement Plan

The First Level Warning is a formal method of informing a staff member of a University policy or department rules violation or of failure to perform job duties in an acceptable manner. Generally, a First Level Warning occurs after a staff member has received coaching from their supervisor related to the issue(s) and a summary of the previously documented conversation(s) is provided to HR. This is intended to encourage the staff member to change the behavior/performance. A copy of the First Level Warning is provided to the staff member, as well as housed within the staff member's personnel file located within HR.

The duration of this plan is typically 30 to 60 days, with a maximum option of 90 days. It requires follow-up meetings with the supervisor throughout the period to ensure adequate progress. The supervisor will notify the staff member, through the appropriate form, upon successful completion of this plan. In the event of further University policy or department rules violation, failure to perform job duties in an acceptable manner occur, or of additional concerns, the process may move to a second level warning or further disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Second Level Warning and Extended Improvement Plan

The Second Level Warning is generally used when performance and/or behavioral problems persist or when action is more severe than warranting a First Level Warning. A copy of the Second Level Warning is provided to the staff member, as well as housed within the staff member's personnel file located within HR. The duration of this plan is typically 30 to 60 days, with a maximum option of 90 days. In general, a staff member currently within a second level warning status is not eligible for a transfer or promotion. The supervisor will notify the staff member, through the appropriate form, upon successful completion of this plan. In the event of further University policy or department rules violation, of failure to perform job duties in an acceptable manner occur, or of additional concerns, the process may move to a final warning or further disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Final Warning

The Final Warning generally will be given at any time during the corrective action process or if the performance or resulting behavior is more severe than warranting a First or Second Level Warning. This warning may also result if the staff member does not successfully complete the First or Second Level Warning improvement plans. In general, a staff member currently within a final warning status is not eligible for a transfer or promotion. A copy of the Final Warning is provided to the staff member as well as housed within the staff member's personnel file located within HR. This warning includes a plan no longer than 30 days in length and is intended for immediate action to be taken ensuring the performance or behavior is addressed. Upon successful completion of this plan, the supervisor will notify the staff member through the appropriate form. In the event of further University policy or department rules violation, of failure to perform job duties in an acceptable manner occur, or of additional concerns, the process will move to the last step in the disciplinary action process.

Termination

Generally, if all prior appropriate disciplinary actions do not resolve the situation, or if the nature of the violation is so serious that a First, Second, or Final Level Warning is not appropriate, the staff member may be terminated. The supervisor must consult with HR before a staff member may be terminated. Again, this typical pattern does not alter the "at will" status of a staff member and does not impose upon Baylor any notice of termination requirements.

Corrective Action Track

Performance and/or attendance issues are addressed as a single track in the corrective action process. For example, generally, a staff member who has been issued a First Level Warning for a performance issue would receive a second level warning for an attendance issue that warrants corrective action.

Length of Time Corrective Action Remains Active

The corrective actions listed above will be active for a period of one year or other appropriate length of time as defined by HR. Typically, if there is cause for further corrective action within one year, the next level of corrective action will be taken. The timeline for each case will be adjusted as appropriate for that case.

Corrective Action Notice Contents

Any corrective action taken should be supported by appropriate documentation. When corrective action is initiated, it should be documented in the provided template and be addressed from supervisor to staff member. The staff member and the supervisor receive

and retain a copy of the signed corrective action notice for their records while the original is forwarded to HR for placement in the staff member's personnel file. The corrective action notice should include the following:

- The action being taken (i.e., first level warning, second level warning, final warning or termination)
- The specific violation or problem for which the action is being issued. (e.g., performance, behavioral issues, or conduct concerns)
- Specific instances of problem behavior or violations, including dates and times
- Review of past coaching discussions or corrective action steps as noted above, if applicable
- Description of the impact of staff member's behavior on organization or work group
- Statement of expectations and established time frame to be achieved
- Description of consequences (e.g., if this step fails, you may be subject to further corrective action up to and including termination of employment)
- Reference to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Supervisor's signature
- Employee's signature (including the following statement: "Employee signature does not necessarily indicate their agreement, but only that they have received this notice.") If the employee declines to sign it, this should be noted on the notice and forwarded to HR.

Failure to follow any described step does not invalidate any Baylor action(s). Some steps will be modified, for example, if the alleged failure or misconduct involves the first or second line supervisor.

Sample Guidelines

To assist supervisors in determining the appropriate level of corrective action in a particular situation, and to promote consistency in the application of the corrective action process, the following chart provides general examples of infractions and some appropriate action steps.

Each situation is evaluated on a case-by-case basis and, therefore, may vary from the chart below. Corrective action steps can progress more rapidly based on the severity of the situation. Individual circumstances are evaluated in consultation with HR when considering corrective action. Failure to consult with HR does not invalidate employment action.

Conduct:	Examples of Progression:				
Absenteeism and/or tardiness	Documented conversation	First Level Warning	Second Level Warning	Final Warning	Termination

Failure to meet any job standards	Documented conversation	First Level Warning	Second Level Warning	Final Warning	Termination
Failure to work scheduled hours (leaving early or working overtime without permission)	Documented conversation	First Level Warning	Second Level Warning	Final Warning	Termination
Violations of safety rules or University safety practices (depends on severity)	First Level Warning	Second Level Warning	Final Warning	Termination	
Obscene, crude, vulgar, racially or sexually charged, or abusive language (depends on severity)	First Level Warning	Second Level Warning	Final Warning	Termination	
Inappropriate conduct towards other employees, students, visitors, contractors (depends on severity)	First Level Warning	Second Level Warning	Final Warning	Termination	
Improper use of University property and resources (depends on severity)	First Level Warning	Second Level Warning	Final Warning	Termination	

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