

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY AND MEDICAL CENTER

HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT COUNSELING (PIC) POLICY#: HR014

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 1999

(Revision Date January 1, 2003, September 1, 2008 changes noted in Red)

POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to outline the process for Performance Improvement Counseling (PIC). This process is an extension of performance evaluation and professional development. It is intended to assist employees in changing their performance, attendance or conduct at work. Therefore, the facts and circumstances of each case will determine which step of the PIC process is appropriate. Conduct outside the work place may give rise to discipline, up to and including termination of employment. The Employee Relations office is available for consultation to both the Supervisor/Manager or staff member.

INTRODUCTION

The process to address performance or conduct concerns for staff members in their initial (first three months at Vanderbilt for hourly paid employees and the first six months for exempt employees) orientation period is defined in *Section I. Performance and Conduct During Orientation*. Once staff members have completed their initial orientation period, any performance or conduct issues that may arise in current or future positions will be addressed through appropriate PIC, as defined in *Sections III. VI.*, or through the Discharge Policy.

PROCEDURE

I. PERFORMANCE AND CONDUCT DURING ORIENTATION

- A. For staff members who are paid hourly, the orientation period is three months following the date of hire. For exempt employees the orientation period is six months following the date of hire.
- B. If job performance or conduct during orientation is unsatisfactory, supervisors may give the staff member written notice of the deficiency and explain how the performance or conduct needs to improve in order to continue employment. During the orientation period a staff member may be terminated without notice. However, terminations should be reviewed with Employee Relations prior to taking action. Staff members terminated in their orientation period may not use the grievance review procedure. However, staff members who believe that their termination is the result of unlawful discrimination may consult with the Opportunity Development Center. (Refer to Policy # HR015, Discharge)
- C. If a staff member's performance or conduct does not meet the expectations set by the supervisor, or there has not been enough opportunity to evaluate the staff member's performance the supervisor may extend the period of orientation up to an additional

ninety days. Any extensions beyond the additional 90 days should be approved by Employee Relations. Notice of extension should be given to the staff member in writing. This extension provides additional time to evaluate whether the individual meets expectations. The supervisor should outline in writing to the staff member why the orientation is being extended. This extension provides additional time to evaluate whether the individual meets expectations. At the end of the extension the supervisor should discuss with the staff member their performance and notify them in writing that their orientation period has been completed, if appropriate.

II. INFORMAL COUNSELING

Supervisors are expected to provide feedback to staff members to improve performance or to deal with conduct problems as they arise. Supervisors may document informal counseling. If informal counseling does not resolve the issue, or if the conduct or performance issues are too serious to warrant informal counseling, PIC should be initiated.

III. FIRST STEP – WARNING

If performance or conduct concerns develop or continue, an initial warning will be given to the staff member. The supervisor should explain to the staff member why his or her conduct or performance is unacceptable and the possible consequences of repeated violations. A memorandum documenting the conversation is completed and a copy is given to the staff member. The memorandum is placed in the staff member's departmental file.

IV. SECOND STEP WRITTEN PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT COUNSELING

A. If performance or conduct concerns develop and a warning does not resolve the concern, Written PIC (WPIC) may be warranted.

B. If the supervisor concludes that the performance or conduct concerns are too serious to warrant first step, a WPIC may be appropriate. This formalizes a discussion between a supervisor and a staff member about a performance or conduct that is inconsistent with University or departmental policies or expectations. Conduct that warrants WPIC, includes, but is not limited to:

- pattern/**or excessive occurrences** of absenteeism, tardiness (**which includes extended breaks**) or leaving early. **This also includes occurrences of not working assigned schedules and not fulfilling the FTE required for the position.**
- minor neglect of assigned duties
- A failure to call in according to departmental policies when unable to report for work
- unproductive use of work time
- working unauthorized overtime
- excessive use of business phones/Internet access for personal reasons
- violation of any University **policies (e.g. Smoking & Tobacco Use, Dress Code, VUMC Operations and Safety Policies)**
- carrying unauthorized persons in University vehicles
- loitering within the work area during nonwork time

- having unauthorized family members or friends in the work area
- unauthorized use of University resources

C. A summary memo will be provided to the staff member to sign indicating he/she has received a copy. If the staff member refuses to sign, the supervisor may request another supervisor to witness that the staff member refused to sign. A note should be made on the memo, 'refused to sign', and may be signed and dated by both supervisors. A copy should then be provided to the staff member. The original documentation should be sent to Employee Relations.

D. If the performance or conduct improves to an acceptable level and no other performance or conduct concerns arise during that time, the WPIC will be effective for three months.

E. While on WPIC a staff member is not eligible to transfer to another position within the University without disclosing to the hiring manager their status of WPIC and reviewing the circumstances surrounding the WPIC. Failure to make this disclosure could be grounds for immediate termination.

V. THIRD STEP FINAL PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT COUNSELING

C. If performance or conduct does not improve to an acceptable level within the time frame established in the WPIC, or if additional or serious performance concerns arise, a Final Performance Improvement Counseling (FPIC) action may be appropriate.

D. If a supervisor has a conduct or performance concern which rises to the level of a FPIC, discussion with the staff member should be the first step. If the supervisor concludes that the conduct concerns are too serious to warrant First Step or Second Step, a FPIC action should be taken. FPIC is effective for six months beyond the day issued. Conduct concerns that may warrant FPIC include, but are not limited to:

- rude or unprofessional conduct
- violation of the University's solicitation policy
- gambling on University time or premises
- neglect of duty that could result in minor loss or injury or violation of a safety rule
- violation of the University's policies against harassment
- accessing confidential information without authorization
- inappropriate email communications
- inappropriately giving your computer access code to an unauthorized individual
- failure to review with staff members annually the VUMC Compliance and Integrity Standards of Conduct (VUMC and other applicable departments)
- failure to respond to on call

C. A summary memorandum will be provided to the staff member to sign indicating he/she has received a copy. The original documentation should be sent to Employee Relations.

D. If the performance or conduct improves to an acceptable level and no other performance or conduct concerns arise, the FPIC will be effective for 6 months.

E. Occasionally, as part of FPIC, the supervisor can require the staff member to take a work day to develop a written description of the actions he or she intends to take to correct the concerns and achieve satisfactory performance.

F. If the staff member cannot present an acceptable plan for improvement, or does not feel he or she can successfully meet expectations under the conditions established by the supervisor, the staff member may be asked to resign, or the supervisor can choose to terminate the employment relationship. The supervisor should consult Employee Relations prior to termination.

G. While on FPIC a staff member is not eligible to transfer to another position within the University without disclosing to the hiring manager their status of FPIC and reviewing the circumstances surrounding the FPIC. Failure to make this disclosure could be grounds for immediate termination.

VI. CONSEQUENCES OF PIC

A. Staff members are not eligible to receive an annual increase while on Written or Final PIC. However, PIC will not impact eligibility for salary increases after the appropriate time period expires. Increases will not be paid retroactively. Verbal warnings do not impact salary increases.

B. The PIC will not impact eligibility for transfers after the appropriate time period expires. Staff members with conduct problems resulting in PIC are rarely allowed to transfer. Exceptions must be with the consent of the leaving and gaining departments and must be approved through Employee Relations. Refer to Policy # HR008 Transfer Policy.

C. The PIC will remain on file and may be considered in determining which level of PIC, or Discharge, is appropriate, if future performance or conduct concerns arise.

Revised January 1, 2003

Associate Darlene Lewis, Associate Vice Chancellor, Human Resources Approved Lauren Brisky, Vice Chancellor, Administration Approved Harry Jacobson, Vice Chancellor, Health Affairs

This policy is intended as a guideline to assist in the consistent application of University policies and programs for staff. The policy does not create a contract implied or expressed, with any Vanderbilt staff members, who are employees at will. Vanderbilt reserves the right to modify this policy in whole or in part, at anytime, at the discretion of the University.

Other Related Links:

[Previous Version\(s\) of This Policy](#)