

Policy Number/Title:	4.44 Progressive Discipline Policy
Effective Since:	01/22/2025
Last Revision Approved:	01/22/2025
Responsible Office:	Human Resources

1. Scope:

The guidelines for discipline outlined in this policy pertain to circumstances of employee misconduct. Generally, performance-related problems should be addressed by the guidelines established in the Performance Improvement Plan process and the Employee Performance Management System Policy.

This policy applies to all covered employees. This policy does not apply to either non-covered employees or employees exempt from the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act.

Non-covered employees include:

- probationary employees,
- temporary employees,
- temporary grant employees,
- time-limited project employees, and
- research grant employees.

Employees exempt from the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act include but are not limited to:

- teaching or research faculty
- professional librarians
- academic administrators
- other persons holding faculty appointments
- athletic coaches
- unclassified employees in the athletic department
- SCRS and SC PORS retirees occupying FTE positions

2. Definitions:

Probationary Employee – A full-time or part-time employee occupying a part or all of an FTE



position in the initial working test period of employment with the State of 12 months' duration.

Covered Employee – A full-time or part-time employee occupying a part or all of an FTE position who has completed the probationary period and has a “meets expectations” or higher overall rating on the employees’ performance review and who has grievance rights. This definition does not include rehired retirees, and employees in temporary, temporary grant, time-limited, academic, academic administrator, and unclassified employees in Athletics.

Universal Review Date – The date prior to which all employees’ performance reviews are due. Winthrop University’s universal review date shall be March 31.

Employee Performance Plan – A planning document presented to an employee at the beginning of a rating period that documents the performance expectations for the review period.

Short Year Review – Any performance review that evaluates an employee’s performance for a period of time less than 12 months. (Exception: Performance Improvement Plan reviews.)

Short Year Employee Performance Plan – Any Employee Performance Plan covering a period of time less than 12 months.

3. Policy:

The circumstances surrounding an offense, such as the severity of the misconduct, the number of times it has occurred and any previous counseling, will suggest what action should be taken. Usually, counseling or an oral reprimand is sufficient for the first occurrence of a minor offense. A repetition of the offense or the first occurrence of a more severe offense should be followed by a written reprimand which becomes a part of the employee’s permanent personnel file (a written reprimand should also be signed by the employee as having been received and understood). Further repetitions of the offense or the first occurrence of a very serious offense is followed by suspension, reassignment, demotion, termination, or other appropriate action. Please note that these are intended only to be guidelines because it is most difficult to be all-inclusive or to assign a degree of severity to the various examples given below. For example, “leaving the workstation without authorization” may range from a temporary absence from the workstation to complete abandonment of a position. In such cases, a supervisor must rely on judgment as an experienced supervisor to arrive at appropriate disciplinary action. At the university’s discretion, individual offenses calling for oral or written reprimands could cumulatively result in suspension or termination.

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The supervisor is required to contact the Office of Human Resources, Employee Diversity, and Wellness (Office of Human Resources) for counseling, assistance in preparing written reprimands/suspensions, and/or detailed information regarding documentation that may be included with disciplinary actions. The supervisor is required to maintain written documentation associated with conversations and meetings with an employee, and any other documentation regarding the disciplinary matter. Original written disciplinary action notifications will be placed in the employee's official personnel file in the Office of Human Resources. Any disciplinary action, other than a verbal reprimand, must be approved by the Office of Human Resources and the divisional vice president or the highest-ranking administrative officer in the division prior to taking action.

Voluntary Resignations

Employees who voluntarily fail to report to work for three consecutive workdays and fail to contact the supervisor during this time period may be considered to have abandoned their positions and voluntarily resigned. If extenuating circumstances apply associated with Family and Medical Leave Act or Americans With Disabilities Act qualifying events, the supervisor must consult the Office of Human Resources.

Disciplinary Action

If the supervisor has knowledge that absenteeism may be associated with an FMLA or ADA qualifying reason, the supervisor must discuss the issue with the Office of Human Resources before disciplinary action is taken. No disciplinary action beyond a verbal reprimand may be taken without prior authorization by the Office of Human Resources. Supervisors and an authorized Human Resources representative may recommend appropriate discipline. The following steps shall be followed in such cases when discipline beyond a verbal reprimand is necessary.

1) The supervisor presents all facts surrounding the incident to the department head, or when the department head is initiating the action, they present the facts to the dean, director, divisional vice president, or the highest-ranking administrative officer in the division.

2) If the dean, director, vice president, or administrative officer agrees with the recommended disciplinary action, the matter must be presented to the Office of Human Resources.

3) If action is to be taken, it shall be taken under the authority of the Vice President for Human Resources or a designee, with the supervisor initiating such action.

Types of Disciplinary Actions



Depending upon the nature and severity of the offense, any of the following disciplinary actions may be taken: oral reprimand or equivalent; written reprimand or equivalent; suspension without pay; termination; reassignment; downward reclassification; downward unclassified title change; and/or demotions. These actions are not listed in any progressive order and any of the actions may be taken as warranted by the offense.

When appropriate and at the discretion of the university, the employee may be suspended without pay immediately pending the outcome of an internal investigation.

An employee may be terminated upon receiving three disciplinary actions within a one-year period, even if the actions are not related to the same offense.

Types of Offenses

Offenses which may result in disciplinary action include, but are not limited to, those presented in the [Progressive Discipline chart](#). The offenses are not in any particular order or severity. The list of offenses is intended to serve only as a guide and is not intended to be all inclusive. Other offenses may occur which require disciplinary action. At the occurrence of any of the listed offenses, or any that are not listed, the appropriate discipline up to and including termination shall be determined after the particular circumstances of the case have been carefully considered.

4. Procedures:

This section was intentionally left blank.

5. Resources:

[Progressive Discipline Policy Chart](#)

6. History of Revisions:

01/22/2025 Policy first established

7. Approvals:

Responsible Officer Signature/Date:

Vice President/Senior Administrator Signature/Date:



President Signature/Date: