

## **Progressive Counseling**

Progressive counseling is appropriate corrective action to improve an employee's performance in a particular position and to bring about adherence to expected standards of conduct and performance. However, progressive counseling is not appropriate corrective action for extremely serious deviations from accepted standards of conduct, such as conduct that may be injurious to fellow employees, students, patients and visitors or University property. For serious deviations, immediate suspension and/or involuntary termination is appropriate. Nothing in this section should be viewed as a guarantee that one form of action will necessarily precede another.

The progressive counseling procedure is designed to inform employees of conduct or performance concerns, to provide an opportunity to be heard and to correct the problem. Corrective action must be reasonably related to the seriousness of the circumstances and an employee's past record must be taken into consideration. Consultation with a representative of the Human Resources Department or the HR Director is encouraged prior to taking any disciplinary action and is required before taking corrective action involving suspension or involuntary termination.

### **COUNSELING AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

**Verbal Counseling:** Defined as a discussion between the supervisor and an employee who fails to adhere to the standards of conduct or to meet expected standards of performance. Under most circumstances, verbal counseling will occur before any other corrective action is taken.

**Written Counseling:** Defined as a written communication from the supervisor to the employee who continues either not to adhere to standards of conduct or who continues not to meet expected standards of performance. Generally, an employee will receive two written communications before any other corrective action is applied. Prior to delivering the communication to the employee, it should be reviewed by a representative of the Human Resources Department or the HR Director.

**Suspension:** Suspension is imposed upon an employee who continually fails to adhere to standards of conduct or performance. Following consultation with a representative of the Human Resources Department or the HR Director, the length of the suspension is determined by the department and usually ranges from one to three working days without pay. Documentation of the suspension includes the specific days of the suspension as well as the date and time the employee is to return to work. If an exempt employee is to be suspended, the HR Director must be consulted.

**Suspension Pending Review for Termination:** May be issued in order to conduct an investigation and a review of the facts to determine whether the employee should have an additional opportunity to improve behavior or whether the employee should be terminated.

Involuntary termination is appropriate when (1) after verbal and written counseling, an employee still does not meet the standards of performance expected, (2) after oral and written counseling, the employee fails to adhere to expected standards of conduct, or (3) the decision to terminate is made following an investigation and review during a suspension period. In cases of serious misconduct or criminal activity, the supervisor may, after consulting with a representative of the Human Resources Department, immediately suspend or terminate the employee.