

Having a Discipline Conversation with your Employee

Once you have received the discipline documentation from Human Resources, the next step is meeting with the employee to present the discipline documentation. Disciplining an employee is unpleasant for everyone involved, however, following the tips below will guide you through the process and in the end the general hope is that the employee is inspired to perform better in the future.

- **Speak to the employee in private** – Any discussions about performance or discipline should always be done in a private setting away from the rest of your employees.
 - To accomplish this, you can schedule a meeting with the employee, or you can approach the employee and state that you would like to meet with them in your office and meet right away.
 - Sometimes scheduling a meeting can cause concern and stress for the employee, but sometimes, especially in departments where the employee might not work at the same location, its best to schedule a meeting for the discussion.
 - Depending on the department and the type of work being performed, determine what is best.
- **Address the issue directly** – when addressing an employee, be straightforward and clear on what the problem is with their performance.
 - Provide examples of behavior that you or another supervisor has observed.
 - Use statements that start with “I’ve noticed that you’ve been....” Or “It’s come to my attention that you haven’t....”
- **Allow the employee to respond** – provide the employee with a chance to respond to the behavior that is being discussed to get their side of the story.
 - This process should be treated as a conversation with the employee, so it’s important to engage them in conversation and get their input on the situation.
 - Engaging an employee in conversation makes them feel like they are a part of a discussion on the issue, rather than making them feel like they are being blamed for the situation.
 - While the employee is responding, listen actively and attentively. Respect their point of view of the situation.
- **Review University policy and/or employee expectations** – Before ending the conversation, make sure to review the policy that is being violated and/or the employee expectations that are not being met and what the expectation will be moving forward.
- **Offer Guidance** – Discuss ways to assist the employee in meeting the expectations set forth during your conversation.
 - Provide the employee with realistic solutions to help them meet the expectations.

- This is an opportunity to come to a solution that both you and the employee agree on and that you can work on together. Having employee buy in during this process is important, as they will be more likely to work hard for a solution they helped create.
- **Reiterate the employee's importance** - One of the most important aspects of the discipline meeting is to reiterate to the employee that they are a valuable member of your team.
- **Ask Human Resources** – If you have any concerns or questions about having the disciplinary conversation with your staff member, ask Human Resources for guidance. We have been involved in numerous conversations with employees regarding their performance and can provide tips and advice on how to have the conversation with your employee.

