

5.19 Employee Disciplinary Policy

Last Revised: November 2025

Policy: Piedmont Community College's President or designee may demote or dismiss an employee of Piedmont Community College (PCC) for cause.

Purpose/Definitions:

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a process by which employees are coached, mentored, counseled, re-assigned, or dismissed concerning behavior and/or work performance.

Definitions

Cause—grounds for disciplinary action that results from conduct which fails to meet College standards that are deemed to be in violation of the Policy and Procedure Manual.

Demote—the action of decreasing an employee's work pay rate and/or assigning an employee to a role with less pay during and/or as the result of a disciplinary investigation.

Designee—any PCC employee, typically a team member/supervisor, to whom the initial responsible person yields the employment decision.

Dismiss—the action of terminating an employee from employment with PCC.

Harmonious workplace—a workplace where all employees are treated with dignity and respect, fostering positive interactions, open communication, and a sense of belonging.

Hazing -- Any intentional, knowing, or reckless act, occurring on or off campus, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are, or include, students at an institution of higher education. This includes but is not limited to:

- physical brutality or abuse
- forced or coerced consumption of any food, liquid, drug, or other substance
- forced or coerced physical activity
- sleep deprivation
- exclusion from social contact
- conduct that could result in extreme embarrassment or humiliation

- any activity that would unreasonably interfere with academic pursuits

Restitution— the act of giving back something that was lost or stolen, or of paying money for the loss.

Approval Authority/Monitoring Authority: The Board of Trustees of Piedmont Community College has approval authority for this policy. The Director, Human Resources Organizational Development (HROD) has monitoring authority for this policy.

Procedure:

Section 1: Disciplinary Investigation

- 1.1. Allegations of grounds for disciplinary action in Section 4 that do not result in immediate dismissal are investigated by the employee's supervisor (or designee) (hereafter noted as "the investigator") in consultation with the Director, HROD or designee.
 - 1.1.1. Certain actions may require investigation by other College officials such as the Director, College Safety; Director, HROD; and/or the vice president of the area to which the affected employee is assigned.
 - 1.1.2. The President may opt to assign an alternative investigator.
- 1.2. The investigator will review all available information, including witness interview(s) and employee response, before recommending a disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
 - 1.2.1. The investigator will meet with the employee to discuss the report that contains the allegation(s) and findings.
 - 1.2.1.1. The employee has up to ten (10) business days to respond to the allegation(s).
- 1.3. Disciplinary investigations which reveal cause must result in a Written Disciplinary Report. The report will include the following sections:
 - 1.3.1. Job Expectations
 - 1.3.2. Description of the Event(s)
 - 1.3.3. Findings
 - 1.3.4. Employee Response

1.3.5. Recommendation

- 1.4. Upon receipt of the employee's response, the investigator has five (5) business days to write the recommendation and route the document for the appropriate signatures.
- 1.5. Upon receipt of a recommendation, the President has ten (10) business days to approve the recommendation or provide alternative discipline.
 - 1.5.1. If needed, the President may request additional time to make a decision.
 - 1.5.2. During this time, the President has the option of interviewing any witness and/or the employee for further clarity.
 - 1.5.3. The President's decision is final.
- 1.6. Upon receipt of the decision, the employee's supervisor has five (5) business days to communicate the disciplinary/employment decision to the employee.
 - 1.6.1. This communication plan will be developed in collaboration with the Office of HROD.

Section 2: Preliminary Supervisor Coaching

- 2.1. Prior to coaching, support may begin with a verbal warning/reprimand between the supervisor and the employee.
- 2.2. When the supervisor determines that an employee needs some coaching/support concerning performance or behavior, the supervisor will meet with the employee and will document the meeting on an Employee Coaching Notes form.
 - 2.2.1. Level 1: Performance/Behavior issue is minor but needs attention.
 - 2.2.2. Level 2: Performance/Behavior issue is minor but approaching habitual.
 - 2.2.3. Level 3: Performance/Behavior issue is minor and habitual, and improvement measures need further attention.
- 2.3. A copy of all levels of supervisory notes must be provided to HROD in case of progressive disciplinary actions.
- 2.4. Vice President signature is optional at Levels 1 and 2; however, the vice president must be notified at Level 3. The vice president does have the option to recommend implementing a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) or recommend a formal write-up.
- 2.5. Employee Coaching Notes may be used to support a performance improvement plan and any other progressive disciplinary action.

Section 3: Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)

- 3.1. Supervisors must provide a reasonable level of coaching as described in Section 2 before implementing a PIP.
- 3.2. Implementation of a PIP must be coordinated with the Office of HROD.
- 3.3. The PIP must include actionable and measurable improvement areas.
- 3.4. The PIP must include a start date, a minimum of one check-in date (e.g., a midpoint), and final check-in date.
- 3.5. Upon receipt of a PIP, the employee has three (3) business days to review the PIP and request clarity on any improvement areas.
- 3.6. Should the PIP process prove unsuccessful, loss of privileges, demotion, or termination should be considered.

Section 4: Grounds for Dismissal

- 4.1. Grounds for immediate dismissal may include, but are not limited to:
 - 4.1.1. insubordination
 - 4.1.2. workplace violence, including hazing (See PCC Policy 2.37 Anti-Hazing)
 - 4.1.3. sexual or other unlawful harassment
 - 4.1.4. gross neglect of job duties
 - 4.1.5. immoral or unethical conduct unbecoming a member of the faculty or staff, whether occurring on or off campus, that is detrimental to the College
 - 4.1.6. conviction of a felony or a crime involving moral turpitude
 - 4.1.7. retaliation, tampering with evidence, intimidating witnesses, and/or providing false information during disciplinary investigations
 - 4.1.8. failure to repay money owed to the State in accordance with the provisions of Article 60, Chapter 143 of the North Carolina General Statutes
 - 4.1.9. failure to meet the standards set in a performance improvement plan
 - 4.1.10. failure to maintain satisfactory and harmonious working relationships with the public and/or other employees
 - 4.1.10.1. PCC department/divisional leadership will be accountable for maintaining a harmonious workplace. Any conduct that is viewed as unharmonious and not representing the values of the college will be addressed promptly and appropriately by HROD and the Office of the President for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

4.1.11. documented progressive disciplinary actions

4.2. Grounds for disciplinary action may include, but are not limited to:

4.2.1. violations of policies and/or procedures

4.2.2. failure to fulfill the duties and responsibilities imposed by the North Carolina General Statutes.

4.3. The President may make the decision to demote or dismiss an employee directly.

Section 5: Immediate Dismissal

5.1. Notice of dismissal occurs in consultation with the Office of HROD.

5.2. When the decision is made to dismiss an employee immediately, the following steps are taken:

5.2.1. Notify Information Technology Services to remove employee's access to network services.

5.2.2. The Office of HROD will send the former employee the official dismissal notice and any other exit information within 10 business days of the dismissal.

5.2.2.1. The Office of HROD will inform the former employee of any personal effects to be returned to the former employee or College property that needs to be returned to campus.

5.2.3. The employee will be allowed to return to their workstation to remove their personal effects unless their continued presence poses a risk to the College.

5.2.4. The employee will surrender entry keys, PCC ID(s), and any other property of PCC to the Office of HROD.

5.2.5. The Office of HROD will survey the appropriate campus officials to confirm closure of all accounts and receipt of applicable PCC property.

5.2.5.1. Failure to return any PCC property or in the event of theft an employee could be subject to criminal prosecution and/or restitution.

5.2.6. The employee will be escorted out of the building by the Director, College Safety or designee.

5.3. If the continued presence of the dismissed employee poses a risk to the college, the Director, College Safety or designee will expedite the removal of the employee from campus.

5.3.1. The Director, College Safety or designee will collect entry keys and PCC ID during the expedited removal.

- 5.3.2. The Office of HROD, in consultation with the former employee's supervisor, will complete an inventory of items which may be the personal effects of the former employee.
- 5.3.3. The Office of HROD will send the former employee the official dismissal notice, along with the office inventory, and any other exit information within 10 business days of the dismissal.
- 5.3.4. The former employee then has five (5) business days after receipt of dismissal notice to respond with any questions. Otherwise, the inventory, as listed, will be shipped to the last address of record and any leave payout, if applicable, will be processed as calculated.
- 5.3.5. The Director, HROD will coordinate the return of any additional PCC property.
 - 5.3.5.1. Failure to return any PCC property will be subject to criminal or civil prosecution and/or restitution.

Section 6: Employee Rights

- 6.1. The employee may follow the procedures as outlined in PCC Policy 5.20 Employee Grievance if there is reason to believe a wrongful demotion or dismissal has occurred.

Legal Citation: [N.C.G.S. 115-D](#), [1C SBCCC 200.94 \(p.76\)](#)

History: Policy Effective October 1988, EC Revised December 2018, August 2023, November 2024; November 2025

Cross-references PCC Policy 5.20 Employee Grievance.