Performance: Overview of Managing Substandard Performance for Supervisors
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General Information:

Clemson University’s 2020 Road Map outlines a key goal of attracting, retaining and rewarding top talent. The effective management of performance at the University supports this goal by enabling supervisors and employees to address performance issues in an effective and timely manner.

Summary:

Supervisors are encouraged to address performance concerns promptly, as this provides employees an early opportunity to understand the source of concern and, in conjunction with the supervisor, identify a course of action toward improvement. When possible, managing substandard performance should begin with informal coaching, but, depending on the nature and severity of the performance under review, it may start at any step in the process.

This document outlines the steps supervisors follow when addressing substandard performance.

Key Notes:

Substandard performance management options include informal coaching, writing a Performance Improvement Plan and issuing a Warning Notice of Substandard Performance.
Substandard performance management definitions:

**Informal coaching** can be used as a first step in addressing substandard performance and is a way to informally discuss the concern, define the expectations and develop specific and actionable steps to correct the performance.

A **Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)** is a formal action taken to address concerns with one or more job duties. It documents performance issues and specific improvement tasks and actions. A PIP can lead to a Warning Notice of Substandard Performance if the employee does not address performance concerns in a satisfactory manner.

A **Warning Notice of Substandard Performance** is a formal action taken in accordance with the Employee Performance Policy to address concerns with one or more job duties. Failure to successfully address performance issues outlined in a Warning Notice of Substandard Performance will result in removal from the position. This may include demotion, transfer or termination from employment.
User Instructions: Managing Substandard Performance for Supervisors

References:
For a quick summary of the steps, please view the Job Breakdown:
Performance: Managing Substandard Performance for Supervisors

Toolkits:
Supervisor’s Guide to Managing Misconduct
Supervisor’s Guide to Managing Substandard Performance

Policies:
Employee Performance Policy
Discipline Policy
Discipline for “Non-covered” Employees Policy
Grievance Policy and Procedure

Forms:
Performance Improvement Plan
Warning Notice of Substandard Performance*
Supervisor Checklist

* Drafted in conjunction with Employee Relations

Glossary:
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Overview of Managing Substandard Performance

1. Conduct informal coaching
2. Document the job duties to be improved
3. Address performance concerns
4. Conduct regular meetings
5. Evaluate performance
User Instructions: Managing Substandard Performance for Supervisors

1. Conduct Informal Coaching

   1.1 The supervisor observes or is informed of an area of performance that needs improvement.
   1.2 The supervisor notifies their direct manager of the concern and recommends a course of action based on the severity of the performance improvement needed.
   1.3 If the performance concern is being addressed through informal coaching, the supervisor meets with the employee to discuss the concern. If a formal action is needed, please see step 2.
      1.3.1 If possible, the employee and supervisor agree on the expectations and develop specific and actionable steps to correct the performance concern.
      1.3.2 The supervisor should document the information discussed in the coaching session. If performance does not improve, this documentation may be used to take formal steps to address the concerns.
      Additional Information: The Employee Performance Policy contains additional information on managing substandard performance.

2. Document the Job Duties to be Improved

   2.1 If informal counseling does not result in improved performance, the supervisor reviews the employee’s work history to identify any prior performance concerns, including documented informal coaching, Performance Improvement Plans or Warning Notices of Substandard Performance.
      2.1.2 The supervisor notifies his or her direct manager of the performance concerns.
   2.2 The supervisor consults with OHR’s Employee Relations unit to assess the performance concerns and draft a PIP or Warning Notice of Substandard Performance.
      2.2.1 Employee Relations provides a recommendation based on the performance concern. The recommendation may include either a Performance Improvement Plan or a Warning Notice of Substandard Performance.
      Additional Information:
      - A Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) is issued to address concerns with one or more job duties. Typically, PIPs are in effect for 30 to 60 days.
      - A Warning Notice of Substandard Performance is a formal action taken in accordance with the Employee Performance Policy to address serious concerns with one or more job duties. Supervisors are asked to consult with OHR’s Employee Relations unit prior to issuing a warning notice. A Warning Notice of Substandard Performance is typically in effect for 30 to 120 days.
3. **Address Performance Concerns**

3.1 If issuing a PIP, the supervisor meets with the employee to discuss the performance concerns, expected performance and action steps to improve performance.

3.1.1 The supervisor keeps a signed copy of the PIP bearing the supervisor’s and the employee’s signature.

3.2 If issuing a Warning Notice of Substandard Performance, the supervisor meets with the employee and Employee Relations to discuss performance concerns, expected performance and action steps to improve.

3.2.1 The supervisor keeps a signed copy of the warning notice bearing the supervisor’s and the employee’s signature.

3.2.2 Employee Relations files the original document in the personnel file and adjusts the employee’s next review date in PeopleSoft.

4. **Conduct Regular Meetings**

4.1 The supervisor schedules weekly meetings with the employee for the duration of the PIP or Warning Notice of Substandard Performance. These meetings are used to gather input on performance and document progress on established goals.

- If serious performance concerns emerge or escalate during this period, supervisors should consult with Employee Relations immediately.

5. **Evaluate the Performance**

5.1 At the conclusion of a PIP, the supervisor evaluates the performance and, in a meeting, notifies the employee if the performance has improved to an acceptable level.

- If the performance has failed to improve, the supervisor consults with Employee Relations to provide a Warning Notice of Substandard Performance to the employee.

5.2 At the conclusion of a Warning Notice of Substandard Performance, the supervisor and Employee Relations evaluate the performance and, in a meeting, notifies the employee if the performance has improved to an acceptable level. This information is documented and signed by the employee and supervisor.

- If the employee’s performance has not improved to an acceptable level, the supervisor and Employee Relations collaborate to determine the next steps, which may include an extension of the Warning Notice of Substandard Performance, demotion, transfer or termination from employment.