

The purpose of the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) is to help supervisors and direct reports address and resolve performance issues. This guidance should be used in concert with the advice received from the department's Human Resources Representative, Employee Relations Services and/or HR Consultancy Services. The PIP communicates the performance discrepancies, when an improved level of performance is to be achieved and the action steps that will assist the employee in meeting performance expectations.

## **The "Performance Improvement Plan" aims to fulfill the following goals:**

- To improve and sustain the desired performance results of each staff member
- To address performance discrepancies identified through the performance management process
- To provide identification of expected performance results that do not meet performance expectations
- To provide adequate descriptions of required performance improvements
- To initiate action steps that a staff member might take to correct performance – including identification of training and other resources available
- To provide a timetable outlining the dates by which improvement will be necessary
- To provide a statement of consequences that will occur if required improvement is not achieved
- To establish regular meetings for the supervisor and staff member and facilitate cooperation and ongoing communication

## **During the PIP discussion, the supervisor should discuss the following:**

- Identify the specific performance issue(s)
- The impact of the issue(s) on the department and the University
- Obtain the employee's feedback
- Expected performance results
- Developmental objectives (include internal/external resources necessary to influence improved performance)
- Action steps that will be taken by the employee
- Action steps that will be taken by the supervisor
- A resolution and decision on the course of action

## **When do I implement a PIP?**

Performance Improvement Plans should be implemented to aid in correcting performance challenges associated with the skills and expertise of employees and not be used to correct inappropriate behavioral conduct or a violation of work rules. To address and correct behavioral challenges, supervisors should follow Georgia Tech's Corrective Action and Disciplinary Procedures Policy 5.13.

Behavior problems include misconduct, insubordination and other issues related to an employee's conduct or behavior. Some examples of behavioral challenges include (but are not limited to):

- Refusal to complete tasks or assignments
- Profanity in the workplace
- Excessive absenteeism/tardiness
- Theft

Performance deficiencies are associated with skills that cause the employee to fall short of the performance standards required by his/her job. It is a supervisor's responsibility to ensure employees have the resources needed to effectively perform their job responsibilities. Some examples of performance challenges include (but are not limited to):

- Failure to meet deadlines
- Poor work quality
- Inappropriate work methods

## **PIP Process**

Performance Improvement Plans should be implemented when an employee's overall performance rating is "Unsatisfactory", or if the supervisor determines the employee's current performance requires improvement after the supervisor has held prior discussions with the employee and has communicated expectations. The following flow chart illustrates the process for implementing a pip when an employee's overall performance rating is "unsatisfactory":

## Non-Exempt Employees



## Exempt Employees



The following flow chart illustrates the process for implementing a pip outside of the normal performance review process:

## Non-Exempt Employees



## Exempt Employees



As illustrated above, the supervisor should follow the progressive disciplinary process beginning with a verbal warning. If performance challenges continue, the supervisor should aim to correct the performance discrepancies by issuing a written warning. If performance continues to be unsatisfactory, the next corrective measure should be implementation of a PIP (non-exempt employees may also receive a suspension in addition to being placed on a PIP). Approval from Employee Relations Services is required whenever an employee is being placed on a Performance Improvement Plan, suspended and/or terminated. Supervisors should consult with their Human Resources Representative for guidance. The completed PIP should be sent to the employee's GTHR personnel file after appropriate signatures and approvals have been obtained.

## Section I - Performance Standards/Expectations

This section of the PIP communicates the performance results that are expected. The performance standards should communicate observable, specific indicators of successful performance expressed in terms of Quantity, Quality, Timeliness, Cost, Safety, or Outcomes. Performance standards should be S.M.A.R.T.:

- **Specific** - Performance standards should let employees know exactly which actions and results they are expected to accomplish.
- **Measurable** - Whenever possible, objectives and standards should be based on quantitative measures such as direct counts, percentages, and ratios.
- **Attainable** - The objective or standard should be achievable and set based on reasonable productivity standards.
- **Relevant** – The performance standards should be relevant to the job responsibilities.
- **Timely** - Results should be delivered within a time period that meets the department and organization's needs. Georgia Institute of Technology 2/2008 Performance Improvement Plan Guidelines/Process 3 of 5

In determining performance standards, also consider the following:

Quantity - Specifies how much work must be completed within a certain period of time, i.e., enters 30 enrollments per day.

- **Quality** - Describes how well the work must be accomplished. Specifies accuracy, precision, appearance, or effectiveness. i.e., 95% of documents submitted are accepted without revision.
- **Timeliness** - Answers the questions: By when, how soon, or within what period, i.e., all work orders completed within five working days of receipt.
- **Effective Use of Resources** - Used when performance can be assessed in terms of utilization of resources: money saved, waste reduced, etc. i.e., the computer handbook project will be completed with only internal resources.
- **Effects of Effort** - Addresses the ultimate effect to be obtained; expands statements of effectiveness by using phrases such as: so that, in order to, or as shown by. i.e., establish inventory levels for storeroom so that supplies are maintained 100% of the time.
- **Manner of Performance** - Describes conditions in which an individual's personal behavior has an effect on performance. i.e., assists other employees in the work unit in accomplishing assignments.
- **Method of Performing Assignments** - Describes requirements; used when only the official policy, procedure, or rule for accomplishing the work is acceptable, i.e., Files are maintained in accordance with established office procedures.

## Section II - Performance Discrepancies

This section of the PIP communicates the aspects of the unsatisfactory performance that require immediate improvement. These are statements which clearly define the performance problems that exist with the particular employee. Each discrepancy should be identified in a separate statement and should be clearly communicated, citing specific examples whenever possible. Such statements should be supported by appropriate documentation. For example: "Employee frequently fails to complete assignments by the deadline date."

## Section III – Action Plan

In this section of the PIP, the supervisor establishes an action plan aimed at correcting the employee's performance. If additional training is required, the training should be specified, as should the timetable in which it will be accomplished. Other items that should be considered in the action plan section of the PIP are identification of any special support which will be given by the manager and special efforts/activities or assistance suggested by the employee as necessary to reach the goal(s). The action plan should follow the S.M.A.R.T. guidelines. Georgia Institute of Technology 2/2008 Performance Improvement Plan Guidelines/Process 4 of 5

## Performance Improvement Plan Guidelines/Processes Section IV - Follow Up Review

In this section of the PIP, the supervisor communicates the performance observed throughout the PIP review period. Supervisors should maintain written documentation concerning performance discussions, summarizing dates and details of each discussion or meeting, throughout the PIP review period. Supervisors should consult with their Human Resources Representative for guidance. If an employee fails to improve their performance as required in the PIP, the supervisor should follow the appropriate next steps based on the process flow charts illustrated. If the employee is being placed on a PIP as a final step in the progressive disciplinary process, the supervisor should consult with the department's Human Resources Representative and obtain approval from Employee Relations Services prior to proceeding with the termination process. Approval from Employee Relations Services is required whenever an employee is being placed on a Performance Improvement Plan, suspended and/or terminated.