



Lehigh University Human Resources Policy

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| Effective Date: | 11/1/1989 |
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| Applicability: | All Staff Members |

LEAVING LEHIGH: INVOLUNTARY DISCHARGE POLICY

Purpose:

Policy on involuntary terminations from Lehigh

Policy:

Introduction

Lehigh recognizes that there will be times when employees, for a variety of reasons, may not be able to meet expected performance standards. Regardless of the reasons for the need to end the employment relationship, the goal of the University is to treat employees fairly and to ensure that proper procedures are followed to achieve consistency across the institution. The goal of the University is to treat all employees with dignity and respect in spite of differences of opinion during involuntary separations.

Policy

A staff member's employment may be terminated for reasons that include, but are not limited to, uncorrected performance deficiencies or serious misconduct. Termination of employment is a serious action and requires consultation with Human Resources and approval by the vice president, dean or senior manager of the area prior to taking such action. All terminations must be fully documented in accordance with University standards for performance management. Regardless of the reason for the termination of employment, individuals should always be treated with dignity and respect through discussions, investigations, and during the delivery of the decision to terminate employment.

The most important prerequisite for discharging an employee is adequate documentation of the reasons for termination of employment. Human Resources will work closely with supervisors and managers in these situations. Where the dismissal involves inability to perform job duties or inappropriate conduct, the employee should receive appropriate notice about the performance or the conduct and be given the opportunity to improve performance.

In instances involving serious misconduct, such as alleged dishonesty, insubordination, or criminal action, the University will suspend employment pending the outcome of an investigation. A supervisor should not terminate an employee without having all the facts to support the decision and without obtaining proper approvals. Human Resources will conduct investigations following appropriate procedures based on the nature of the incident and will involve other LU departments (University

Police, Audit, Harassment Officer, or others) as necessary.

Following the conclusion of the investigation, and after the appropriate manager has approved the decision to terminate the employment relationship, the supervisor will meet with the individual to convey the decision. A Human Resources representative may be present to answer questions and to review details about the steps to take upon leaving the University.

Forced Separation

It is the supervisor's responsibility to inform the individual of the decision to terminate the employment relationship. An employee should not be given the option of resignation instead of dismissal for serious misconduct.

Employees discharged for serious misconduct will not be considered for rehire at Lehigh.

Other Resources

The following resources are available to assist managers:

- [Performance Improvement Process Guidelines](#)
- Preparing for the Termination meeting (available from HR)
- Guidelines for Investigating Misconduct (available from HR)

Procedures for Employee Separations:

Upon termination of employment, the following steps must be taken:

- The supervisor is responsible for arranging payment of any monies due the employee for time worked or for benefits or allowances the employee may be owed
- The employee is responsible for returning University property to the department and paying any monies due the University
- The Budget, Payroll, and Human Resources offices must be notified promptly in writing through the [Assignment/Appointment Request Form](#) in order to remove the employee from payroll and to terminate benefits. Provide a copy of the termination letter to Human Resources.

Employees who resign, quit without notice, or are discharged will be paid on the next regular payday. Failure to notify Human Resources or Payroll of a termination, voluntary or involuntary, through normal channels may result in a violation of the *Fair Labor Standards Act* governing payroll procedures. It may also result in an erroneous overpayment to the employee.

Separation Information and Checklist

As part of the termination process, supervisors should review the [Separation Information Sheet](#) with the departing employee. This sheet contains information regarding employee responsibilities, benefits, payroll, and other separation issues.

Supervisors also need to complete a [Separation Plan Checklist](#) for each departing employee and retain in their files for one year to ensure consistency across campus.

Keywords: Termination, Involuntary, Separation