



ADDRESSING PERFORMANCE AND BEHAVIOR CONCERNS

What differentiates Pepperdine from other organizations is not that we are immune to challenges, but rather the manner in which we address performance or behavior issues on our teams. Perhaps especially in trying circumstances, we never fail to treat each person with infinite dignity. Simultaneously, we do not equate the value of relationships with a corresponding lack of accountability. Part of treating people with respect is telling them the truth, with grace and care, and holding one another to high standards as we seek to grow and flourish.

Performance and behavior issues negatively affect many constituents—the offending employee, the direct supervisor, peers and colleagues, and those being served—while also potentially diminishing a team's morale and the ability to realize our mission. An avoidance of difficult conversations, even with noble intentions of not wanting to hurt others' feelings, means placing a greater emphasis on our own comfort over the well-being of other people. Withholding feedback that will help others be successful is a disservice and undermines the Golden Rule of treating others like we would want to be treated. Rather, as servant leaders, we reframe difficult conversations as opportunities to bring healing to people and teams. Like so many things in life, it is HOW we handle these situations and conversations that will distinguish our leadership.

Because such conversations can feel arduous and awkward, Human Resources is ready to partner with you every step of the way—from discussing approaches to address concerns, to providing talking points and different perspectives, to helping bring closure to ongoing issues.

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1 Follow three steps to provide honest and meaningful feedback.

Effective feedback does not need to be long and can be broken down into three steps:

- » Cite the issue.
- » Explain why the issue is problematic.
- » State specific and measurable expectations going forward.

To learn more about each of these steps, as well as the University's general progressive discipline process, please see the Supervisor's Guide to Documentation and reach out to Human Resources.

2 Follow up in writing.

Documentation is simply the written form of feedback to employees. While verbal conversations are helpful, documentation provides an anchor point of mutual understanding, allows employees to refer back to something concrete, and aids supervisors should any performance or behavior issues escalate or repeat. Additionally, documentation serves as legally defensible reasons for employment actions, such as promotions, demotions, or terminations. Whether informal (such as an email) or formal (such as annual assessments, memoranda, or performance improvement plans), regular written feedback sets employees up for success and resolves workplace challenges.

3 Summarize specific and ongoing feedback on annual assessments.

Generally, all involved parties will help resolve conflicts (with the exception of addressing policy violations or inappropriate behavior, where supervisors may need to act unilaterally). Symbolically sitting on the same side of the table—looking together at the conflict on the other side of the table—allows parties to work collaboratively and objectively. Propose possible solutions, establish an agreed-upon plan, and define specific commitments each party agrees to meet in advancing the relationships and mission of your team.