

THE SUPERVISOR'S GUIDE TO DOCUMENTATION

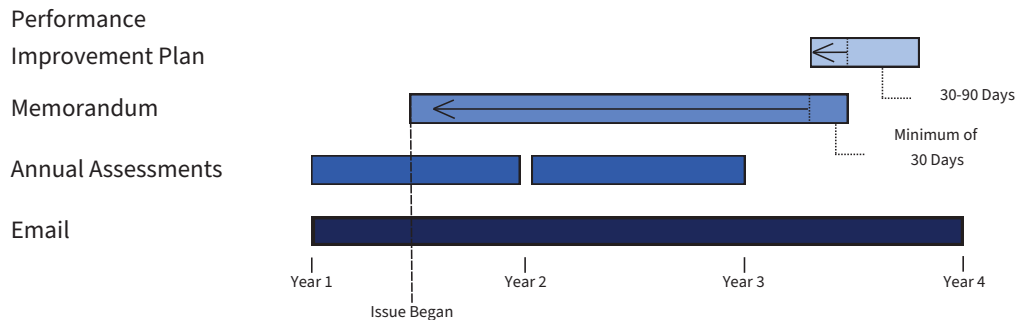
DOCUMENTATION OVERVIEW

In the context of employee supervision and recommendations, documentation is simply the written form of feedback to employees.

- Informal documentation, such as email, is expected and generally necessary prior to formal documentation. Supervisors should follow up regular verbal feedback with an email to the employee summarizing the discussion.
- Formal documentation, such as memoranda or Performance Improvement Plans, is placed in the employee's Human Resources file after it has been shared with the employee.

Documentation provides employees feedback owed to them for their professional success. It is also critical and legally defensible for many employment actions such as demotions, promotions, transfers, and terminations.

GENERAL PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE/DOCUMENTATION



DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES

COMPREHENSIVE

It is crucial that documentation is comprehensive. All performance and behavior issues should be addressed, and the employee should be apprised of all expectations for success.

GRAMATICALLY CORRECT

Use complete sentences, ensure correct grammar and punctuation, and avoid typos to establish credibility.

CONTEXT

Provide adequate details to ensure readers understand the context without being inundated with or confused by irrelevant information. Third parties unaware of the situation should be able to read the documentation and understand the issues and expectations going forward.

TIMELINES

Document issues as soon as possible after their occurrence. Immediate documentation conveys the importance of the matter, provides feedback to employees while the issue is fresh in their minds, and demonstrates the University's responsiveness to addressing and resolving issues.

THREE STEPS TO PROVIDING FEEDBACK

1. CITE THE ISSUE

Direct and Succinct: Directly identify and state the issue. Refrain from telling a play-by-play story of what happened.

Factually Based: Cited issues are factual statements about what happened. Provide specific information such as dates, times, project names, and the like.

University Policy Violations: If applicable, reference the University Policy Manual or Code of Ethics violation when citing the issue. "On December 2 you notified me of your absence due to illness at noon, four hours after the start of your normal work shift, in violation of University Policy 14.8."

2. EXPLAIN WHY THE ISSUE IS PROBLEMATIC

Business Impact: Identify resulting problems with the employee's performance or behavior as it relates to business operations. Consider the impact upon departmental processes, customer service, employee availability, community/work environment, morale, etc. "It is problematic that you arrived to work four hours late because you missed morning meetings and were unavailable for student counseling."

3. PROVIDE SPECIFIC AND MEASURABLE EXPECTATIONS

Comprehensive: Expectations provided to the employee should be comprehensive. Thorough statements help ensure that the documentation is effective and complete, and that the employee understands how to move forward successfully.

Position Expectations: Consider expectations for the position, rather than expectations based on the incumbent's abilities or strengths. Ensure expectations provided are consistent with the job description and the position to which the employee applied and was hired. No expectations to staff should conflict with the University Policy Manual, Code of Ethics, or California law.

Crafting Expectations: There should be at least one expectation for each issue cited, perhaps more. Each expectation should:

- Be a complete sentence
- Begin with an action verb
- Be specific
- Be measurable
- Refer to the University Policy or Code of Ethics, if applicable
- Be reasonable

Measurable: Make each expectation as specific and measurable as possible to limit bias and subjectivity when assessing the employee's future performance and behavior. Consider ways to establish measurable outcomes:

- Quantity ("Make at least ten recruiting calls per business day.")
- Hard deadlines ("Submit your survey conclusions by Tuesday, February 18.")
- Recurring deadlines ("Send me an overview of progress on each of your projects every Tuesday by 5 PM.")
- Time frame ("Respond to all emails within one business day. You do not need to provide a final answer within one business day; but you must respond to each email indicating that you have received the message and that you will respond fully in a timely manner.")

Proactive Team Expectations: Consider sending expectations to all of your staff to establish or remind them of expectations that apply to everyone, such as appropriate office attire or protocol when requesting vacation. "Notify your supervisor via phone/email within 30 minutes of the beginning of your work shift that you will not be in the office due to illness (University Policy 14.8)."