

## **SUHR-002: Staff Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) Policy**

### **1. Policy Statement**

Spalding University is committed to supporting employee success through constructive performance management. When an employee's performance falls below acceptable standards as established in their annual performance goals and evaluation, a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) provides a structured opportunity for improvement while ensuring fair and consistent treatment of all employees.

### **2. Purpose and Objectives**

The Performance Improvement Plan policy serves to:

- Provide employees with clear expectations and opportunities to improve performance
- Establish a fair and consistent process for addressing underperformance
- Document performance issues and improvement efforts for legal compliance
- Support employee development through targeted resources and coaching
- Protect organizational interests while respecting employee rights
- Create a standardized framework for performance correction

### **3. Policy Scope and Application**

#### **3.1. Covered Employees**

This policy applies to all regular full-time and part-time staff employees during and after their probationary period, excluding:

- Employees in their initial 90-day probationary period
- Temporary or contract workers
- Executive-level positions (subject to separate executive performance procedures)

#### **3.2. Triggering Conditions**

A Performance Improvement Plan may be initiated when an employee demonstrates:

- Overall performance rating below "Meets Standards" (below 2.5/5.0) on annual evaluation or mid-year evaluation
- Single goal or competency rating falls below "Meets Standards" (below 3.0/5.0) on annual evaluation or mid-year evaluation
- Failure to achieve critical annual performance goals without acceptable justification
- Consistent decline in performance over multiple review periods
- Behavioral issues that significantly impact goal achievement or workplace effectiveness
- Inability to perform essential job functions despite adequate training and support
- NOTE: Employees on an active Performance Improvement Plan are not eligible for promotion or position change consideration until final disposition of the plan

### **4. PIP Initiation Process**

#### **4.1. Supervisor Assessment**

Before initiating a PIP, supervisors must:

- Document specific performance deficiencies with measurable examples
- Review previous feedback, coaching attempts, and performance discussions
- Consult with HR to ensure consistency and legal compliance
- Consider whether performance issues can be addressed through alternative means
- Verify that the employee has received adequate training and resources

#### 4.2. HR Review and Approval

All PIPs require HR approval before implementation, including:

- Review of documentation supporting the need for improvement plan
- Assessment of consistency with organizational standards and past practices
- Legal compliance review to ensure non-discriminatory application
- Verification that proper progressive discipline steps have been followed
- Approval of proposed improvement goals, timeline, and resources

#### 4.3. Management Authorization Levels

- **Immediate Supervisor:** May recommend PIP initiation
- **Next-Level Supervisor:** Must approve PIP recommendation
- **HR Director:** Must approve all PIPs before implementation

### 5. PIP Structure and Requirements

#### 5.1. Standard PIP Duration

- **Initial PIP Period:** 90 calendar days (standard)
- **Minimum Duration:** 30 calendar days (for specific performance issues)
- **Maximum Duration:** 120 calendar days (for complex performance issues)
- **Extension Option:** Additional 30-60 days with HR Director approval

#### 5.2. Required PIP Components

Every PIP must include:

- Clear identification of specific performance deficiencies
- Measurable improvement goals aligned with job requirements
- Timeline with specific milestone checkpoints, based on duration
- Support resources and training commitments
- Regular monitoring and feedback schedule
- Consequences for successful and unsuccessful completion
- Employee acknowledgment and signature requirements

### 6. Goal Setting Standards

PIP improvement goals must be:

- **Specific:** Clearly defined performance expectations
- **Measurable:** Quantifiable outcomes and success metrics
- **Achievable:** Realistic given available resources and timeline
- **Relevant:** Directly related to job performance and organizational needs
- **Time-bound:** Clear deadlines and milestone dates

### 7. Support and Resources Framework

#### 7.1. Mandatory Support Elements

The organization must provide:

- **Training Resources:** Access to relevant skill development programs
- **Coaching Support:** Regular one-on-one sessions with manager or designated coach
- **Mentoring Opportunities:** Pairing with successful peer or senior employee when appropriate
- **Resource Access:** Necessary tools, systems, or materials for success
- **Time Allocation:** Reasonable time for training and development activities

## 7.2. Training and Development Support

Available resources include:

- Internal training programs and workshops
- External professional development opportunities
- Online learning platform access
- Professional certification support
- Peer shadowing and cross-training opportunities
- Skills assessment and personalized development plans

## 8. Budget and Resource Allocation

- **Time allocation:** Up to 10% of scheduled working hours over the duration of the PIP for development activities
- **External training:** Subject to departmental budget approval

## 9. Monitoring and Documentation Standards

### 9.1. Regular Check-in Requirements

- **Frequency:** Minimum weekly meetings during PIP period
- **Documentation:** Written summary of each meeting to be written by supervisor and shared with employee within 24 hours
- **Employee Input:** Opportunity for employee self-assessment and feedback within 24 hours of receipt of meeting summary
- **Progress Tracking:** Measurable evidence of improvement or continued challenges

### 9.2. Formal Review Schedule – for Standard PIP Duration

- **30-Day Review:** First milestone assessment with documented progress
- **60-Day Review:** Mid-point evaluation with adjustment opportunities
- **90-Day Review:** Final assessment (if standard PIP duration)
- **Final Review:** Comprehensive evaluation and outcome determination
- **Minimum/Maximum Duration PIPs:** milestones are adjusted based on PIP length

### 9.3. Documentation Requirements

All PIP documentation must include:

- Detailed performance deficiency descriptions with specific examples
- Clear improvement goals and success metrics
- Evidence of support and resources provided
- Regular progress notes and meeting summaries
- Employee responses and self-assessments
- Milestone achievement records
- Final outcome determination with supporting rationale

## **10. Success Criteria and Measurement**

### **10.1. Minimum Acceptable Performance Standards**

For successful PIP completion, employees must:

- Achieve at least 3.0/5.0 rating on all improvement goals
- Meet all specified milestone targets throughout the period
- Demonstrate consistent progress and sustained improvement
- Show proactive engagement in improvement activities
- Maintain professional conduct and policy compliance

### **10.2. Performance Measurement Methods**

- **Quantitative Metrics:** Measurable outcomes and goal achievement rates
- **Qualitative Assessment:** Behavioral observations and competency demonstrations
- **Stakeholder Feedback:** Input from colleagues, customers, or other departments
- **Self-Assessment:** Employee reflection and progress documentation
- **Objective Evidence:** Work samples, project outcomes, and performance data

### **10.3. Success Indicators**

Evidence of successful improvement includes:

- Consistent achievement of weekly and monthly targets
- Positive feedback from colleagues and stakeholders
- Demonstrated application of new skills and knowledge
- Self-directed problem-solving and initiative
- Sustained performance beyond minimum requirements

## **11. PIP Outcomes and Consequences**

### **11.1. Successful Completion**

When performance standards are met:

- Employee returns to normal performance management cycle
- PIP documentation remains in personnel file through next complete appraisal cycle
- Recognition and acknowledgment of improvement achievements
- Establishment of new performance goals for upcoming period
- Continued monitoring for sustained improvement (6-month period)
- Eligibility for promotional opportunities restored

### **11.2. Unsuccessful Completion**

When performance standards are not met, options include:

- **PIP Extension:** Additional 30-60 days with revised goals (requires HR approval)
- **Role Modification:** Transfer to a different position better suited to skills
- **Demotion:** Reduction in responsibilities and compensation with revised expectations
- **Termination:** End of employment relationship for continued underperformance

### **11.3. Alternative Outcomes**

- **Partial Success:** Achievement of some but not all goals may result in modified job responsibilities

- **Medical/Personal Issues:** Referral to Employee Assistance Program or accommodation process
- **Skills Mismatch:** Career counseling and internal mobility opportunities

## 12. Employee Rights and Protections

### 12.1. Due Process Rights

Employees have the right to:

- Understand specific performance expectations and improvement requirements
- Receive necessary support, training, and resources for improvement
- Regular feedback and coaching throughout the PIP period
- Document their progress and respond to performance assessments
- Seek guidance from HR representatives
- Union representation where applicable

### 12.2. Anti-Retaliation Protection

The organization prohibits retaliation against employees who:

- Participate in good faith in the PIP process
- Seek HR guidance or support during the improvement period
- Request reasonable accommodations or assistance
- Exercise their rights under this policy

### 12.3. Confidentiality Assurance

PIP information will be maintained confidentially and shared only with:

- Direct supervisor and management chain
- HR personnel involved in the process
- Legal counsel when required
- Other parties as necessary for legitimate business purposes

## 13. Appeal and Grievance Process

### 13.1. Internal Appeal Rights

Employees may appeal PIP decisions through:

1. **Initial Discussion:** Direct conversation with immediate supervisor
2. **Management Review:** Formal review by next-level manager
3. **HR Investigation:** Comprehensive review by HR department
4. **Senior Leadership Review:** Final internal appeal to designated executive

### 13.2. Appeal Timeline

- Appeal must be filed within 5 business days of PIP initiation or outcome
- Entire appeal process should take no more than 45 business days

STEP	ACTION	RESPONSE TIME
1	Initial Discussion	5 business days
2	Management Review	5 business days
3	HR Investigation	10 business days
4	Senior Leadership Review	10 business days

### **13.3. Grievance Standards**

Appeals must include:

- Specific allegations of policy violations or procedural errors
- Supporting documentation and evidence
- Proposed resolution or corrective action
- Clear statement of desired outcome

## **14. Legal Compliance and Risk Management**

### **14.1. Equal Employment Opportunity**

PIP application must comply with all applicable laws regarding:

- Non-discrimination based on protected characteristics
- Reasonable accommodations for disabilities
- Fair and consistent treatment across all employee groups
- Documentation supporting all employment decisions

### **14.2. Documentation Standards**

All PIP records must meet legal standards for:

- Accuracy and completeness of performance documentation
- Consistency with organizational policies and past practices
- Timeliness of performance feedback and corrective actions
- Objective evidence supporting all performance assessments

### **14.3. Risk Mitigation**

To minimize legal exposure:

- All PIPs require HR review and approval before implementation
- Managers receive training on proper PIP procedures and documentation
- Regular audits ensure consistent policy application
- Legal counsel reviews high-risk cases before final employment decisions

## **15. Training and Implementation**

### **15.1. Manager Training Requirements**

All managers must complete training on:

- PIP policy procedures and requirements
- Performance documentation standards
- Coaching and feedback techniques
- Legal compliance and risk management
- Employee rights and confidentiality requirements

### **15.2. HR Professional Development**

HR staff must maintain current knowledge of:

- Employment law developments affecting performance management
- Best practices in performance improvement planning
- Documentation and legal compliance standards
- Conflict resolution and employee relations

## **16. Annual Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure:

- Continued effectiveness in achieving performance improvement
- Compliance with current employment laws and regulations
- Consistency with organizational culture and values
- Alignment with industry best practices

## **17. Policy Administration**

### **17.1. Responsibility Matrix**

- **HR Department:** Policy oversight, compliance monitoring, and legal review
- **Department Managers:** PIP implementation and day-to-day management
- **Senior Leadership:** Final approval for termination decisions
- **Legal Counsel:** Review of high-risk cases and policy compliance

### **17.2. Record Retention**

PIP documentation will be retained according to:

- **Successful PIPs:** 12 months after completion in personnel file
- **Unsuccessful PIPs:** Permanent retention in personnel file
- **Appealed PIPs:** 7 years retention regardless of outcome
- **Terminated Employees:** Per organizational record retention policy

### **17.3. Policy Updates and Communication**

- Policy changes require HR Director and Legal Counsel approval
- Updates will be communicated to all managers 30 days prior to implementation
- Annual policy review and training for all supervisory staff
- New manager orientation includes comprehensive PIP training

## **18. Effective Date and Supersession**

This Performance Improvement Plan Policy is effective as of 11/01/2025 and supersedes all previous performance improvement policies and procedures. Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Human Resources Department.

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**Policy Owner:** Human Resources Department

**Policy Approval:** Stephen Jordan, Director of Human Resources

**Effective Date:** 11/01/2025

**Next Review Date:** 11/01/2026

**Document Version:** 1.0