

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE POLICY & PROCEDURE

Purpose / Intent

The purpose of this policy and procedure document is to highlight the AMS's progressive disciplinary process. The general intent of disciplinary action shall be to correct and improve employee performance and should not be seen as a punitive measure. The conduct expected from all AMS employees is full adherence to the terms of employment stated within the policy documents as outlined in the Standards of Performance. The AMS's disciplinary procedures consist of a simple process for tracking occurrences of policy violations.

Scope

This policy applies to the behaviors and actions of all AMS waged and salaried employee positions, held by students of Queen's University.

Policy

1. Delivery of Discipline

1. The AMS delivers all disciplinary notices and policy updates through our Online Human Resources Information System, Citation Canada.
2. By signing off on disciplinary documents, the employee acknowledges that they have received notification of the action documented in the notice. The employee does not have to agree with the nature of the disciplinary or performance concern addressed.
 - a. Conversely, if an employee chooses not to sign off on a disciplinary document, it does not mean the disciplinary action has not taken place; the action is still valid without the signature.

2. Process for Discipline

Steps in the Progressive Discipline Process:

- First Written Warning: Issued for minor or initial infractions
- Second Written Warning: Issued for repeated and/or more significant infractions.
- Final Written Warning: Issued for severe infractions and/or continued non-compliance
- Termination: Reserved for persistent violations or serious misconduct

Flexibility in the Process: The progressive disciplinary process is intended to provide employees with a fair opportunity to correct their behavior. However, depending on the seriousness and

nature of the situation, and in alignment with the Standards of Performance and organizational policies, AMS reserves the right to exercise flexibility in how discipline is applied.

This means that any step in the disciplinary process may be:

- Repeated (e.g., additional coaching or warnings if the employee is showing improvement but requires continued support).
- Omitted (e.g., skipping a verbal or written warning when the behavior is severe or recurring).
- Taken out of sequence (e.g., moving directly to a Final Written Warning or termination when warranted in the case of a major work rule violation).

This flexibility ensures that disciplinary action is proportionate, fair, and responsive to both the employee's conduct and the operational needs of the organization, while also protecting our employees.

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3. Approaches to Disciplinary Procedures Based on Roles

Disciplinary procedures differ based on specific job roles to ensure fairness and accountability. While managerial staff, who have strategic and oversight responsibilities rather than finite tasks, require performance-based evaluations, service staff, whose roles involve finite, task-oriented duties, follow a structured demerit system to address policy violations consistently. Managerial and Supervisory Staff:

- The demerit system is unsuitable for managerial staff because their roles focus on strategic oversight and leadership rather than finite tasks
- Discipline emphasizes accountability, goal achievement, and meeting deadlines.
 - Performance issues are addressed through: Weekly meetings where expectations are set together
 - Performance metrics aligned with organizational objectives
 - Improvement plans with specific goals, timelines, and support

If improvement is insufficient, escalation may lead to written warnings or suspension

Service Staff (Demerit System)

A 10-point demerit system tracks infractions. Corrective actions occur at specific intervals:

- 3 consecutive points result in a First Written Warning
- 6 consecutive points result in a Second Written Warning

- 9 consecutive points result in a Final Written Warning
- 10 consecutive points results in Review of Employment/Termination Management must seek Human Resources Office support before delivering termination.
 - Any individual occurrence of policy violation resulting in 3 or more demerits, and/or any combination of policy violations resulting in 3 consecutive demerits will require Human Resources Office support.
 - In extreme cases, as a result of a major work rule violation, management reserves the right to go directly to a Final Written Warning, or termination, provided they have received Exec and HR approval prior to.
 - Managers must notify employees of infractions immediately and document discussions to provide coaching opportunities

The demerit system is designed to correct behaviors as they occur, providing employees with coaching opportunities and clear expectations for improvement. All efforts will be made to set staff members up for success in their roles.

In certain cases, with HR support, Executive or Senior Managers may determine that an employee would benefit from a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). A PIP outlines a structured timeline with key performance metrics that must be met to demonstrate progress and ensure the employee's success in their role.

1. Although there are differences in how the progressive discipline process is executed for staff, there are still expectations that all AMS employees follow the same AMS policies and procedures.

4. Demerits

- Managers assign demerits for specific policy violations as outlined in the Universal Demerit List
- Examples of infractions can be seen in Section 6
- Managers must:
 - Conduct discussions with employees to ensure they understand the reason for the demerit.
 - Approach conversations with dignity and respect, maintaining professionalism while addressing concerns.
 - Clearly outline expectations for the employee, reinforcing workplace standards and responsibilities.

- Communicate that there is a performance issue, ensuring the employee is aware of the concern and its potential consequences.
- Document each demerit in the Progressive Discipline Notice, creating a formal record for future reference.

5. Review of Employment and Termination

Before termination, managers must:

- Collaborate with the Human Resources Office to evaluate all documentation and determine if termination is appropriate
- Explore all opportunities to help the employee succeed before proceeding with termination

Termination normally occurs after violations of the Standards of Performance or other AMS policy or expectation and is the last step in the progressive discipline process; however, for a particularly serious violation or departure from expected standards, an employee may be terminated immediately, bypassing other steps of the progressive discipline process.

Suspension

Suspension may be used as a temporary measure while investigating a workplace issue or determining the appropriate course of action. It allows time to review the circumstances without rushing to a disciplinary decision.

- **Paid Suspension:** Used when a difficult or complex decision requires further review. Employees remain on payroll while the investigation or assessment is completed.
- **No Suspension Should Be Issued Without Prior Consultation with Human Resources.**

6. Universal Demerit List

- The following table contains a list of common infractions in direct disregard for AMS Human Resources policies. The table also outlines repercussions in a demerit system which assigns value to each of those infractions. Examples of violations in this List do not include all possible infractions for which an employee might be disciplined, up to and including termination.

Related Policy	Example of Offense / Explanation	Number of Demerits
Attendance & Punctuality	Arriving to work 1 minute to 59 minutes after scheduled shift or calling in sick outside of government legislated days results in - late or absence, both + 1 demerits.* If a medical accommodation is required, or a reasonable excuse has been brought forward to management, both will be considered when deciding to apply a demerit.	1
Mutual Respect	Using inappropriate language or topics on shift. Contact HR for any clarification if required.	1
Workplace Activity	Snacking on shift without manager approval.	1
Behaviour Policy	Improper uniform or attire. Check with servicespecific uniform rules.	1

Personal Device Use	Being distracted with personal devices when on shift.	1
Attendance & Punctuality	Failure to be available for at least one shift per week without justification and manager approval. (Any availability changes must be approved prior to scheduling of shifts).	1

Off-Duty Conduct	Wearing portion of uniform while off-duty without manager approval.	1
Insubordination	Failure to follow instructions from the Manager on Duty (simple instructions or repeated occurrences of a minor nature).	1
Workplace Activity	Willful neglect of employee duties (as outlined in the employee contract and job description).	3
Behaviour Policy	Abuse of staff privileges or discounts.	3
Attendance & Punctuality	No Call No Show: Failure to report to a scheduled shift, training, or meeting, and failure to notify a manager. Once you are more than 1 hour late, you are considered to have missed the 'shift.'	3
Behavior Policy	Inappropriate use or mistreatment of equipment, furniture, or merchandise.	3
Mutual Respect	Intentional disrespectful behaviour to staff or patrons or failure to adhere to the rules of any oncampus establishment or service.	3
Behavior Policy	Exhibiting behaviour that compromises service <i>on or off</i> shift.	3
Standards of Performance	Major violation of Human Resources Policy and/or the AMS Mission Statement.	9
Substance Abuse	Arriving to work in a state that would be considered under the influence of drugs and or alcohol, unfit to perform work duties.	Up to 10 points (Always seek HR support)
Harassment, Discrimination, and Violence in the Workplace	Sexual/verbal/physical harassment of staff or patrons (based on investigation findings).	Up to 10 points (Always seek HR support)

Behaviour Policy	Theft (based on investigation findings, zero tolerance).	Up to 10 points (Always seek HR support)
Insubordination	Gross insubordination.	Up to 10 points (Always seek HR support)

2. In the event of a situation that may require a demerit, the Manager on Duty is required to employ shift critiquing through having a discussion with said employee. The MOD should notify the employee of the infraction and the possibility of further discipline.
3. Demerits can only be given by the designated managerial staff who oversee their departments' discipline.
 - a. Designated managerial staff ensure consistency prior to delivering corrective action and will be identified during fall training.

7. Cumulative Discipline Expectations

Certain policy violations may be severe enough to warrant immediate termination, even for a first offense. In such cases, managers must evaluate the situation carefully and consult with Human Resources before proceeding.

For less severe infractions, a progressive disciplinary process is implemented, where consequences escalate with repeated violations. If a violation is serious enough in nature, it may warrant immediate termination of employment for a first offense. Managers should always consider whether an offense is of such a serious nature that terminations for a first offense is appropriate and contact a Human Resources partner.

When unacceptable behavior in the workplace occurs that is not serious enough to warrant immediate termination of employment for the first offense, then one of the steps in the progressive disciplinary process other than termination would typically occur. In combination with other disciplinary actions, any single action could result in termination of employment depending on the seriousness of the offense(s) and the total number of disciplinary actions already accumulated. Managers should always consider the seriousness of the offense and partner with Human Resources to determine the appropriate option in the progressive disciplinary process.

A disciplinary action is considered "active" when it is within a rolling twelve (12) month period from the date the action was administered. Previous "active" disciplinary action will remain for consideration in the progressive discipline process.

Example Scenario

- January 5, 2024 - An employee receives a First Written Warning for repeated tardiness. This warning remains active until January 5, 2025 (12 months).
- June 10, 2024 - The same employee violates another workplace policy (e.g., failure to follow safety protocols). Because their First Written Warning from January is still active, this new infraction escalates the discipline to a Second Written Warning rather than starting over. This warning remains active until June 10, 2025 (12 months).
- November 20, 2024 - The employee commits another violation (e.g., unexcused absence). Since both the First and Second Written Warnings are still active, this results in a Final Written Warning. This warning remains active until November 20, 2025 (12 months).
- January 6, 2025 - The First Written Warning from January 2024 is no longer active. However, the Second and Final Written Warnings are still within the 12-month period and remain on record for any future violations. This warning remains active until January 6, 2026 (12 months).

If another violation occurs while prior warnings are still active, the employee may face termination review based on the severity of the infraction and their disciplinary history. This system ensures that past behavior is considered while providing employees with a fair opportunity to correct their actions before facing serious consequences.

8. Questions About Disciplinary Action

1. Often, disciplinary action can seem overwhelming and threatening, and sometimes people may need clarification to better understand the disciplinary process. The AMS has an Open-Door Policy. Employees should feel comfortable approaching and addressing any concerns they may have with the Human Resources Office.

Monitoring

Monitoring for compliance with this policy will be carried out by the Human Resources Office.

Responsibility and/or contact person	HR Office
Approved by	Board of Directors
Date initially approved	November 24, 2022
Date last revised	June 18, 2025

Date of next review	Every two years, or when significant change dictates a need for revision.
Related policies, procedures, and guidelines	Attendance; Dress Code; Harassment, Discrimination & Violence; Honesty & Integrity; Insubordination; Mutual Respect; Off Duty Conduct; Open-Door Policy; Personal Device Use; Standards of Performance; Substance Abuse; and Workplace Activity.
Policies superseded by this policy	N/A