



**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF POLICE
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM
POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**



Subject			Policy Number
DISCIPLINE AND APPEAL PROCEDURE			208
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Reference Standards		Rescinds or Amends Policy Number	
TPCA: 205.1, 208.1 CALEA: 26.1, 26.1.6, 26.1.7 IACLEA: 4.3.2		B-11	

I. PURPOSE

To establish a procedural framework outlining the discipline process for peace officers, telecommunicators, and public safety officers (the latter also referred to in some circumstances as guards) of The University of Texas System Police. The objective is to provide an appeal process for disciplinary action as the result of a suspension without pay, demotion, or termination from employment. This Policy should be read in conjunction with ODOP Policy 204 – Complaint Investigation and ODOP Policy 205 – Grievance Procedure.

All individuals employed by institutional police departments or ODOP not included above shall follow their institution’s and UT System policies related to discipline and appeal procedures.

The provisions of this policy do not constitute a contract, express or implied, between any employee covered by this policy and The University of Texas System and its institutions. No provision of this policy and its procedures should be interpreted as providing additional rights, including rights contrary to the "employment at will" doctrine.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Allegation of Misconduct: A written complaint of misconduct against a license holder, as defined in this policy, and signed by the person making the complaint. Allegations of misconduct are considered Class I Complaints.
- B. Conduct Violation: Conduct violation is defined as an act, decision, behavior or omission of the same which violates the UTS Code of Conduct, Policies/Procedures of the Office of the Director of Police, the Board of Regents Rules and Regulations, local laws, state laws, federal laws, provisions of an Institution’s Handbook of Operating Procedures, or the Institution’s Police Department rules and regulations. Conduct violations by an employee could result in disciplinary action.
- C. Employees: For the purpose of this policy, employee includes peace officers, telecommunicators, and public safety officers, also known as guards.
- D. License Holder: A Texas County Jailer, Peace Officer or Telecommunicator.

- E. Misconduct: a specific group of Class I Complaints, as defined by TCOLE, to include:
1. Violations of federal or state laws or local ordinances
 2. Alleged conduct, including:
 - a) Use of excessive force;
 - b) Untruthfulness, including false, untrue, or misleading statements, either by overt means or by omission
 - c) Unlawful search;
 - d) Unlawful arrest;
 - e) Civil rights violations;
 - f) Racially motivated police actions;
 - g) Discrimination;
 - h) Sexual harassment;
 - i) Any conduct that seriously degrades the integrity or good order of the department; or
 - j) Any conduct that results in the demotion, suspension, or termination of the license holder.
- F. Work Performance: Work performance is defined through a supervisor's performance evaluation and assessment of the quality and quantity of job tasks performed by each employee. If an employee fails to maintain satisfactory work performance standards, is negligent in the performance of their duty, or does not meet reasonable and objective measures of efficiency and productivity, disciplinary action can occur.

III. CONDUCT AND PERFORMANCE

Each employee is responsible for understanding the job task performance criteria related to their specific position and any applicable UTS Code of Conduct obligations, Policies/Procedures of the Office of the Director of Police, the Board of Regents Rules and Regulations, local laws, state laws, federal laws, provisions of an Institution's Handbook of Operating Procedures, or the Institution's Police Department rules and regulations. An employee who does not fulfill the work responsibilities established by such performance criteria, rules, procedures, or standards of conduct may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. The disciplinary process with an employee includes unsatisfactory work performance and/or a sustained conduct violations complaint.

IV. CORRECTIVE ACTION AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Corrective action is a global term that is used to impact/improve employee performance and/or conduct. The term includes counseling, coaching, mentoring, remedial training, supervisory intervention, and oral reprimands. The term also includes all forms of disciplinary actions from a written reprimand, suspension without pay and demotion. Termination of employment is not considered a form of corrective action as its purpose is not to correct behavior, but rather to end the employment relationship. Whenever possible, corrective action should involve positive intervention between the employee and a supervisor. Intervention can be both informal and formal. To the extent possible, these activities should be positive and focus on learning and professional growth. Corrective action, regardless of the form, should always be constructively critical.

Intervention through formal corrective action will include a written directive such as a performance action/improvement plan. The performance plan should cite the specific job tasks needing improvement. The supervisor should outline through the plan standards that include what constructive corrective training is available for the employee, an acceptable time frame for completion of the performance action/improvement plan, frequency of meetings between the employee and supervisor to discuss the status and progression of the plan, how success will be measured, and consequences if the performance standards are not met. The written directive of license holders and all related documents shall be documented within the employee's department file.

Corrective action in the form of discipline is considered punitive action or sanctions imposed upon an employee in response to a sustained conduct violation, allegations of misconduct, improper actions (i.e.: Class I or Class II complaints), or repetitive unsatisfactory work performance. Disciplinary action may or may not be progressive in nature, depending on the facts and circumstances of the conduct. Disciplinary action does not require a sequence of punitive steps and is intended to correct conduct or unsatisfactory work performance. Any recommendation for disciplinary action should consider the degree of severity of the offense, the employment record of the employee (specifically any same or similar conduct performance issues), and the seriousness of the action or violation. Disciplinary action of license holders shall be documented within the employee's department file. Disciplinary action of license holders related to sustained allegations of misconduct shall be documented within the employee's personnel file.

A. Written Reprimand

A written reprimand is the lowest form of disciplinary action utilizing a memorandum to document a minor infraction or work performance deficiency. The written reprimand should contain clear and specific language that describes the infraction or repetitive unsatisfactory work performance, lists any previous counseling or intervention directly related to the infraction or unsatisfactory work performance, the impact the infraction or work performance deficiency has on department operations that result from the employee's failure to perform to standards, outline steps the employee is expected to complete for meeting the job task standards, and a statement delineating the consequences that can be expected if the performance, conduct or attendance fails to improve. The employee shall be given a copy of the reprimand and a copy placed in their department file.

B. Disciplinary Probation

Disciplinary probation is a supervisory staff review that monitors specific terms and definable conditions.

1. When the employee is notified that they are being placed on disciplinary probation, the employee will also be provided the terms and conditions of the probation.
2. The length of disciplinary probation shall not exceed six (6) months. During the probationary period, progress reports will be prepared every thirty (30) days by the employee's immediate supervisor. Each progress report will be discussed with the employee prior to being reviewed by the command staff.
3. If during any point in the disciplinary probationary period the employee fails to meet the terms and conditions outlined, the employee's immediate supervisor shall make recommendations to the Chief of Police for additional disciplinary action including termination.

C. Suspension without Pay

Suspension without pay is an ordered absence from duty without pay for a specific period. An employee who is suspended without pay continues to accrue vacation and sick leave, is covered by group insurance and entitled to other employee benefit programs.

D. Demotion

Demotion is a reduction from one salary group to a lower salary group and/or a reduction from a higher rank to a lesser rank. An employee who is demoted continues to accrue vacation and sick leave, is covered by group insurance and entitled to other employee benefit programs.

E. Termination from employment

Termination from employment is the involuntary separation of employment of an employee by the Institution.

V. PROCEDURES FOR IMPOSING AND APPEALING CERTAIN DISCIPLINE

The following procedure is applicable to conduct violations, allegations of misconduct, and unsatisfactory work performance of an employee resulting in a decision to impose a disciplinary penalty of suspension without pay, demotion, or termination. This procedure does not apply to:

1. administrative leave with pay pending the investigation of allegations relating to an employee;
2. non-disciplinary demotion or termination resulting from reorganization, reduction in force or financial exigency;
3. dismissal of an employee during the initial 180-day period of employment; otherwise known as probationary dismissal; or
4. decisions or actions that are subject to review pursuant to procedures provided by other approved policies or procedures of The University of Texas System, its institutions, the Office of the Director of Police, or the Institution's Police Department. (Example: Decisions or actions resulting in a verbal reprimand, written reprimand or disciplinary probation are reviewable pursuant to procedures provided in UTS Employee Grievance Process Policy number 205).

A. Imposing Discipline

1. Pre-discipline Notification to Employee

The Chief of Police or Chief's designee shall inform the employee of the reason(s) for the proposed disciplinary action and provide the employee details supporting the disciplinary action. The employee shall be provided with an opportunity to respond to the proposed disciplinary action as a rebuttal before a final decision is made. The employee is not entitled to representation by an attorney at the pre-discipline notification.

2. Decision of Chief of Police

Once the rebuttal is received from the employee and reviewed by the Chief of Police or Chief's designee, a final decision to impose disciplinary measures shall occur. If the decision is to pursue disciplinary action, the employee must be informed in writing of the following:

- a) the type of disciplinary action (e.g. written reprimand, suspension without pay, demotion, or termination) and the effective date(s);
- b) if a suspension without pay, then a specific time period should be listed;
- c) a brief description of the specific incident, misconduct, course of conduct, or unsatisfactory work performance that serves as the basis for the disciplinary action;
- d) previous efforts, if any, that were utilized as an attempt to increase the employee's awareness of the need to change or improve work performance or conduct; and
- e) reference to any relevant law, rule, regulation, or policy.

B. Appealing Disciplinary Actions

Disciplinary actions resulting in suspension without pay, demotion, and termination from employment may be appealed by the employee. The time frames outlined by this policy must be adhered to by both the employee and the appropriate Institution Vice President (or administrative equivalent; hereinafter called Vice President) unless extended, with written notification, for cause by the Vice President. The failure of an employee to comply with the time limits constitutes a withdrawal of the appeal.

1. Written Appeal to Vice President

- a) The employee may submit a written appeal to the Vice President within ten (10) business days from the date of notification of the disciplinary action (date of notification and effective date of disciplinary action are not necessarily the same. Date and manner of notification must be recorded on written documentation). The written appeal document shall contain:
 - (1) A complete statement of the circumstances related to the alleged conduct violation, misconduct and/or unsatisfactory work performance, including time(s) and date(s) of relevant facts;
 - (2) The discipline imposed;
 - (3) A clear and concise statement of why the disciplinary action was inappropriate; and
 - (4) The disciplinary correction requested.
- b) The employee shall provide a copy of the appeal and any attachments to the Chief of Police at the same time the appeal is submitted to the Vice President.
- c) If the appeal is related to an allegation of misconduct of a license holder, the Chief of Police will immediately notify the Executive Director, utilizing the ODOP provided form, and the Executive Director of Police will notify TCOLE of the appeal.

2. Response of Vice President

If the disciplinary action recommended was suspension without pay or demotion, the Vice President will review the written appeal from the employee.

- a) The Chief of Police, within ten (10) business days of receipt of the employee's appeal, will provide a written response and all documentation pertaining to the suspension without pay or demotion of the employee to the Vice President. The employee's personnel and department file may also be submitted to the Vice President, if requested. A copy of the written response from the Chief of Police shall be provided to the employee.
- b) Within ten (10) business days after receiving information from the Chief of Police, the Vice President will render a decision. The written decision will be emailed to the employee's institutional address (if they still have access), mailed by regular mail, and/or hand-delivered to the employee. Each employee is responsible for keeping their Chief of Police notified of their current mailing address. If emailed, the employee must provide written notice of receipt of the email. If no written receipt provided within seven days, the written decision will be mailed and/or hand-delivered to the employee.
- c) For PSOs, the decision by the Vice President is final. For license holders, the decision by the Vice President for suspension without pay or demotion is final.

(1) A terminated non-probationary license holder or the Vice President may request the appointment of an Appeal Review Boards (hereinafter called Board) to review the termination and make a recommendation to the Vice President. If a Board is requested, the terminated officer must provide a copy of the appeal (with any attachments), along with the request to appoint a Board, to the Office of Executive Director of Police (ODOP) within ten (10) after the license holder received notice of the Vice President's concurring decision to terminate the license holder's employment.

- d) If the appeal of the suspension without pay or demotion is successful, the employee shall receive payment for wages lost because of the suspension without pay or demotion. If an appeal of termination is successful, the license holder shall be reinstated to the same or similar position and receive payment of back wages less any unemployment compensation insurance benefits received by the license holder after the date of termination. Employee benefits such as vacation and sick leave shall be credited back to the date of termination.
- e) If the appeal is related to an allegation of misconduct of a license holder, the Chief of Police or designee will notify the Executive Director, utilizing the ODOP provided form and timeline. The Executive Director or designee will notify TCOLE of the outcome of the appeal process within 30 days of the employee notification.

VI. HEARING PROCEDURES FOR LICENSE HOLDERS TERMINATED FROM EMPLOYMENT

- A. After receiving a request from either the Vice President or the terminated license holder for an appeal hearing review, the Office of Director of Police will appoint the Board. The hearing should be conducted as soon as practical, but not later than thirty (30) calendar days from the date the Board is appointed.
- B. The Office of Director of Police will appoint Board members and decide the appropriate format (in person, by teleconference, etc.). Reimbursement for travel, hotel, per diem or other costs for the Board members will be the responsibility of ODOP.
- C. The Chairperson of the Board shall preside over the hearing and ensure the order of presentation as well as rule on questions of relevancy. The Chairperson will provide instructions to the advocates related to exchanging exhibits. An agreed deadline well before the hearing date should be established for proper document review. This policy does not require ODOP, UTS or the UTS Institutions to find or produce documents for the terminated officer and/or their attorney beyond obligations under the Public Information Act. The Chairperson of the Board shall have the discretion to determine the length of the hearing, and the form and scope of examination allowed during the hearing. Upon request, the Board may consult with and be advised by counsel from the Office of General Counsel of The University of Texas System Administration.
- D. The terminated license holder may be represented at the hearing by an attorney or other individual representative of an employee organization that does not claim the right to strike or engage in other labor action. If the license holder is represented by an attorney or a representative of an employee organization, the Institution will be represented by an attorney from the Office of General Counsel of The University of Texas System Administration. The license holder must provide written notice of representation to the Office of the Director of Police, or designee, at least fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the hearing.
- E. In all appeal hearings, ODOP shall make an audio or videorecording of the hearing and make a copy of the recording available to the license holder on request. The recording shall be the official record of the hearing.
- F. The Institution shall have the burden of proof. By a preponderance of the evidence, the Institution must show the truth of the sustained citations and that just cause exists for the imposition of discipline. The essence of the just cause principle is the requirement an employer must have some demonstrable reason for imposing discipline. The reason must concern the employee's ability, work performance, or conduct and the employer's legitimate business needs. (*City of Houston v. Matamoros*, AAA #70 390 00803 05).
- G. The hearing shall consist of testimony by witnesses called by the Institution and the license holder. Cross examination of a witness is available to both parties and Board members. Applicable exhibits may be introduced by either party. The Board can take notice of the license holder's personnel record if introduced during the hearing as evidence.
- H. Neither the Institution nor the license holder has the authority to compel the attendance of a witness at the hearing. Any individual employed by the Institution can be asked to appear as a witness for either party. It shall be the duty of the individual requested to testify to do so concerning any facts which may be relevant to the appeal and to be truthful in doing so. It is the responsibility of each party to ensure attendance by its witnesses.

I. Post Hearing Rules and Procedures

1. The Board shall prepare and forward written recommendation(s) to the Vice President within five (5) business days from the close of the hearing. The Board shall also include a copy of the record (recording and exhibits). After reviewing the Board's recommendation(s), the Vice President shall mail their decision to the license holder within ten (10) business days from the receipt of the recommendation(s) from the Board.
2. The Board recommendation shall rely on the majority vote of the Board members, and the Chair shall be a voting member.
3. The decision of the Vice President is final.
4. If an appeal of termination is successful, the license holder shall be reinstated to the same or similar position and receive payment of back wages less any unemployment compensation insurance benefits received by the license holder after the date of termination. Employee benefits such as vacation and sick leave shall be credited back to the date of termination.
5. If the appeal is related to an allegation of misconduct of a license holder, the Chief of Police or their designee will notify the Executive Director of Police, utilizing the ODOP provided form and timeline. The Executive Director of Police will notify TCOLE of the outcome of the appeal process within 30 days of the employee notification.

VII. APPEAL REVIEW BOARD

A. Appointment of Board Members

When the Vice President of an Institution or the terminated license holder requests a Board be appointed, the Executive Director of Police shall select three (3) license holders, plus one (1) alternate, to serve as an Appeal Review Board. One member of the Board must be of the same rank and license type (i.e. peace officer or telecommunicator) as the license holder. All other members of the board must be of a higher rank or position than the terminated license holder. License holders from the officer's Institution will not be selected to serve. The Executive Director shall appoint the Chairperson of the Board.

The alternate Board member's role is to act in the absence of another Board member. The alternate member should be present during the hearing and post hearing deliberations, but their activities are limited to observation only unless another member's absence occurs.

B. System Coordinator

The Executive Director of Police will assign a representative from the Office of the Director of Police (ODOP) to coordinate matters relating to the hearing presided over by the Board. Funding for travel, lodging, per diem and other costs associated with the hearing are provided through ODOP. Prior to the start of the hearing, the ODOP representative will provide the Board with an orientation to assist with operational guidelines and procedures related to the hearing. The ODOP representative will be available to the Board during the hearing to address questions related to policy or procedural issues.

VIII. DOCUMENTATION

Copies of all documents pertaining to disciplinary actions shall be filed in the officer's personnel or department file at the institution.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael Parks".

Michael Parks
Executive Director of Police

Changes/Amendments since last publication:

Revisions throughout to meet TCOLE Model Policy related to personnel and department files. Grammatical and formatting corrections throughout the policy. Updated Executive Director name. June 1, 2025.

Revision to IV to expand the description of corrective action. Minor changes made to paragraphs two and three to align wording and address same or similar conduct performance issues. March 1, 2026

Revision to V. B. 2. c. to add the decision of the Vice President for PSOs is final. March 1, 2026

Revision to VI. F. to expand on the burden of proof. March 1, 2026

Revision to VII. A. to add license type requirement. March 1, 2026