October 19, 2026

Following adoption of the Auburn University Board of Trustees Policy on Governance and Authority, the Board directed a review of Administrative Policies to ensure consistency and alignment with governing Board Policies. As part of that effort, the Board emphasized that all employees should be held to clear and consistent expectations of excellence, accountability, professional responsibility, and service to Auburn's mission, while recognizing that particular duties and measures of performance will differ across roles. This Employee Conduct Policy is intended to establish a consistent framework for employee conduct across the University and is part of a broader effort to promote clarity, predictability, and alignment throughout the University's policy structure. Related Administrative Policies will be reviewed and revised as necessary to ensure consistency with this framework and applicable Board Policies.

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Employee Conduct Policy

Part I. General Framework

A. Purpose

Auburn University's Employee Code of Conduct and Ethics establishes shared expectations for Auburn Employees and reflects Auburn's values of Integrity, Respect, and Excellence. Those values require Auburn Employees to act honestly and ethically, respect the rights and dignity of others, perform duties with diligence and professionalism, comply with law and University Policy[1], protect University resources and information, and take responsibility for actions that affect the University community. This **Employee Conduct Policy** ("Policy") implements those expectations by establishing University-wide conduct standards, identifying Employee Conduct Rules administered by Human Resources, defining the role of Responsible University Offices, identifying available corrective actions and sanctions, and setting forth required process elements for implementing employment action, including dismissal.

This Policy is intended to promote accountability, consistency, fairness, professionalism, and institutional trust while recognizing that Auburn Employees serve in different roles, hold different responsibilities, and may be subject to different employment terms, procedural protections, or dismissal procedures.

B. Scope

All Auburn Employees are subject to the same University-wide standards of conduct. Evaluation of potential violations and determination of appropriate corrective actions, sanctions, and employment-action procedures applicable in each matter will take into account the Employee's role, job responsibilities, the facts and circumstances giving rise to the employment action, employment category, appointment type, contract terms, applicable University Policy, and applicable law.

This Policy governs Employee conduct, corrective action, sanctions, and dismissal processes unless a controlling University Policy, written contract, or applicable law expressly requires a different process or result. This Policy operates in conjunction with, and does not displace, other University Policies or processes that establish specific conduct standards, reporting obligations, investigative procedures, responsible offices, finding authority, sanction-recommendation authority, sanctioning authority, appeal rights, or implementation procedures.

C. Definitions

For purposes of this Policy, the following terms have the meanings set forth below. These definitions apply only to this Policy unless otherwise expressly stated. Terms used in other University Policies, procedures, guidelines, handbooks, or processes may be assigned different, additional, or more specific definitions. In the event of a conflict, the definition contained in the

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[1] University Policies include Board Policies, Administrative Policies, and Subordinate Policies, as defined in the Auburn University Board of Trustees Governance and Authority Policy.

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more specific University Policy, procedure, guideline, handbook, or process controls for purposes of that University Policy, procedure, guideline, handbook, or process.

1. Employee shall mean all employees, including faculty, staff, administrative and professional employees, temporary employees, student employees acting in an employment capacity, and contractors or contract employees, unless otherwise specifically indicated, including periods when an employee is not actively working but maintains an appointment, position, or contract with the University.

2. Responsible University Office shall mean the University office, department, official, or other University designee officially designated by applicable University Policy, procedure, law, contract, appointment document, the President, the President's designee, or other official University authority to receive, review, investigate, determine, recommend action regarding, impose action regarding, or otherwise address a particular concern, matter, or alleged violation. Responsible University Offices may include, but are not limited to, Equal Opportunity Compliance; Office of Audit, Compliance and Privacy; Research Compliance; Campus Safety; Information Technology; Risk Management; Athletics Compliance; Human Resources; and the Office of the Provost. Human Resources serves as the Responsible University Office for Employee conduct matters not officially assigned to another Responsible University Office.

3. Faculty shall mean any University Employee specifically employed as a member of the faculty appointed to a temporary, probationary, tenured, or continuing position, including periods when an employee is not actively working but on a continuing appointment, position, or contract with the University. This includes professorial appointments at the rank of instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. This also includes nontenure-track faculty in positions such as visiting faculty, adjunct faculty, clinical titles, professor of practice, research titles, lecturer titles, and any other title designated as faculty by the Office of the Provost.

4. Human Resources shall mean Auburn University Office of Human Resources, including but not limited to the Department of Campus Relations and the Campus Human Resources Partners and Liaisons, as appropriate under the applicable University Policy or process.

5. Hearing shall mean an opportunity for an Employee to respond to allegations, findings, recommendations, or proposed employment action, as applicable, before an appropriate University official. Unless otherwise required by applicable law, contract, appointment document, or other University Policy, a Hearing is not a formal evidentiary proceeding and does not require sworn testimony, cross-examination, application of formal rules of evidence, a judicial-style process, or the presence or participation of anyone other than the Employee and the University official. Unless the elements of a Hearing are otherwise defined by applicable law, contract, appointment document, or University Policy, the Hearing requirement is satisfied when the Employee is provided an opportunity to meet or otherwise engage with an appropriate University official and respond to the matter at issue. A Hearing may be conducted in person, virtually, in writing, or through another reasonable method permitted by applicable University Policy, as determined by the Responsible University Office. If the Employee declines to or does not participate after being provided that opportunity, the Hearing requirement is satisfied.

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D. Subject-Matter Jurisdiction and Controlling Authority

A Responsible University Office has authority for matters within the scope of the University Policy, process, or subject-matter area assigned to that office. That authority may include, as applicable, receiving reports, conducting or overseeing investigations, making findings, determining whether policy violations occurred, recommending corrective action or sanctions, imposing corrective action or sanctions where authorized, or referring findings and recommendations to Human Resources, supervisors, or other appropriate University officials for employment action.

When a matter falls within the jurisdiction of a Responsible University Office, the applicable University Policy, office, and process control. Each Responsible University Office is responsible for establishing, maintaining, and implementing any procedures applicable to matters within its assigned authority, including notice, investigation, opportunity to respond, and Hearing procedures where applicable.

E. Reliance on Findings; No Duplicative Investigation

Human Resources, supervisors, administrators, and other University decision-makers may rely on the findings, determinations, reports, and sanction recommendations of a Responsible University Office. No separate or duplicative investigation of matters already determined by the Responsible University Office shall be conducted, unless additional job conduct, performance, or employment-related issues remain unresolved outside the scope of that office's process.

A subsequent employment, disciplinary, sanction-review, grievance, appeal, or dismissal process does not create a new investigation, reinvestigation, rehearing, or appeal of the underlying findings or policy-violation determinations made by the Responsible University Office.

F. Sanction Authority and Employment Implementation

Responsible University Offices may have different levels of authority depending on the applicable University Policy or process. The following principles apply:

1. If a Responsible University Office has authority to investigate, make findings, and impose or recommend corrective action or sanctions, that office's process and authority control within the scope of the applicable University Policy.
2. If a Responsible University Office has authority to investigate and make findings but does not have independent sanctioning authority, the office may refer its findings and recommendations to Human Resources, the appropriate supervisor, or another authorized administrator for employment action.
3. If no other Responsible University Office has jurisdiction over the conduct at issue, Human Resources may investigate, make findings, and coordinate corrective action or sanction recommendations under this Policy.
4. When corrective action or sanctions require employment implementation, Human Resources will coordinate with the Responsible University Office and the appropriate supervisory or administrative official to implement the employment action. Human Resources' implementation role does not reopen or alter the Responsible University Office's findings, determinations, or authorized sanction decision.

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Part II. University-Wide Conduct Standards

A. General Standards of Conduct

The baseline conduct expectations for all Auburn Employees are found in the Employee Code of Conduct and Ethics. These standards inform and support the more specific Employee Conduct Rules (Part III) administered by Human Resources, as well as other University Policies administered by Responsible University Offices with specialized subject-matter authority.

Conduct may violate this Policy, even if it is not specifically listed in the Employee Conduct Rules or in another University Policy, if the conduct is inconsistent with the Employee's responsibilities, University Policy, professional standards, workplace expectations, institutional trust, or the orderly and effective operation of the University.

B. Cooperation and Non-Retaliation

Auburn Employees are expected to report suspected violations of law, University Policy, fraud, abuse, misconduct, safety concerns, retaliation, or other wrongdoing through appropriate University channels, including supervisors, Human Resources, the Office of Audit, Compliance & Privacy, the Office of General Counsel, the Ethics Line, or another office designated by applicable University Policy.

Auburn Employees are required to cooperate fully and honestly with University investigations, audits, reviews, and compliance processes. Failure to cooperate, dishonesty, obstruction, retaliation, intimidation, coercion, or interference with a University process may constitute separate misconduct. For detailed discussion of Employees' obligations, see the Employee Duty to Cooperate Policy.

Retaliation against any person for raising a concern in good faith, participating in a University process, reporting misconduct, or exercising rights under University Policy or law is prohibited and may result in corrective action up to and including dismissal. For further information see Auburn University's Policy Against Retaliation.

Part III. Employee Conduct Rules

Human Resources is the Responsible University Office for the administration, investigation, finding, and sanction-recommendation functions associated with the Employee Conduct Rules outlined in this Part, unless the conduct at issue is governed by another Responsible University Office or more specific University Policy.

The categories and examples below of prohibited employee conduct are illustrative, not exhaustive. Conduct may warrant corrective action or discipline even if it is not specifically listed, if the conduct is inconsistent with the Employee's responsibilities, University Policy, professional standards, workplace expectations, institutional trust, or the orderly and effective operation of the University.

A. Integrity, Honesty, and Institutional Trust

Employees must act with integrity, honesty, and in a manner that maintains institutional trust.

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Employees may not engage in the following conduct:

1. Dishonesty, misrepresentation, fraud, or deceit in University matters;
2. Falsification, alteration, destruction, or misuse of University records, credentials, or other official documents;
3. Knowingly providing false, misleading, incomplete, or deceptive information to the University;
4. Theft, misappropriation, waste, or unauthorized use of University resources;
5. Conflicts of interest, conflicts of commitment, self-dealing, or failure to disclose outside activities as required by University Policy;
6. Conduct that compromises or undermines the honesty, integrity, or trust required for the employee to perform assigned job responsibilities.
7. Conduct that compromises or undermines the integrity of the University's teaching, research, public service, or business practices.

B. Respectful and Professional Conduct

Employees must perform their job responsibilities and interact with others in the course of University business with respect and professionalism.

Employees may not engage in the following conduct:

1. Abusive, threatening, bullying, harassing, intimidating, or demeaning conduct;
2. Conduct that creates a disruptive, unsafe, or intimidating, or unreasonably difficult work or academic environment;
3. Imposing upon the rights or privileges of others, including academic freedom rights or other rights guaranteed by University Policy or applicable law;
4. Insubordination or refusal to comply with reasonable work-related instructions, assignments, directives, or expectations;
5. Repeated or serious failure to work cooperatively with supervisors, colleagues, students, subordinates, or others with whom the employee interacts in the course of University business;
6. Disorderly conduct, fighting, threats, or acts of violence;
7. Conduct that materially interferes with University operations, services, instruction, research, administration, student support, or public safety.

C. Excellence, Responsibility, and Performance of Duties

Employees must meet the requirements of their assigned job responsibilities.

Employees may not engage in the following conduct:

1. Neglect of duty or failure to perform assigned responsibilities;
2. Failure to meet reasonable standards of productivity, responsiveness, reliability, service, or job performance;
3. Repeated failure to correct performance or conduct deficiencies after notice, counseling, training, or corrective action;

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4. Failure to maintain required licenses, certifications, clearances, credentials, training, or eligibility necessary for the position;
5. Failure to satisfy professional, academic, clinical, research, compliance, administrative, fiscal, or supervisory responsibilities applicable to the employee's role;
6. Conduct that impairs the employee's ability to perform assigned duties or satisfy the responsibilities of the employee's position.

D. Compliance with Policy, Law, and University Processes

Employees must comply with applicable law, University Policies and requirements, and official University processes.

Employees may not engage in the following conduct:

1. Violation of University Policies, rules, procedures, standards, or directives;
2. Violation of applicable federal, state, or local law when the violation relates to the employee's position, University operations, public trust, safety, fitness for duty, or ability to perform assigned responsibilities;
3. Failure to comply with mandatory reporting obligations;
4. Failure to cooperate, as required, with University investigations, audits, reviews, compliance processes, litigation holds, records preservation or production requirements, or other official University proceedings;
5. Interference with, obstruction of, or retaliation related to any University investigation, audit, compliance review, or adjudicative process;
6. Violation of applicable safety, security, risk management, laboratory, clinical, research, financial, information technology, data protection, or records requirements.

E. Attendance, Work Time, and Leave

Employees must comply with applicable attendance, scheduling, timekeeping, and leave requirements and directives.

Employees may not engage in the following conduct:

1. Excessive, patterned, or unauthorized absenteeism or tardiness;
2. Leaving work without authorization or abandoning assigned work or duties;
3. Misuse of leave, timekeeping systems, remote work arrangements, flexible scheduling, overtime, or compensatory time;
4. Falsification or misrepresentation of time worked, leave taken, work performed, location of work, or availability for work.

F. Safety, Security, and Workplace Risk

Employees must perform their duties in a manner that protects health, safety, security, and University operations, and complies with applicable safety, security, and risk management requirements.

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Employees may not engage in the following conduct:

1. Conduct that endangers the health, safety, or security of any person;
2. Use of alcohol, controlled substances, or other intoxicating or impairing substances in violation of University Policy or applicable law;
3. Failure to report workplace injuries, safety hazards, security threats, or incidents as required;
4. Unsafe operation of vehicles, machinery, equipment, laboratories, facilities, or systems;
5. Unauthorized possession or use of weapons or dangerous materials;
6. Failure to comply with emergency, safety, health, environmental, security, or risk-management directives.

G. Confidentiality, Information, and Technology

Employees must protect University information and technology resources and comply with applicable confidentiality, privacy, records, data security, and information technology requirements.

Employees may not engage in the following conduct:

1. Unauthorized access, use, disclosure, removal, copying, alteration, or destruction of University information or records;
2. Violation of privacy, confidentiality, data security, cybersecurity, records retention, or information technology requirements;
3. Misuse of University email, systems, accounts, devices, networks, software, credentials, or data;
4. Failure to protect confidential, student, employee, financial, research, proprietary, privileged, or regulated information;
5. Recording, photographing, accessing, distributing, or publishing information in violation of applicable law, University Policy, confidentiality obligations, or workplace restrictions or responsibilities.

H. University Name, Marks, Brand, Communications, and Representation

Employees must use the University's name, marks, brand, resources, and institutional affiliation appropriately and may represent or communicate on behalf of the University only as authorized and consistent with applicable University requirements.

Employees may not engage in the following conduct:

1. Misusing the University's name, marks, brand, position, resources, or authority;
2. Communicating on behalf of the University without authorization or in a manner inconsistent with University Policy or assigned responsibilities;
3. Creating the false impression that personal views, outside activities, private business, or unauthorized statements are official University positions;
4. Using University resources, systems, logos, marks, or affiliation for unauthorized personal, political, commercial, or outside purposes;

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5. Conduct that violates University Policy regarding official communications, media relations, intellectual property, trademarks, licensing, or use of University identity.

I. Supervisory, Managerial, Faculty, and Professional Responsibilities

Employees must carry out supervisory, managerial, faculty, and professional responsibilities with oversight and accountability consistent with their roles and duties.

Employees may not engage in the following conduct:

1. Abuse or misuse of supervisory, academic, professional, clinical, fiscal, or administrative authority;
2. Failure to address known misconduct, safety risks, University Policy violations, conflicts of interest, or compliance concerns within the employee's area of responsibility;
3. Failure to report matters that the employee is required to report because of the employee's role;
4. Retaliation or adverse treatment against a person for reporting concerns or participating in a University process;
5. Failure to protect students, employees, research participants, minors, or other vulnerable persons when the employee has responsibility to do so;
6. Failure to maintain professional standards applicable to the employee's discipline, license, certification, appointment, or assigned duties;
7. Conduct that undermines the employee's ability to perform duties requiring trust, judgment, confidentiality, impartiality, safety, stewardship, or professional responsibility.

Part IV. Employee Conduct Review and Determination Process

A. Applicability

This Part establishes a general framework for the review, investigation, determination, and employment implementation of Employee conduct matters. It applies unless a more specific University Policy, Responsible University Office process, contract, appointment document, or applicable law provides otherwise.

Human Resources may serve in more than one role under this Policy. In some matters, Human Resources is the Responsible University. In other matters, another Responsible University Office has subject-matter authority, and Human Resources may assist with employment-related implementation of that office's findings, recommendations, sanctions, or dismissal-related actions.

B. Reporting, Intake and Initial Assessment

Reports of Employee misconduct may be made to a supervisor, Human Resources, a Responsible University Office, or another appropriate University official. Upon receipt of a report of Employee misconduct, the receiving office or official shall promptly notify the appropriate Responsible University Office.

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C. Notice

Notice of conduct review or investigation will be provided to the Employee by the Responsible University Office consistent with the notice procedures maintained by that office or included in the applicable University Policy.

A notice may be modified, delayed, limited, or supplemented when necessary to protect safety, preserve evidence, comply with law, protect privacy or confidentiality, avoid interference with another investigation, coordinate with another University process, or satisfy the requirements of the applicable University Policy or Responsible University Office process.

D. Review or Investigation

The Responsible University Office may gather documents, interview witnesses, review records, consult supervisors or subject-matter experts, assess University Policy requirements, and take other steps reasonably necessary to determine whether University Policy was violated. The Responsible University Office will provide the Employee a reasonable opportunity to respond before a final determination is made.

The scope, method, timing, documentation, and procedures for the review or investigation may vary depending on the nature of the matter, the applicable University Policy, the Responsible University Office involved, the Employee's role, safety or operational concerns, and applicable law.

E. Findings and Determinations

At the conclusion of a conduct review or investigation, the Responsible University Office will determine whether the available information supports a finding that the Employee violated University Policy, job conduct expectations, professional obligations, assigned duties, or other applicable standards. Such determination will be documented and communicated consistent with the procedures established by applicable University Policy or the Responsible University Office.

Where a Responsible University Office conducts the review or investigation, its findings, sanction recommendation, or authorized sanction decision may be used to determine or implement employment action. A duplicative investigation of matters already determined by the Responsible University Office will not be conducted.

F. Corrective Action and Sanction Recommendation

Corrective action is intended, when appropriate, to correct conduct, improve performance, protect University operations, and promote accountability. In some instances, misconduct may warrant significant discipline, including dismissal, without prior progressive discipline.

Corrective actions or sanctions may be recommended or decided by the Responsible University Office in accordance with applicable University Policy. Where a Responsible University Office lacks independent sanctioning authority, it may refer findings and recommendations to the appropriate supervisor, responsible administrator, or Human Resources for employment action.

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Available corrective actions and sanctions may include, but are not limited to:

1. Informal counseling or coaching;
2. Warning;
3. Written reprimand;
4. Final written warning;
5. Performance improvement plan or conduct improvement plan;
6. Required training, education, mentoring, or counseling referral;
7. Loss or restriction of privileges, access, assignments, duties, title, administrative appointment, leadership role, or supervisory responsibility;
8. Reassignment, schedule change, workspace change, reporting-line change, or other operational restriction;
9. Restitution or repayment where appropriate;
10. Ineligibility for merit increase, bonus, promotion, appointment, reappointment, supplemental compensation, or other discretionary employment benefit, where permitted;
11. Suspension with or without pay;
12. Demotion or reduction in pay;
13. Nonrenewal, where permitted by appointment type, contract, or University Policy;
14. Termination of contract in accordance with contract terms;
15. Dismissal from employment or termination of appointment.

When determining appropriate sanctions, the University may consider the nature and seriousness of the conduct, the Employee's role and responsibilities, prior corrective action, impact on others, risk to the University, mitigating or aggravating circumstances, and any applicable University Policy, contract, legal, or accreditation requirements.

Progressive discipline may be appropriate in many circumstances, but the University is not required to use progressive discipline when the conduct is serious, repeated, disruptive, or otherwise inconsistent with continued employment, except as required by law.

Administrative Leave and Interim Measures

The University may place an Employee on administrative leave, reassign duties, restrict access, modify reporting lines, remove supervisory authority, limit contact with individuals, or take other interim measures while a matter is under review or investigation.

Interim measures are not a final determination of responsibility. Interim measures are appropriate when the University determines them to be reasonably necessary to protect the safety or well-being of individuals, preserve evidence or the integrity of the investigative process, prevent interference with witnesses or potential retaliation, minimize disruption to institutional operations, or otherwise protect legitimate institutional interests while the allegations or circumstances are evaluated. Administrative leave and other employment status changes will be coordinated through Human Resources.

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Part V. Implementation of Non-Dismissal Corrective Actions and Sanctions

Corrective action, sanctions, or other employment action short of dismissal may be implemented based on the findings, recommendations, or authorized sanction decisions of the Responsible University Office or designated University official. Sanctions short of dismissal may be implemented through the process established by the applicable University Policy, Responsible University Office process, Human Resources procedure, through ordinary supervisory processes, or through other applicable University process. Human Resources may assist supervisors, administrators, and other Responsible University Offices with implementation of recommendations, corrective action, sanctions, or dismissal processes.

Part VI. Dismissal

A. Applicable Dismissal Process

If dismissal is recommended based on findings or determinations made by a Responsible University Office, the University will follow the dismissal process applicable to the Employee's employment category, appointment type, tenure status, contract terms, controlling University Policy, or law before dismissal is finalized.

Prior to dismissal, the Employee will be provided:

1. Written notice of the allegations, including an explanation of the evidence supporting dismissal, as defined and required by applicable University Policy or procedure. Explanation of the evidence shall be a summary of the information supporting dismissal.
2. An opportunity to respond to the allegations in a Hearing as defined and required by applicable University Policy or procedure (see Part I.C.5).
3. Written notice of any resulting finding, determination, recommendation, or decision, as defined and required by applicable University Policy or procedure.

B. Limited Purpose of Dismissal Process

Although dismissal processes may differ among Employee categories, a dismissal process does not create a new or separate investigation, reinvestigation, rehearing, or appeal of matters already investigated, determined, or resolved by the Responsible University Office with jurisdiction over the underlying matter. Accordingly, some or all of the steps identified above in Part VI.A. may be satisfied by the Responsible University Office's process. If a separate dismissal process applies, it is limited to determining whether dismissal is an appropriate employment action based on the established findings, applicable University Policy, and any procedural or substantive issues required to be reviewed under controlling University Policy, contract, appointment document, or law.

C. Dismissal Hearing

1. Non-Faculty Employees

Before a final decision of dismissal is made, a non-Faculty Employee will be provided notice of the proposed dismissal and the basis for the proposed action and will be given an opportunity to

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respond in a Hearing with a designated administrator. The scope of the Hearing shall be limited to the propriety of dismissal as the recommended sanction based on the established findings.

2. Non-Tenured Faculty Employees

Before a final decision of dismissal is made, a non-tenured Faculty Employee will be provided notice of the proposed dismissal and the basis for the proposed action and will be given an opportunity to respond in a Hearing with a designated administrator. The scope of the Hearing shall be limited to the propriety of dismissal as the recommended sanction based on the established findings.

3. Tenured Faculty Employees

Before a final decision of dismissal is made, recommendation for dismissal of a tenured Faculty member will be made to the Provost. To initiate a dismissal action, the Provost shall review the findings and recommendation provided by the Responsible University Office to confirm that the dismissal recommendation was based on a finding of Serious Misconduct by the tenured Faculty member, which includes but is not limited to the following:

a. Exhibited professional incompetence;
b. Failure to perform duties or meet professional responsibilities of the tenured Faculty member's position, including, but not limited to, failure to perform as documented in a post-tenure review;
c. Failure to successfully complete any post-tenure review professional development program;
d. Engaging in behavior that adversely affects Auburn University or the tenured Faculty member's performance of duties or meeting of responsibilities;
e. Violation of laws deemed by the University to be a terminable offense;
f. University Policy violations deemed by the University to be a terminable offense;
g. Conviction of a crime affecting the fitness of the tenured Faculty member to engage in teaching, research, service, outreach, or administration;
h. Engaging in unprofessional conduct that adversely affects the University or the tenured Faculty member's performance of duties or meeting of responsibilities;
i. Falsification of the tenured Faculty member's credentials;
j. Other good cause as defined in University Policy

Tenured Faculty dismissal may also be appropriate due to financial exigency or the phasing out of a University program requiring elimination of the tenured Faculty member's position.

Upon confirmation that the dismissal recommendation is based on a finding of Serious Misconduct, financial exigency, or the phasing out of a University program, the tenured Faculty member will be provided notice of the proposed dismissal and the basis for that proposed action and will be given an opportunity to respond in a Hearing, pursuant to procedures established by the Office of the Provost. The scope of the Hearing shall be limited to the propriety of dismissal as the recommended sanction based on the established findings.

D. Final Dismissal Action

1. Non-Faculty Employees

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Upon conclusion of the Hearing, the appropriate University official will determine the final employment action and notify the Employee.

2. Non-Tenured Faculty Employees

Upon conclusion of the Hearing, the appropriate University official will determine the final employment action and notify the non-tenured Faculty Employee.

3. Tenured Faculty Employees

Upon conclusion of the Hearing, the Provost will make a final recommendation to the President. If the Provost recommends dismissal and the President sustains that recommendation, the President's decision will be final. The President shall so notify the Provost and the tenured Faculty member, and the tenured Faculty member will be dismissed accordingly.

If the Provost does not recommend dismissal but determines that other sanctions may be appropriate, the Provost may recommend such sanctions to the President. The Provost may consult with Human Resources or the Responsible University Office, as applicable, in determining appropriate sanctions short of dismissal.

If the President rejects the recommendations of the Provost regarding dismissal and/or sanctions, they shall state such objections in writing and include the President's final determination regarding appropriate sanctions. Such written notice shall be provided to the Provost and to the tenured Faculty member. The President's final decision will complete the official dismissal process and sanctions, if any, will be implemented.

Part VII. Employee Category Clarifications

A. Tenured Faculty-Specific Clarification

The tenured Faculty dismissal process (Parts VI.C.3 and VI.D.3) applies only when the University seeks actual dismissal or termination of a tenured Faculty appointment. It is not triggered by corrective action, discipline, sanctions, restrictions, or other employment actions short of dismissal.

B. Contract Employee Clarification

Contract Employees are expected to comply with University conduct standards and applicable University Policies while performing work for or on behalf of the University. Corrective action, removal from assignment, restriction from campus or systems, nonrenewal, termination, or other action may be taken consistent with the applicable contract, University Policy, and law.

When a contract Employee's conduct is investigated by a Responsible University Office, the University may rely on the findings, determinations, or recommendations from that process to determine appropriate action under the contract.

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Part VIII. Protected Rights and Reservation of Authority

A. Protected Rights

This Policy shall be applied consistent with applicable law, Board Policy, University Policy, and academic freedom principles recognized and protected by University Policy.

Nothing in this Policy is intended to restrict protected speech, lawful reporting, good-faith participation in a University process, or other rights protected by law or University Policy.

B. Academic Freedom

In determining whether conduct constitutes a violation of University Policy, the University shall consider, where relevant, whether the conduct occurred in the exercise of academic freedom, including teaching, research, scholarship, or other protected academic activities. The Responsible University Office will consult with appropriate individuals with academic expertise as needed to evaluate a claim of academic freedom.

Nothing in this Policy is intended to prohibit, restrict, or penalize the legitimate exercise of academic freedom. At the same time, academic freedom does not exempt University Employees from compliance with otherwise applicable laws, policies, or standards of professional conduct.

B. No Exhaustive List; No Limitation on University Authority

The examples in this Policy are illustrative and do not identify every form of misconduct or every circumstance that may warrant corrective action. The University retains authority to address conduct that, in its judgment, is inconsistent with University standards, disrupts University operations, violates University Policy, creates risk, undermines institutional trust, or impairs an Employee's ability to perform assigned responsibilities.

Nothing in this Policy limits the University's authority to take action required by law, contract, accreditation standards, safety concerns, funding obligations, regulatory requirements, or the University's responsibility to manage its workforce and operations.

C. Relationship to Existing Policies; Superseding Effect

This Policy establishes the University's general framework governing Employee conduct, corrective action, sanctions, employment action, and dismissal. Consistent with the Board of Trustees Policy on Governance and Authority, to the extent an Administrative Policy, Subordinate Policy, provision of the Faculty Handbook, procedure, guideline, or other University document is inconsistent with this Policy, this Policy controls unless applicable law, Board Policy, a written contract, or an employment appointment document expressly requires otherwise. The University may revise other policies, procedures, and handbook provisions following adoption of this Policy to conform those documents to the framework established herein. Until such revisions are completed, this Policy shall govern in the event of a conflict concerning Employee conduct, corrective action, sanctions, employment action, or dismissal.

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