

Policy Name: Standards of Conduct and Workplace Expectations

Policy Owner: Human Resources (GTHR)

Policy Contact: Alexa Jackson-Presley, Sr. Director, Workforce Success

Reviewed By: OGC, HR, Internal Audit, Faculty Affairs, Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Undergraduate Education and Research Administration, Office of Graduate Education, VP UG Ed & Student Success, Center for Teaching & Learning, Kelly E. Cross, Gail D. Spatt, Adam M. Steinberg, John M. Stein, Dawn M. Baunach, Saeedah C. Hickman

Policy Steering Committee Approval: August 2026

Policy Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to establish clear standards of conduct and workplace expectations for Georgia Tech staff employees. The policy promotes accountability, professionalism, workplace safety, and respectful behavior while supporting fair and consistent responses to conduct concerns.

Summary of Substantive Policy Elements:

- **Replaces the General Work Rules Framework:** Transitions from the existing General Work Rules Policy and its major and minor rule classifications to a modern standards-of-conduct framework.
- **Defines Workplace Expectations:** Establishes professional, ethical, safety, attendance, and workplace behavior expectations for Georgia Tech staff employees.
- **Organizes Conduct Standards:** Groups expectations into professional integrity and accountability, safety and security, workplace conduct, attendance and work expectations, and criminal reporting obligations.
- **Clarifies Key Terms and Responsibilities:** Defines workplace conduct concepts, including insubordination and lawful and reasonable instructions, and explains the responsibilities of employees, managers, and designated Human Resources representatives.
- **Introduces a Risk-Based Evaluation Model:** Evaluates conduct concerns based on the totality of the circumstances, including the nature, severity, frequency, impact, prior corrective action history, and institutional risk.
- **Allows Flexible Corrective Action:** Clarifies that corrective action may be accelerated, repeated, or omitted based on the circumstances and is not required to proceed sequentially.
- **Strengthens Safety and Compliance Expectations:** Expands guidance concerning workplace safety, security, misuse of institutional resources, fraud, confidentiality, criminal reporting obligations, and cooperation in investigations.
- **Aligns Related Workplace Policies:** Strengthens alignment with Institute policies addressing workplace violence, substance use, absenteeism and lateness, harassment, retaliation, and corrective action.



Georgia Institute of Technology

Standards of Conduct and Workplace Expectations

Policy No. 5.9

Type of Policy: Administrative

Effective Date: June 2006

Review Date: October 2026

Last Revised: October 2023

External Requirement for Review: [Date, Reason] – if applicable

Compliance Reporting: [Date, Reason] – if applicable

Policy Owner: Human Resources

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1. Reason for Policy

This policy establishes general standards of conduct applicable to staff employees and provides a framework for addressing conduct inconsistent with Institute expectations.

2. Policy Statement

Georgia Tech is committed to maintaining a professional, respectful, lawful, and high-performing workplace that supports its mission of teaching, research, and public service.

Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects integrity, accountability, professionalism, and respect for others.

Failure to adhere to established standards of conduct may result in corrective action, up to and including separation of employment, consistent with applicable Institute and University System of Georgia (USG) policies.

Georgia is an employment-at-will state. Nothing in this policy alters the at-will employment relationship or creates a contract of employment.

Prohibited Conduct

Conduct inconsistent with Institute standards includes, but is not limited to, the following categories of prohibited behavior:

The examples below are illustrative and are not intended to be an exhaustive list of prohibited conduct. Other conduct inconsistent with Institute expectations may also result in corrective action.

Prohibited Professional Integrity and Accountability

- Insubordination, including the refusal to follow lawful and reasonable work-related instructions from a supervisor or manager.
- Theft, fraud, or misuse of Institute property or resources.
- Falsification of records, including timekeeping or employment documentation.
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or protected information.
- Failure to maintain required job-related licenses, certifications, credentials, or employment eligibility required for the position.

Prohibited Safety and Security

- Any negligent act that may endanger the safety or lives of others or that might result in damage to or destruction of Institute property.
- Violations of established safety protocols.
- Unauthorized possession or use of liquor or illegal drugs on Institute premises (See also GT Employee Alcohol and Illegal Drug Use Policy).
- Unlawful possession of firearms or other dangerous weapons on Institute premises (See also GT Workplace Violence Policy).
- Fighting or threatening behavior on Institute premises.

Prohibited Workplace Conduct

- Disruptive, abusive, or unprofessional behavior.
- Misuse of Institute Technology Systems.
- Failure to cooperate in authorized internal investigations.
- Failure to adhere to established work schedules, including unauthorized absence from an assigned work location during scheduled work hours.
- Taking Institute or other employee's property.

Prohibited Attendance and Work Expectations

- Failure to maintain satisfactory attendance and comply with established work schedules.
- Failure to return to work upon expiration of approved leave or vacation (See also GT Absenteeism and Lateness Policy).
- Performing unauthorized personal work during assigned working hours.
- Misuse of Institute resources for personal purposes.
- Violation of Board of Regents or Institute policies, including the Tobacco and Smoke-Free Campus policy.

Criminal Reporting and Risk Assessment

Employees who are charged with a crime (other than minor traffic offenses) must report being charged with such a crime directly to Georgia Tech Human Resources within seventy-two (72) hours of becoming aware of such charges and to report criminal convictions within twenty-four (24) hours of becoming aware of such convictions.

The Institute will evaluate reported charges or convictions based on job-relatedness, institutional safety considerations, and the totality of the circumstances. A charge or conviction does not automatically result in disciplinary action.

Failure to comply with reporting requirements may result in corrective action.

Application of Corrective Action

Conduct concerns addressed under this policy will be evaluated by Georgia Tech Human Resources (GTHR, including Workforce Success and other appropriate Human Resources representatives), based on the totality of the circumstances, including:

- Nature of the conduct
- Severity
- Frequency
- Impact on individuals, operations, or institutional risk
- Prior conduct or corrective action history

Corrective action may include, but is not limited to, coaching, written warnings, suspension, demotion, and separation of employment. The Institute reserves the right to utilize other appropriate corrective measures based on the circumstances.

Although corrective action often follows a progressive approach, the Institute reserves the right to accelerate, repeat, or omit steps depending on the circumstances.

Nothing in this policy guarantees sequential discipline.

Supervisors must consult with their designated Human Resources representative and any applicable Human Resources subject matter experts prior to implementing suspension, demotion, or separation of employment.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all staff employees of the Georgia Institute of Technology.

4. Definitions

Insubordination	Failure or refusal to comply with a supervisor's lawful and reasonable work-related instruction that does not violate applicable law, Board of Regents policy, Institute policy, or established safety requirements.
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5. Responsibilities

Employees are responsible for:

- Maintaining professional conduct.
- Complying with Institute policies and procedures.
- Cooperating in investigations.
- Promptly raising concerns through appropriate channels.

Managers are responsible for:

- Addressing conduct concerns promptly and consistently.
- Documenting concerns appropriately.
- Consulting with Human Resources regarding significant corrective action.

Designated Human Resources representatives are responsible for:

- Addressing conduct concerns promptly and consistently.
- Assessing the totality of circumstances when corrective action is warranted.
- Partnering with the Office of Workforce Success on corrective action decisions.

6. Enforcement

Failure to adhere to these standards may result in corrective action up to and including separation of employment, consistent with applicable laws and Institute policies.

To report suspected instances of ethical violations, please visit Georgia Tech's Ethics Hotline a secure and confidential reporting system, at:

https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/en/report_custom.asp?clientid=7508

7. Related Information

Resource	Link
GT Performance, Conduct and Corrective Action Policy	https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/employment/progressive-discipline
GT Absenteeism and Lateness Policy	https://www.policylibrary.gatech.edu/employment/absenteeism-and-lateness
GT Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy	https://www.policylibrary.gatech.edu/employment/equal-opportunity-nondiscrimination-and-anti-harassment-policy
GT Non-Retaliation Policy	https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/employment/non-retaliation-policy
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX)	https://www.policylibrary.gatech.edu/employment/equal-opportunity-nondiscrimination-and-anti-harassment-policy
GT Sexual Misconduct Policy	https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-life/sexual-misconduct
GT Research Integrity, Safety and Compliance	https://research.gatech.edu/research-integrity-compliance-safety
O.C.G.A. § 16-11-127.1 Carrying Weapons within School Safety Zones	http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/gacode/
GT Employee Alcohol and Illegal Drug Use	https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/employment/employee-alcohol-and-illegal-drug-use
GT Workplace Violence Policy	https://www.policylibrary.gatech.edu/employment/workplace-violence
04.07 Grievance	https://usg.policystat.com/policy/19298238/latest/
03.05 Dismissal, Demotions, or Suspensions	https://d2zk9fgwitlpui.cloudfront.net/shared/21de102f56e74ed3816b5608f411e96f/03-05 Dismissal- Demotions- or Suspensions.pdf

8. Policy History

Revision Date	Author	Description
October 2023	GTHR	Updated to conform with USG HRAP updates
August 2026	GTHR	Policy Revision