



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ABSCONDMENT/DESERTION POLICY: UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

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1. PREAMBLE

The purpose of this policy is to regulate the situation that arises when an employee leaves his/her employment without prior authorisation and/or without informing his/her supervisor of his/her whereabouts for a period of five (5) consecutive days.

2. DEFINITIONS

Abscondment: Refers to the situation where an employee has left his/her place of employment without leave of absence for a period of five (5) consecutive working days.

Desertion: Desertion implies that an employee has left his/her place of work without leave of absence for a period five (5) or more days, and does not appear to have any intention of returning to the workplace.

Employee: Means all employees paid through the University of Fort Hare payroll or any employee who has a verbal or written contract of employment with the University.

HOD: Means the Head of a Department.

Place of Work: Means any place of work directly or indirectly linked to University of Fort Hare.

Supervisor: Means any person or persons placed in a position where employees report to him/her.

3. PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED

3.1 IN THE EVENT OF SUSPECTED ABSCONDMENT

3.1.1 The supervisor must inform Human Resources Department of the situation regarding the employee.

3.1.2 The supervisor must issue a written communiqué to the employee concerned (to the last known address) stating the following information:

- (a) The amount of days the employee has been absent without the proper permission;
- (b) A specific date by which the employee must return or contact the employer; and
- (c) That non-compliance may result in the employee being seen as a deserter, which could lead to the termination of the employee's contract of employment.

3.1.3 A copy of delivery of the communiqué must be forwarded to the Human Resources Department.

3.2 IN THE EVENT THAT THE EMPLOYEE RETURNS ON THE DATE AS INDICATED.

The following process must be followed:

- (a) The supervisor must enquire as to the reason/s why the employee was absent from work and why he/she did not notify the employer earlier about the reason/s and circumstances causing the absence;
- (b) Based on the explanation given, the supervisor decides on whether or not further action against the employee is needed and if so the Disciplinary procedure must be followed; and
- (c) The supervisor must notify Human Resources Department of the date of return, the days absent and the action/s to be taken.

3.3 IF THE EMPLOYEE CONTACTS THE EMPLOYER WITHIN THE SPECIFIED PERIOD.

The following process must be followed:

- (a) If the employee contacts the supervisor by the specified date, the supervisor must enquire as to the reason/s why the employee was absent from work and why he/she did not notify the employer earlier about the reason/s and circumstances that caused the absence;
- (b) A specified date of return must be agreed by the supervisor and the employee;
- (c) Based on the explanation given, the supervisor decides on, whether or not further action against the employee is necessary and if so the Disciplinary procedure which must be followed; and
- (d) The Human Resources Department must be notified of the agreed date, the actual date of return, and what action/s is to be taken.

3.4 IF AN EMPLOYEE DOES NOT RETURN OR NOTIFY THE EMPLOYER BY THE SPECIFIED DATE

The following process must be followed:

- 3.4.1 The supervisor must issue to the employee, at the last known address, an official communiqué stating the following:

- (a) That the employee has not returned on the date as specified;
- (b) That the employer therefore has no other option but to classify the employee as a deserter;
- (c) It is therefore accepted that the employee does not want to return to work and therefore terminates the contract of employment from the first day of absence; and
- (d) If the ex-employee has any questions, she/he should contact the Human Resources Department.

3.4.2 Contact the Human Resources Department indicating that the employee has not returned by the date as supplied. Provide the Human Resources Department with the documentation and actions taken by the supervisor.

3.5 IF THE EMPLOYEE RETURNS AFTER THE DATE SPECIFIED

The following process needs to be followed:

- 3.5.1 The employee must be given an opportunity to explain the situation leading to his/her absenteeism. This would include giving reasons why he/she was absent from work, why he/she did not contact the employer and give the reason/s why he/she did not return to work within the period specified;
- 3.5.2 Where the reason is such that it was clearly not possible for the employee to make contact with the employer or to return earlier (e.g. employee in coma) and particularly where there is some proof to support the employee's claim, or this claim can be verified in some way, the employee should be re-employed. This will depend on the reasons given for the absence, and the proof that the employee can provide to support his/ her claim; and
- 3.5.3 If an employee cannot provide sufficient proof, the employee has the right to appeal in terms of the appeal procedure and should be directed to the Human Resources Department who will provide the employee with the necessary information.