

Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) Process

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Overview

A Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) is a structured process to help employees address performance gaps and return to meeting expectations. This document outlines the PIP process at NovaTech.

Purpose

A PIP is designed to:

- Clearly communicate performance concerns
- Provide specific, actionable improvement goals
- Offer support and resources for improvement
- Document performance issues and remediation efforts
- Give the employee a fair opportunity to succeed

A PIP is **not**:

- Automatic termination
- Punishment
- A surprise (issues should be discussed prior)

When a PIP is Appropriate

Typical Situations

- Sustained underperformance despite coaching
- Performance rating of “Below Expectations”
- Failure to meet role requirements after feedback
- Significant skill gaps affecting job performance

Not Appropriate For

- One-time mistakes
 - Issues addressable through coaching alone
 - Conduct issues (use disciplinary process instead)
 - New employees still ramping (use extended onboarding)
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Before Initiating a PIP

Manager Requirements

Before starting a PIP, managers must have:

1. **Documented performance issues**
 - Specific examples with dates
 - Impact on team/company
 - Clear connection to job expectations
2. **Provided prior feedback**
 - Performance concerns discussed in 1:1s
 - Written documentation shared
 - Opportunity to improve given
3. **Offered support**
 - Coaching and guidance provided
 - Resources made available
 - Barriers addressed
4. **Consulted HR**
 - Reviewed situation with HR Business Partner
 - Confirmed PIP is appropriate path
 - Discussed alternative approaches

HR Review

HR will review:
- Documentation quality
- Consistency of expectations
- Prior feedback history
- Whether PIP is warranted
- Legal and fairness considerations

PIP Process

Step 1: PIP Development

Manager drafts PIP with HR support:

PIP Document includes:
- Performance issues and impact
- Specific improvement goals (SMART)
- Success metrics
- Support and resources provided
- Timeline (typically 30-60 days)
- Check-in schedule
- Consequences of not meeting goals

Step 2: PIP Meeting

Manager meets with employee to: 1. Explain performance concerns clearly 2. Present the PIP document 3. Discuss improvement goals 4. Answer questions 5. Provide copy of PIP 6. Get employee acknowledgment

Meeting best practices: - Schedule adequate time (45-60 min) - Hold in private setting - HR may attend for support - Allow employee to ask questions - Be clear but compassionate

Step 3: Improvement Period

During the PIP period:

Employee responsibilities: - Work toward improvement goals - Attend all check-ins - Ask for help when needed - Document progress

Manager responsibilities: - Weekly (minimum) check-ins - Ongoing feedback and coaching - Document progress and concerns - Provide promised support - Be available for questions

Step 4: Check-ins

Regular check-ins include: - Progress review against goals - Feedback on recent performance - Discussion of challenges - Adjustment of support if needed - Documentation of conversation

Step 5: Conclusion

At end of PIP period, three outcomes:

Outcome	Criteria	Next Steps
Successful	All goals met	PIP closed, regular performance mgmt
Extended	Significant progress, needs more time	PIP extended (once only)
Unsuccessful	Goals not met	Termination process initiated

PIP Document Template

Section 1: Performance Concerns

Current State: [Describe specific performance issues with examples, dates, and impact]

Expected State: [Describe what meeting expectations looks like in this role]

Gap: [Clearly articulate the gap between current and expected performance]

Section 2: Improvement Goals

Goal	Metric	Target	By Date
Goal 1	How measured	What success looks like	Date
Goal 2	How measured	What success looks like	Date
Goal 3	How measured	What success looks like	Date

Section 3: Support Provided

- [Support item 1]
- [Support item 2]
- [Training/resources]
- [Additional manager time]

Section 4: Timeline and Check-ins

PIP Duration: [30/45/60 days] **Start Date:** [Date] **End Date:** [Date]

Check-in Schedule: - Week 1: [Date] - Week 2: [Date] - [Continue weekly] - Final Review: [Date]

Section 5: Consequences

If improvement goals are not met by the end of this PIP period, the consequence may include [termination of employment/extended PIP/other consequence].

Acknowledgment

Employee signature indicates receipt of this document and understanding of expectations. Signature does not indicate agreement with the assessment.

Employee: _____ Date: _____ Manager: _____

Date: _____

Employee Rights

During PIP

Employees have the right to:

- Understand specific expectations
- Receive regular feedback
- Ask questions and seek clarification
- Request reasonable accommodations
- Access HR for concerns
- Provide their perspective in writing

If Disagreeing with PIP

Employees may:

- Document their perspective in writing
- Request meeting with HR
- Provide additional context
- Note disagreement while still acknowledging receipt

Manager Responsibilities

Throughout PIP

- Maintain objectivity and fairness
- Provide consistent feedback
- Document all interactions
- Offer genuine support
- Be available and responsive
- Recognize progress when it occurs

What to Avoid

- Ignoring the employee
- Setting unrealistic goals
- Moving goalposts
- Discussing PIP with others
- Treating employee differently
- Failing to document

HR Responsibilities

- Guide manager through process
 - Review PIP for fairness
 - Ensure documentation quality
 - Advise on legal considerations
 - Support both manager and employee
 - Maintain confidentiality
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Successful PIP Completion

When employee meets all PIP goals: 1. Hold closing meeting to acknowledge success 2. Document successful completion 3. Transition to regular performance management 4. Continue monitoring (60-90 days) 5. Remove PIP from active status

The employee should feel: - Their efforts are recognized - They have a fresh start - The path forward is clear

Unsuccessful PIP Completion

When employee does not meet PIP goals: 1. Final review meeting 2. Document specific gaps remaining 3. HR and manager discuss next steps 4. Typically proceeds to termination 5. Follow separation process

One extension may be granted if: - Significant progress made - Clear path to completion - Circumstances warrant extension

Confidentiality

PIP information is confidential: - Shared only with those who need to know - Not discussed with team members - Maintained in secure personnel file - Employee may share at their discretion

Documentation Retention

- PIP documents retained in personnel file
 - Successful PIPs: 2 years
 - Unsuccessful PIPs: Per legal requirements
 - Used only for legitimate HR purposes
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FAQ

Q: Is a PIP the same as being fired? A: No. A PIP is an opportunity to improve. Many employees successfully complete PIPs and continue their careers at NovaTech.

Q: Can I be put on a PIP without warning? A: A PIP should not be a surprise. Performance concerns should have been discussed previously. If you receive a PIP without prior feedback, raise this with HR.

Q: What if I disagree with the PIP? A: You can document your perspective in writing. You're required to acknowledge receipt but not agreement.

Q: How long do PIPs last? A: Typically 30-60 days depending on the nature of improvements needed.

Q: Can I look for another job while on a PIP? A: You may explore other opportunities. Internal transfers typically require PIP completion.

Related Documents: Performance Review Process (HR-DEV-003), Progressive Discipline Policy (HR-EMP-010), Termination Process (HR-OFF-001)