Performance and Conduct Management for Laboratory Supervisors

Lesson 1: Distinguishing Between Performance Issues and Misconduct

Screen 1: Standard OLSS Course Opener

Screen 2: Menu/Lesson Selection Page

Screen 3: (Narrator with accompanying graphics): Course & Lesson Introduction

At CDC, supervisors play a crucial role in managing and leading employees. A primary responsibility is to oversee employees' performance and conduct. The goal of this course is to prepare you to do so specifically in laboratory settings.

Note that for laboratory supervisors, performance and conduct management includes ensuring compliance with the policies, standards, and laws in place to meet safety, efficiency, ethical, and quality expectations in CDC laboratories.

Let's get started.

I'm Martin. I work in the Office of Laboratory Science and Safety, and I'll be guiding you through this learning.

In the first lesson, you'll meet several laboratory supervisors and hear about situations they're dealing with. Throughout the course, you'll be asked what each supervisor should do or how the case should be treated. Along the way, you'll learn about your responsibilities as a supervisor and the complexities of evaluating performance and conduct. More specifically, you'll think through gray areas and distinguish between performance issues and misconduct, consider employee accountability, and understand investigation processes. As you get a sense of supervisory best practices, you'll know when—and from where—to get professional assistance.

Don't forget, you do not have to complete this course in one sitting. Your progress will be saved, and you'll be able to pick up where you left off. A good rule of thumb is to, if possible, complete one lesson before taking a break.

Screen 4: (Supervisors discussion): Challenges of differentiating between performance issues and misconduct; lean on peers for support

Script
Anissa: It's been a rough week. I feel like I've been running experiments non-stop.
Pamela: I barely had time to eat lunch yesterday. We got some unexpected results in our latest trial. It's going to take some time to figure out what the results mean.
Kirby: Pamela, unexpected results can sometimes be the most exciting in science. But…sounds like you have your work cut out for you. *Anissa, how's your viral study going?*
Anissa: Not good. Someone in my group might have made an error on the study design, and results may be skewed. I'm worried, and not sure how to treat the situation.
Gina: You know you can always discuss the situation with your manager, and for tough situations, confidentially or hypothetically with the Office of Science. If you're on unfamiliar ground, loop in OHR.
Kirby: I have questions on this topic. It's hard for me to tell whether laboratory-related errors are research misconduct or a performance issue. I know the Office of Science handles research misconduct cases, but if it is more of a performance issue, then maybe I should address it myself or involve Employee Relations.
Anissa: That's understandable, Kirby. "Gray area" situations seem to be the rule, not the exception.
Mauricio: I wish we could avoid any protocol violations or non-compliance issues, but especially those gray area situations. I understand that performance issues and misconduct are on a spectrum and all situations need to be addressed. But sometimes the situations are both or neither. That makes it even more challenging.
Gina: Definitely. I've been unusually preoccupied with one of my employees' struggles. I think it's a performance issue. I'm not sure.
Anissa: So, what is the best way to handle these situations? And what can we do better to prevent issues in the first place?
Pamela: There's a lot we can do. As laboratory supervisors, we set the tone and expectations for our staff. We're on the front lines dealing with complicated situations as they unfold. We need to understand when poor quality work, deviations from protocols, or non-compliance with regulations are misconduct and when they are a performance issue.

Script
Mauricio: There's no reason, however, to be siloed in our supervisory problem-solving. OS and OHR have helped me immensely in past situations. It's important to reach out to them with questions or concerns – that's what they're there for!
Kirby: We can be good resources for each other too. Supervisors supporting supervisors.
Pamela: Agreed. Other supervisors, OS, and OHR have likely already dealt with anything we're facing. Our burden is reduced when you let others' experiences help guide our courses of action.
Mauricio: So, let's practice what we're preaching. Tell us more about your situation, Gina. Maybe we can figure out of it's a performance issue or misconduct, and what to do about it either way.

Screen 5: (Scenario #1, first segment): Chris's Performance Issues (Errors, Low Quality Work)

Script
Gina: Chris, thanks for meeting with me privately. I would like to offer you some feedback on your work. You've been doing a great job managing laboratory safety protocols. I'm happy with how well you've followed safety guidelines, handled hazardous materials, and implemented safety training.
Chris: Thanks. I've had excellent guidance from you and Esmeralda.
Gina: I'm a bit concerned about something, however. Lately we've not had the supplies we need when we need them. It's delayed a few big studies and experiments. Is there something disrupting our normal flow of ordering and managing supplies?
Chris: Not that I'm aware of.
Gina: Last month, some of the items ordered were not the brand requested. We've been ordering very specifically for quality control. Equipment maintenance and calibration have also suffered lately. Repairs aren't happening in a timely manner.
Chris: Gina, I feel awful about this. I've been with CDC for 8 years. I've never gotten this much criticism at once. I'll admit I haven't been as focused lately. I assure you I will adjust and do better.
Gina: I understand. I know you want to do good work. You're an integral part of this laboratory, and we need your experience and expertise. I wanted to bring these issues to your attention so we can work together to make some adjustments.

Screen 6: (Scenario #1, Question 1): Definition of Performance Issue and Misconduct

Based on the conversation between Gina and Chris, is this a performance issue or misconduct?

A. Performance Issue
B. Misconduct

Answer Choice	Audio Script (Feedback)
A (Correct)	Yes, that's right.
B (Incorrect)	No, this is not misconduct; it is a performance issue.
Explanatory Feedback (played at the end of the correct and incorrect feedback)	A performance issue refers to situations where an employee is not meeting the expected standards of work quality, productivity, or other job-related metrics. Performance issues can arise from a lack of skills, knowledge, or training. They may also occur because of a lack of motivation, lack of focus, poor time-management skills, or insufficient feedback on work. Finally, external factors can affect work performance. Misconduct refers to behavior that violates agency policies, ethical standards, or legal requirements. It is failure to comply and follow rules. In most cases of misconduct, an employee has control over the outcome: they are capable but still do not perform; they are aware but still do not comply. Their behavior appears to be a matter of choice.

Screen 7: (Scenario #1, Question 2): Factors that indicate a performance issue and misconduct

Chris is apologetic about his errors and displays eagerness to do better. How does this factor into whether the situation will be considered a performance issue or misconduct?

A. It will more likely be treated as misconduct.
B. It will more likely be treated as a performance issue.

Answer Choice	Audio Script (Feedback)

A or B (same feedback for either choice)	Categorizing a situation as a performance issue or misconduct is based primarily on the definition it fits. However, when a situation is gray and multi-layered or has markers of both a performance issue and misconduct, an employee's high level of remorse and good attitude about improvement and change can, along with other factors, result in the situation being treated as a performance issue. Generally, factors indicating a performance issue are: • The employee feels and shows true remorse for the situation. • The employee did not act intentionally. • The employee did not act with malice, defiance, or hostility. • The employee did not have the requisite skills, knowledge, or training to comply or to perform well. • The employee made the mistake or error just one time or has had the issue for a brief period of time. • The employee has personal distractions or obligations that interfere with their work. • Consequences for the act, behavior, or poor performance were not severe and did not cause grave harm to the public, other employees, or animals. • Consequences for the act, behavior, or poor performance did not cause significant damage to the organization's reputation, finances, or output. Generally, factors indicating misconduct are: • The employee acted intentionally. • The employee acted with malice, defiance, or hostility. • The employee has offended repeatedly despite warnings, coaching, training, remediation, etc. • Consequences for the act or behavior were grave for the public, for internal employees, or for animals • Consequences for the act or behavior were harmful to the organization's finances, reputation, or output.

Screen 8: (Scenario #1, Question 3): Common examples/types of performance issues/misconduct

We've established that Chris's issue is about performance, not conduct. What type of performance issue do you think Chris has? (Select all that apply.)

A. Errors, omissions, and delays
B. Failure to adhere to schedules and meet deadlines
C. Low productivity (not enough work output)
D. Low quality output
E. Cost-ineffectiveness

Answer Choice	Audio Script (Feedback)
A and D (Learner must get both and only A and D) (Correct)	Correct.
Any answer other than both and only A and D (Incorrect)	The correct choices are A and D.
Explanatory Feedback (played at the end of the correct and incorrect feedback)	Chris's performance issue is errors, omissions, and delays that affect his team's work. This is low quality output. Low productivity and failure to adhere to schedules and meet deadlines are two other types of performance issues. Common types of misconduct are theft, harassment, bullying, intimidation, microaggressions, discrimination, frequent tardiness, insubordination, conflicts of interest, financial fraud, and violation of safety regulations. Non-compliance also falls under the misconduct umbrella, but it is handled differently from other types of misconduct.

Screen 9: (Narrator with accompanying graphics): Non-compliance misconduct

As we've just learned, non-compliance with policies, protocols, and laws is a form of misconduct, but it is treated differently from general misconduct, such as harassment, intimidation, or theft. Non-compliance has a different set of offices involved. It also has different accountability and investigation mechanisms.

Non-compliance misconduct is especially pertinent to laboratory supervisors, as it may, in fact, be more common than general misconduct.

Let's hear from the supervisors again about their compliance and non-compliance issues with laboratory employees.

Screen 10: (Supervisors discussion): Compliance/Non-Compliance and animal use protocols

Script
Mauricio: While we're talking about our situations, maybe you guys can help me consider what to do about a dilemma with a particular employee. It's a compliance issue; a possible protocol violation.
Gina: I hope it's not one that involves animals. Those are serious.
Pamela: All compliance issues are serious.
Kirby: It does seem like the ones involving animals require more documentation. Every procedure must be meticulously recorded.
Anissa: Yes. There's considerable fallout if an audit occurs and any discrepancies in records are found.
Kirby: Mauricio, what's going on with your employee?
Mauricio: This person is a brilliant laboratory scientist, but lately I'm concerned about his choices. He seems to do what he wants when he wants, instead of following laboratory protocols.

Screen 11: (Scenario #2, first segment): Administering Unapproved Virus Doses

Script
Mauricio: James, in the last glucagon-like peptide Hepatitis B study, we were to administer to the mice 6 micrograms per injection twice a day, spaced apart by at least 6 hours. We're doing the same this time.
James: Understood, though it seems a small amount compared to the specifications for other vaccine studies, which can be as much as 100 micrograms.
Mauricio: It's crucial that we monitor dosage and administration carefully based on specific requirements for each study. We have to follow the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approved protocol. Quality of science, ethical considerations, and CDC requirements are all factors. We don't want to be in violation.
James: I understand. In that last study, the mice varied in body weight, sex, and age. Those have to be factored into the study design and analysis plan too.

Script
Mauricio: The study was carefully designed by experienced scientists who have worked for at least a decade on this research and submitted their protocol to the IACUC for approval. We have to adhere to the IACUC-approved protocol which specifies the amount and frequency of vaccine administration. These nonclinical safety data will ultimately be submitted to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and evaluated for approval to use the vaccine in clinical studies in humans.
James: It just seems a shame that we, as laboratory scientists, aren't permitted to use our professional expertise to judge situations.
Mauricio: I understand the inclination for on-the-spot decision-making, but the IACUC reviews and approves all research protocols involving animals in vaccine studies. Their review assesses risks and benefits, with an emphasis on animal safety and welfare. We have to adhere to the approved protocol specifications. Not adhering to the protocol is non-compliance. The IACUC could potentially revoke the privilege to conduct animal work if we are not in compliance with their approved protocols.

Screen 12: (Scenario #2, second segment): Administering Unapproved Virus Doses

Script
Mauricio: Hi Suni. How's day 3 of the Hepatitis B study?
Suni: I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but I'm concerned about something I'm seeing. It involves James.
Mauricio: Oh? You've got my attention.
Suni : Well, it's about vaccine dosage. We're administering 6 micrograms at 9 am and 3 pm each day, according to protocol. But there is always some leftover, and James has been administering the remaining vaccine to two of the slightly bigger mice around 5 pm. He says he doesn't want to waste it.
Mauricio: Not wanting to waste supplies is understandable, but this is a dose-escalation toxicity study. The doses are calibrated with great accuracy and precision and must be administered according to protocol—otherwise the study data are compromised and the animals wasted. Extra vaccine injections could cause organ failure, tissue damage, or even death.

Screen 13: (Scenario #2, Question 1): Administering Unapproved Virus Doses

At this point, does the situation appear to be one of misconduct or a performance issue?

A. Misconduct
B. Performance Issue

Answer Choice	Audio Script (Feedback)
A (Correct)	Yes. This situation points to misconduct because James has veered from approved protocol specifications. Since James has administered unapproved doses several times, and he's stated his reason for doing so, his act is intentional. Intentional non-compliance with animal use protocols is misconduct.
B (Incorrect)	The situation is not a performance issue. It is misconduct because James has veered from approved protocol specifications. Since James has administered unapproved doses several times, and he's stated his reason for doing so, his act is intentional. Intentional non-compliance with animal use protocols is misconduct.

Screen 14: (Scenario #2, Question 2): Administering Unapproved Virus Doses

True or False: Though intentional non-compliance is misconduct, the situation can be treated as a performance issue instead if it is the employee's first offense.

Answer Choice	Audio Script (Feedback)
True or False (Either answer gets the same feedback)	The answer to this is complex. The default categorization for intentional non-compliance is misconduct. A first offense, alone, does not change that. However, situations can be gray and complicated. If intentional non-compliance is a first offense *and* many other mitigating factors are also present, supervisors and other relevant offices may choose to treat the situation uniquely.

Screen 15: (Narrator and accompanying graphics): Gray areas

Let's talk more about gray areas. Because situations are often layered, they can be hard to categorize as a performance issue or misconduct.

An employee could be completing work poorly because of a lack of knowledge, training, and skills. This points to a performance issue. However, the situation could have circumstances associated with misconduct, such as a defiant attitude, repeated errors despite remediation, and serious consequences.

Conversely, an employee may be frequently late for work or meetings, a behavior associated with misconduct. However, the situation could have circumstances associated with performance issues, such as remorse for mistakes, eagerness to improve, and negligible or no consequences for anyone involved.

Because the situations have elements of a performance issue *and* misconduct, a supervisor may feel uncertain as to how to treat them. They are gray.

Screen 16: (Narrator and accompanying graphics): How to handle gray areas

How should you handle gray area situations?

Know that there is no easy or fool-proof formula, process, or checklist. The best preparation you can have as a laboratory supervisor is to be aware of gray area situations and to expect them. Be patient when they arise. When it comes to investigating and evaluating them, take it slowly and judiciously. Seek input from OHR, fellow laboratory supervisors, and other officials. As you seek experienced and fair-minded counsel, see if any consensus views emerge for you to seriously consider as the basis of your own assessment.

Next, let's delve into another common type of misconduct – a safety violation.

Screen 17: (Supervisors discussion): Safety Violations

Script
Anissa: Have any of you had safety incidents?
Mauricio: Unfortunately, yes. I've had laboratory scientists ignore proper use of PPE, mishandle hazardous chemicals, and tamper with equipment safety features.
Pamela: As soon as I become aware of a safety violation, I address it immediately. Safety violations need to be stopped right away to make sure no one gets sick or injured.
Kirby: More needs to be done to stop safety violations. It's often carelessness, but people still need frequent reminders. We need increased signage and more job aids at people's fingertips.

Script
Gina: Sadly, people ignore safety procedures to cut corners and save time. Like not appropriately decontaminating a work surface or re-using PPE.
Mauricio: Safety trainings should be repeated more frequently. Not just once a year but quarterly.
Anissa: One of the laboratory staff working with me on the Virus X study has been violating a safety protocol related to doors. She keeps them open when they are supposed to be closed.
Kirby: Just one violation?
Anissa: It was just one at first—propping the doors open —but lately another violation has occurred. I'm wondering, are safety violations performance or conduct issues?

Screen 18: (Scenario #3, first segment): Safety Violation

Script
Jose: Anissa, what can we do about Zoë? She's continued to prop doors open in the Virus X quarantine study. Casey and I keep reminding her to close them, but she won't listen. Maybe if she hears from a supervisor instead of us...?
Anissa (LS): We can't have that. Open doors will affect air balancing and negative pressure.
Jose: Exactly. Can you tell her that?
Anissa: What does she say when you confront her?
Jose: She claims the doors aren't open for long enough to matter. She thinks anything under 20 minutes has no impact on disease spread.
Anissa (LS): The controlled environment is particularly important. Temperature and humidity levels matter a great deal. We don't want to risk invalid study results. Or the virus escaping from the laboratory.
Jose: It's written in the SOP that doors have to stay closed. Why won't she just follow the protocol?
Anissa (LS): I'll talk to her.
Jose: When you do, remind her about wearing PPE in quarantine rooms too. I've seen her go in several times with no protective equipment. We're worried about study data being compromised, someone getting sick, or going through a big review because of her laxity.

Screen 19: (Scenario #3, second segment): Safety Violation

Script
(Later) *Anissa: Zoë, may I have a word with you?*
Zoë: Sure, what's going on?
Anissa: I'm aware of you propping doors open in the Virus X quarantine study. This can't occur. If doors are open even for a brief period, the quarantined subjects aren't truly isolated. Our whole purpose is to get a read on the natural course of the disease—tracking symptom onset and severity, and the duration of illness. We'll get skewed results if the doors are open. Not to mention, Virus X is extremely dangerous.
Zoë: Our study has gone on for three weeks, and I only opened the doors a few times. It can't be enough to matter. Why does this have to be an issue? Don't we have enough to deal with without all the nitpicking?
Anissa: It's important that all of us follow the SOP to the letter. We can't justify deviations, no matter how minor or insignificant you think they are. Especially when we are entrusted with Virus X.
Zoë: Well, to be honest, I didn't see that guideline when I read through the SOP. We're busy, and there are so many guidelines. I'm sure it's there, but I didn't see it.

Screen 20: (Scenario #3, Question 1): Safety Violation

Drop-down interaction. For each statement, select whether it represents **misconduct** or a **performance issue.**

A. Zoë is not complying with an approved protocol. (misconduct)
B. Zoë is not retaining information on written documents. (performance issue)
C. Zoë is distracted while doing her work and needs to focus more. (performance issue)
D. Zoë has a dismissive and irritated demeanor when her supervisor speaks with her about the issue. (misconduct)

Answer Choice	Audio Script (Feedback)

Feedback (for any answer submission)	Zoë not complying with an approved protocol is misconduct. Zoë not retaining information on written documents is a performance issue. Zoë being distracted while doing her work and needing to focus more is a performance issue. Zoë's dismissive and irritated demeanor is associated with misconduct. It is not easy to determine how to treat a situation when it has hallmarks of both misconduct and a performance issue, but discussion with peer supervisors, OHR, and other management officials can help you sort out how to proceed in nuanced and unique situations. Generally speaking, safety violations are more likely to be treated as performance issues when they stem from genuine mistakes, lack of training, or a misunderstanding of safety protocols. They are more likely to be treated as misconduct when there is an element of negligence, willful disregard, or deliberate violation of safety protocols. Let's return now to our first scenario where Chris was making mistakes.

Screen 21: (Scenario #1, second segment): Chris's Performance Issues (Errors, Low Quality Work)

Script
Gina: Chris, I'm afraid we need to talk again. It's been a month since we first talked, and I'm not seeing improvement in your work. We couldn't properly conduct a Lyme disease study recently because the device we use to monitor temperature, humidity, and lighting was not working. It was on the repairs list, as were three microscopes, with a deadline a week before the experiments were to start. Jamie was also missing gloves, PPE, syringes, and needles again. Did the company not deliver on time? What happened?
Chris: I'm sorry. Those supplies and repair orders were on my desk and I thought I'd taken care of them.
Gina: Also, the document you outlined for Tamara was not as high quality as what we're used to from you. The specific aims and objectives section was vague. The expected outcomes and significance sections only touched the surface of our vision and theories. Your description of experimental design lacked details as well. These are areas you used to be very thorough

Script
about. I know it's not your responsibility to write final drafts, but we always counted on your thorough notes and research to make later contributors' work easier.
Chris: (looks helpless and says nothing)
Gina: I think we should implement some checks on your work leading up to when you turn it in to research writers. I'd like to set up two reviews by me and maybe one from Ann.
Chris: I won't let you down. Which projects are we talking about?
Gina: Let's do this for the next two rounds of supplies ordering, equipment maintenance and repairs, and three upcoming writing projects. I'm going to send you a detailed email with deadlines for these pre-checks. We'll either use a Word doc share or we'll have a sit-down and work together.
Chris: That sounds reasonable. Thanks, Pam. I'll look out for the email.
Gina: Thanks for your positive attitude, Chris.

Screen 22: (Scenario # 1, Question 4): Chris's Performance Issues (Errors, Low Quality Work) – Options for Supervisors Dealing with Performance Issues.

True or False: Gina should defer to OHR to handle Chris's performance issue.

Answer Choice	Audio Script (Feedback)
True or False (either answer gets this feedback)	The statement is false. A supervisor is allowed and encouraged to implement any checks or modifications they think will help resolve the performance issue. Providing additional support, training, and coaching are also in a supervisor's purview. It is not necessary to involve OHR at an early stage, especially when all parties are cooperating in a professional manner.

Screen 23: (Scenario # 1, third segment): Chris's Performance Issues (Errors, Low Quality Work)

Script
Gina: (looking over some documents and papers as Chris walks in). Hi Chris. Please sit down. Let's talk about this recent round of reviews and outputs. I'm still not seeing improvement in timeliness or quality. On the first review, I gave you detailed edits and suggestions for further research. Some of those were implemented in the second review, but not enough of them. I

Script
reinforced them, as did Ann when she reviewed. What do you propose we do? Is there anything going on that I can help with?
Chris: (says nothing at first; finally speaks). There's a lot of pressure on me with Stella starting kindergarten, two other kids hitting teen age–all of them have increased activities that require parent duty for me. I'm also now the president of my HOA and doing hefty work for another volunteer organization. I know I shouldn't make excuses. But everything's adding up. So much to be done, personally and professionally.
Gina: I see. This isn't just a focus and concentration issue then. You have a lot of competing priorities. You've seemed stressed and sometimes unusually quiet. You're also doing certification courses, if memory serves.
Chris: Yes, it's been rough. The hematology and immunology certifications are important, but they are taking so much out of me.
Gina: This explains a lot. You have a lot of distractions, Chris. They're important and worthwhile distractions, but they are still distractions to your other duties.
Chris: I know. I'm not able to manage my tasks properly even when I'm intentionally focusing.

Screen 24: (Scenario # 1, Question 5): Chris's Performance Issues (Errors, Low Quality Work) – Options for Supervisors Dealing with Performance Issues.

Which of the following can a supervisor offer an employee whose performance issues are rooted in personal distractions and obligations? (Select all that apply.)

A. Resources related to strategic scheduling and time management.
B. A reduction in pay and decreased health benefits.
C. A flexible work schedule to accommodate the obligations.
D. Additional support and redistribution of work.
E. An immediate demotion since responsibilities have not been handled well.
F. Wellness resources: employee assistance, counseling services, etc.

Answer Choice	Audio Script (Feedback)
A, C, D, and F (Learner must get only and all four to get 'Correct' Feedback.	Yes, this is correct.

Any answer submission other than only and all four correct choices (A, C, D, and F) [Incorrect]	When an employee's performance issues are rooted in personal distractions and obligations, a supervisor could offer any of the following: • Resources related to strategic scheduling and time management. • A flexible work schedule to accommodate the obligations. • Additional support and redistribution of work. • Wellness resources: employee assistance, counseling services, etc.

Screen 25: (Scenario # 2, third segment): Administering Unapproved Virus Doses

Script
Mauricio: James, I've examined some time logs and other documentation. Personnel I've talked to have given me consistent information. I have reason to believe you intentionally deviated from virus administration protocols.
James: I guess there's no point in denying it. But I'd like to talk about my rationale for what I did. It may be more complicated than you think.
Mauricio: I have to report it first. It may be out of my hands for a time. We can talk about it at a certain point, but not now.
James: Alright.
Mauricio: Going forward, after this is resolved, let's work together before you make your own judgement around not following approved protocols. We want to ensure we do work ethically and responsibly.

Screen 26: (Scenario # 2, Question 3): Administering Unapproved Virus Doses - Options for Supervisors Dealing with Misconduct

True or False: Mauricio should not have examined time logs and other documentation, nor should he have talked to anybody about the situation.

Answer Choice	Audio Script (Feedback)
True or False (either answer gets this feedback)	The statement is false. It is acceptable for a supervisor to conduct informal fact-finding when a suspicion of misconduct has been raised or an incident has been reported. The supervisor should be as discreet as possible as they do so, with care not to prematurely, unnecessarily, or unjustifiably damage

	anybody's reputation. Informal fact-finding is a precursor to an official reporting of the incident to relevant offices.

Screen 27: (Scenario # 2, Question 4): Administering Unapproved Virus Doses - Supervisors Dealing with Misconduct

Once a supervisor realizes that non-compliance with animal use protocols has likely occurred, who should they report it to? (Select all that apply.)

A. IACUC (Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee)
B. Division Directors
C. Workforce Relations Office
D. ACUPO (Animal Care and Use Program Office)
E. The Office of General Counsel

Answer Choice	Audio Script (Feedback)
A and D (Learner must get only and both A and D to get 'correct' feedback)	Correct.
Any answer other than only and both A and D (Incorrect)	The correct choices are A and D.
Explanatory Feedback (played at the end of the correct and incorrect feedback)	When non-compliance with animal use protocols is suspected, the supervisor should report it to IACUC and ACUPO.

Screen 28: (Scenario # 3, third segment): Safety Violation

Script
Anissa: May I ask why you are propping the doors open, Zoë?
Zoe: It's just so much easier to walk in and out. The door is heavy, honestly. It's a chore having to force it open each time.
Anissa: And what about your usage of PPE? I understand you aren't being consistent. Please wear PPE at all times to protect yourself and others. We want the study data to be from flawlessly executed experiments, including adherence to safety protocols. Past studies have been discontinued because laboratory staff did not wear the required PPE. You could also be exposed to harm yourself. Do I need to remind you that Virus X is a deadly disease?

Script
Zoë: It's very hot in that room when we are wearing all that PPE. Others agree. I've been fine. Honestly, why do we not have body autonomy in this laboratory? If I get sick or catch anything during an experiment, I wouldn't blame the laboratory. I'm aware of the individual risks I'm taking.
Anissa: It's not about what you feel comfortable with and what would happen if you got sick or injured. Or if anyone else got sick or injured. If we're reviewed by the Institutional Review Boards, and you're seen not wearing PPE, we're going to face fines, penalties, or suspensions. This is very serious.

Screen 29: (Scenario # 3, Question 2): Supervisors dealing with misconduct

Anissa decides that Zoë's actions in the laboratory are misconduct. She chooses to take an informal action at this point: a verbal or written warning. Which statements are true about informal actions in the form of verbal or written warnings?

A. They go on an employee's permanent record.
B. They clearly communicate the rules.
C. They emphasize that the errant behavior is unacceptable.
D. They can never be in email form.
E. They must be documented.

Answer Choice	Audio Script (Feedback)
B, C, and E (Learner must get only and all three to receive 'correct' feedback)	Informal actions in the form of verbal or written warnings clearly communicate the rules. They emphasize that the errant behavior is unacceptable now and in the future. They must be documented even though they are informal.
Any answer other than only and all three (B,C, and E) (Incorrect)	The correct choices are B, C, and E. Informal actions in the form of verbal or written warnings clearly communicate the rules. They emphasize that the errant behavior is unacceptable now and in the future. They must be documented even though they are informal.

Screen 30: (Scenario # 3, Question 3): Supervisors dealing with misconduct

The supervisor in this situation chooses to take an informal action at this point. If she chose to take a formal action (a letter of reprimand, suspension, demotion, or removal), what question would she have to ask herself to support that decision?

A. Did this situation involve other employees or just one employee?
B. Should the employee have known that what they were doing was wrong?
C. What is the likelihood of the act being repeated or the behavior recurring?
D. How long has the employee been employed with the organization?

Answer Choice	Audio Script (Feedback)
B (Correct)	Yes.
Incorrect Answers	The correct answer is B.
Explanatory Feedback (played at the end of the correct and incorrect feedback)	The decision to take a formal action should be based on whether the employee should have known that what they were doing was wrong.

Screen 31: (Narrator with accompanying graphics): Overview of Scientific Integrity

Now let's pivot to another important topic: scientific integrity.

Scientific integrity is adherence to professional practices, ethical behavior, and the principles of honesty and objectivity when conducting, managing, using the results of, and communicating about science and scientific activities. Inclusivity, transparency, and protection from inappropriate influence are hallmarks of scientific integrity.

Several offices help safeguard scientific integrity at CDC.

They include the Office of Science (OS) and the Office of Research Integrity (ORI).

- OS serves as the agency's authority on scientific quality, integrity, and innovation. OS staff members collaborate across the agency to provide the scientific expertise, services, and systems that ensure CDC delivers information the world trusts. Within OS, the Research Integrity Officer (RIO) group oversees scientific integrity issues.

- ORI oversees and directs Public Health Service (PHS) research integrity activities on behalf of the Secretary of Health and Human Services. This includes oversight of research misconduct inquiries and investigations, as well as institutional compliance.

Let's hear from the supervisors about a relevant subset of scientific integrity – research misconduct.

Screen 32: (Supervisors discussion): Research Misconduct

Script
Mauricio: Aside from intentional or unintentional non-compliance in laboratory settings, we also have to address research misconduct.
Anissa: We have help, though, from The Associate Director for Science in our CIO or the Scientific Integrity Official in the Office of Science.
Kirby: What exactly is research misconduct? I've been unclear at times. Does that include data security breaches and non-compliance? Ugh…laboratory supervisors sure do not have it easy.
Gina: Research misconduct is a subset of scientific integrity. It applies across CDC, not just to laboratory work.
Pamela: It pertains to data fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism. If an employee does any of those things in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or while reporting results, they've engaged in research misconduct.
Mauricio: Impressive, Pamela. You've got a solid handle on this.
Pamela: I almost wish I didn't. One of my laboratory employees has been having issues that led me to look into the criteria for research misconduct.
Gina: We're listening…

Screen 33: (Scenario #4, first segment): Research Misconduct – Data Fabrication

Script
Pamela: Gladys, how are we doing on the vaccine delivery systems documentation and clinical sample analysis? The human trials are most important to what we're trying to accomplish. I'm eager to see the results.
Gladys: Vaccine delivery systems - I need another day. As far as the sample clinical analysis, will Wednesday of next week be okay?

Script
Pamela: Gladys, this has been happening too often. You were behind on cell culture reports and documents for immunological assays too. You asked to take on these projects and you knew we had deadlines for these reports and findings. We talked about it via email and in several team meetings.
Gladys: I'm sorry – things have been crazy.
Pamela: What's been going on? Is something causing these missed deadlines and, in some cases, incomplete work?
Gladys: I guess I've been a little distracted. Cameron and I are splitting. We're going through with the divorce.
Pamela): I see. How are you doing?
Gladys: It's time for us to go our separate ways. I'm ready, but we're selling the house, and the pressure of moving has been weighing heavily on my mind. And to top things off, I'm nervous that some teams are getting reorganized again. Decisions about that are in progress.
Pamela: You definitely have a lot changing for you. Thank you for sharing your personal news. Let's figure out a better way to manage your workload.

Screen 34: (Scenario #4, second segment): Research Misconduct – Data Fabrication

Script
After time passage… *Natasha: Hi Pamela. Belle and I ran a routine quality assessment the other day. We looked at Dale's, Jenni's, and Gladys' reports.*
Pamela: Oh? Anything I should know about?
Natasha: As a matter of fact, yes, we found something concerning. Nothing with Dale and Jenni, but Gladys...
Pamela: Was the work badly done? Or late? She's had a lot on her plate lately.
Natasha: No, this week's deliverables were on time. But...in reviewing Gladys' work, the findings were odd. Cell culture and vaccine formulation results across the board were so different from what was coming up in previous studies. More efficacy and higher safety ratings.

Script
Pamela: (chuckles) Well, that's good, right?
Natasha: Yes, it is, if the information is valid and the test was done with proper samples, controls, data, and analysis. But...take a look at this (shows Pamela a few sheets of comparison).
Pamela (LS): (looks at sheets for a few moments). You're right, this doesn't make sense. How could the safety percentage and efficacy percentage change so drastically? Most of the same controls and samples were used, in the same amounts and in the same administrations across the various cell cultures.
Natasha: I did some additional analyses but can't make these numbers add up. Maybe Gladys was in a hurry and inadvertently duplicated some old results? Or… you don't think she would have made up these data, do you?
Pamela (LS): Oh, I hope not! If fabrication, if that's what this is, were to go undetected, bad information could get circulated and lives could be lost. But I can't explain this pattern either.
Natasha: So...we're seriously talking about possible data fabrication?

Screen 35: (Scenario #4, Question 1): Research Misconduct – Data Fabrication

Pamela and Natasha suspect that Gladys has engaged in data fabrication. What is the definition of data fabrication?

A. Conducting research on human subjects without proper informed consent or animal research without proper ethical approval.
B. Failing to disclose financial, personal, or professional conflicts of interest that could potentially bias the research or its interpretation.
C. Creating made-up data or results and presenting them as genuine.
D. Manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented.

Answer Choice	Audio Script (Feedback)
C (Correct)	Correct.
Incorrect Answers	The correct answer is C.

Explanatory Feedback (played at the end of the Correct and Incorrect feedback)	Data fabrication is creating made-up data or results and presenting them as genuine.

Screen 36: (Scenario #4, Question 2): Research Misconduct – Data Fabrication

Match the research misconduct type to its definition.

Fabrication: Creating made-up data or results and presenting them as genuine.

Falsification: Manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented.

Plagiarism: Appropriating someone else's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.

Answer Choice	**Audio Script (Feedback)**
All Correct Matches	Good! You matched everything correctly. Fabrication, Falsification, and Plagiarism are all forms of research misconduct.
1 or more Incorrect Matches	You did not match everything correctly. The correct matches are: – Fabrication: Creating made-up data or results and presenting them as genuine. – Falsification: Manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented. – Plagiarism: Appropriating someone else's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.
Explanatory Feedback (played at the end of the	Other research behaviors that do not fall under the official definition of research misconduct but warrant concern are:

correct and incorrect feedback)	• Misrepresentation: providing false or misleading information about qualifications, affiliations, funding sources, or other aspects of the research, and • Conflict of interest: failing to disclose financial, personal, or professional conflicts of interest that could potentially bias the research or its interpretation. The course resources page has information about other types of research concerns.

Screen 37: (Narrator with accompanying graphics): Lesson Review & Next Lesson Set-Up

We've come to the end of the lesson. There's been a lot to take in.

You've learned the factors that indicate a performance issue and those that indicate misconduct. You've also learned that misconduct can be general or related to non-compliance, and that each category is treated differently.

While both performance issues and misconduct involve employee behavior that deviates from expectations, the difference lies in intent, impact, circumstances, attitude, and repeated patterns.

With time and experience, you'll become increasingly comfortable distinguishing between performance issues and misconduct, even when situations are gray.

We've also covered scientific integrity and its importance not just for laboratories, but across CDC offices. As a laboratory supervisor, your awareness of possible research misconduct and how to handle it is crucial to upholding ethical and quality standards.

The next lesson is titled Roles and Responsibilities in Holding Federal Employees Accountable for Conduct and Performance Issues. In it, you'll learn more about your responsibilities as a supervisor, how employees are held accountable when their performance or conduct fall short of expectations, and how other offices within CDC can support you in your supervisory role related to performance and conduct management.