Writing Policy Statements for the University of Oregon Policy Library

The UO Policy Library was created to provide a central location for controlled high-level documents which influence the management and operations of the entire University. It also serves as a reference point for a wide variety of other documents which may originate at the federal, state, college, school, or administrative department level.

To ensure a uniform approach to developing documentation for the Policy Library, the following information is intended to make the policy-writing process easier while also ensuring a consistent format for policies.

What is a controlled document and why is it necessary?

Controlled documents are high-level documents which require a standard format and may require periodic review and revision. The content cannot be altered except through a formal revision or update process. Following the proper procedures for controlled documents ensures that the most recent copy of a document is available and that obsolete versions are withdrawn. The Policy Library will be the caretaker for University of Oregon's highest level of controlled documents, Policy Statements, to ensure:

- Policy Statements go through the proper approval process prior to publication.

- Policy Statements are clearly stated and made available to the University community.
- Policy Statements are reviewed and updated whenever necessary.
- Policy statements are in the correct format and tracking of revisions is maintained.

Is it a policy statement, unit statement, procedure, or guideline?

Only formalized policies will be found in the Policy Library but often there are procedures or guidelines attached to those policies. In addition, separate organizations within the University of Oregon may also publish their own documentation and it may be in the form of policies, procedures, or guidelines. Before writing a document, it is best to determine what category it will fit into and the following definitions will give some insight to which you are attempting to develop.

- **Policy:** A high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and high-level procedures of an organization with intentions to influence and determine decisions, actions, and other matters. Policies are characterized by indicating "what" needs to be done rather than how to do it. Such statements have the force of establishing rights, requirements and responsibilities. Policies are stated in broad terms.
- **University of Oregon Policy Statement**: Set of basic principles or rules formulated and enforced by the University of Oregon Executive Leadership Council to direct effective management and operation of the institution. All UO Policy Statements must adhere to the requirements as stated in the policy, Policy Statements: Development and Management *(http://policies.uoregon.edu/policy/by/1/01-administration-and-governance/development-and-management-university-oregon-policy-sta)*.
- **Unit Policy**: Policies or rules that apply to a particular organization within the University such as a school, college, centers, or administrative department. It does not affect the overall University community but only those within the unit.   Although it is strongly suggested that Unit Policies follow the same format as Policy Statements, the responsible organization is charged with publishing the information on the pertinent website and providing the Policy Library with the link.
- **Procedure**:   Fixed, step-by-step sequence of activities or course of action (with definite start and end points) that must be followed in the same order to correctly perform a task or to implement established policies. Procedures contain the specific details required to implement a policy statement; whereas, policy statements are stated in broader terms.
- **Guideline**: Any document that aims to streamline particular processes according to a set routine. *Following guidelines is not mandatory.*

Appointing a Policy Statement Owner

The organization responsible for initiating the policy statement is the Responsible Office. The Responsible Office should select a Policy Owner for each Policy Statement. A Policy Owner is the individual who is given the responsibility by the policy's Responsible University Officer to develop, review, edit, and maintain the policy. In the development of a policy, the owner may call upon the assistance of a formalized committee. The Policy Owner will also be the point of contact in regards to interpretation of the policy, and questions or feedback from the University community. In addition to the Responsible

Officer, the Policy Owner will be named on the policy statement.

Policy Concept Approval

Prior to the creation of a Policy Statement, a policy concept form must be submitted to the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost for review and approval. The purpose of creating a policy concept is to assist the Responsible Office with making a thoughtful review and assessment of what is needed to develop and implement new UO Policy Statements. Once completed, the Policy Concept Form must be submitted for review and approval to the Vice President or Senior Vice Provost for that area. It will then be submitted to the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost for review and approval. Once the policy concept has been approved, the Policy Library (PL) Program Manager will notify the Responsible Office and the Senate Executive Committee that policy development may begin. The PL Program Manager will notify other relevant personnel that the policy is being developed and will post concept information in the Policy Library. The Policy Concept Form is available online in the Policy Library website found at: http://policies.uoregon.edu/

Creating the Policy Statement

The following information serves as a guide for filling out the specific sections of the policy statement template which is entitled *Policy Development Form*.

A common mistake made by Policy Owners is to include unnecessary narrative. Policy Statements should be direct and include information that relates to the policy only. It should not include lengthy explanations of the history behind the creation of the policy, statistics, or lengthy details of why policy was created.

Selecting a Title for a Policy Statement:

When selecting a title for your document:

- Keep it short and succinct.
- Make sure it reflects the objective of the policy.
- Do not state the obvious. Policy Statements will apply to the University of Oregon or campus and all documents included in the Policy Library will be policies.
  - ✓ *Example: The University of Oregon Policy for the Development and Management of Policy Statements. Better: Policy Statements: Development and Management.*
  - ✓ *Example: Campus Fundraising. Better: Fundraising.*
- If the policy is a unit policy, the title or website should reflect it. The website housing unit policies should be titled "Unit Policies." Example: Graduate School Unit Policies and Procedures
- Ensure that it is easy to find in an alphabetical list.
  Example: Scheduling of Facilities. Better: Facilities Scheduling.

Preamble

The Preamble is a short introduction to the policy. It should be brief and to the point.

Reason for Policy

This section will explain why the policy exists. It should be brief, approximately one paragraph. This section should acknowledge reasons such regulatory requirements, changes in business, or new programs.

Definitions

This is an alphabetical listing of term definitions which bring more understanding to the policy statement.

Example: Policy Library – Official repository for University of Oregon Policy Statements and online access portal to Unit Policies and Procedures [http://policies.uoregon.edu].

Policy Statement

The policy statement section of the document has a very important purpose because it is going to explain the intent of the policy, who it will apply to and who is the responsible office. It deals with the principle rather than how it will be applied. The application process should be addressed in an attached procedure or guideline.

Statements within this section should be short and precise and use simple language that is easily understood by everyone. Historic information should not be included nor should procedures or guidelines.

Exclusions and Special Situations

The information in this section should address unique circumstances.

Example: (*From Facilities Scheduling Policy) This policy does not apply to facilities that are primarily used by the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics. See OAR 571-011-0025. This policy applies to use of all other Facilities for non-instructional uses.*

Procedures

Policies are often supported by documented procedures or guidelines. The more detailed information found in procedures or guidelines supports the more broadly stated information found in the policy. Therefore, documents which support the implementation of the policy should be identified in the Procedures section with links to the actual document included. Policy owners should review the links periodically to ensure they are functioning.

Forms/Instructions/Regulations

Any forms, instructions, or regulations tied to the Policy Statement should be listed in this section with a link attached. This may include University forms, Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR), Oregon University System policies (OUS), federal laws or forms, and other pertinent information from another source. Policy owners should review the links periodically to ensure they are functioning.

Who is Governed by this Policy

This section contains a broad statement identifying who this policy statement applies to.

Who Should Know this Policy

In addition to those who are affected by the policy, this section should also contain a broad statement regarding who will implement the policy and who it may indirectly affect.

Policy Number

A policy number will be assigned by the Office of Senior Vice President and Provost prior to placing the policy statement in the Policy Library.

Terminology

To ensure a complete understanding of mandatory requirements verses suggested procedures, the difference between verbiage such as "should" or "will" and "must" or "may" needs to be taken into consideration.

Policy Statements should contain broad statements rather than details. The details of a policy statement should be included in attached procedures or guidelines.

Whenever possible, do not use specific identifiers such as product or brand names.

If acronyms are used, spell them out the first time they are used.   *(back to top)*

Format for Attached Documents

In order for attached documents to be more easily retrieved, it is suggested that they be saved in a .PDF format when possible.   *(back to top)*

Dates as Reference Points

All policy statements contained within the Policy Library will have a revision history tied to a date. It makes tracking documents easier. It is suggested that when a unit creates or revises a document within their website, each document (policy, procedure, guidelines) contains a revision date at either the top of the document or the bottom. This reference date ensures that the most current copy of the document is posted and that reviews of documents can be scheduled consistently.   *(back to top)*

Policy Assistance

If you need assistance developing a policy, feel free to call the Policy Library Program Manager, Kathy Warden, at 541-346-3531 or email kathyw@uoregon.edu .   *(back to top)*

Quick Guide to Policy Statement Development

Title	• Short and Succinct • Reflects objective • Doesn't include obvious verbage such as policy, UO, Campus • If policy is a Unit Policy, it should be reflected in the document or website title • Easy to find in alphabetical list
Reason for Policy	• Why the policy exists • Brief, one paragraph
Definitions	• Term definitions that assist in understanding the policy statement
Policy Statement	• Explains intent of policy in broad statements • Who policy will apply to • Reponsible Office • Precise and easy to understand • If acronyms are used, first instance should be spelled out • Does not include historic information or procedures or guidelines
Exclusions and Special Situations	• Addresses unique circumstances
Procedures	• Links to documents supporting the policy such as procedures or guidelines • Ensure links are accurate • Check links periodically to ensure they have not been broken
Forms/ Instructions/Regulations	• Contains links to forms or instructions associated with the policy statement • Ensure links are accurate • Check links periodically to ensure they have not been broken
Who is Governed by This Policy	• Who does the policy statement specifically apply to?
Who Should Know About This Policy	• Who does this policy specifically apply to? • Who is involved with implementation of the policy statement? • Who may be indirectly affected by the policy statement?
Cross-Reference to Related Policies	• A list of informational links which supports the policy statement • Ensure links are accurate • Check links periodically to ensure links have not been broken

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