

## University Policy Process Policy Development Checklist

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The University Policy Office (UPO) has designed the Policy Development Checklist to assist you develop or revise university policy. This document provides a basic framework to follow as you navigate through the policy process.

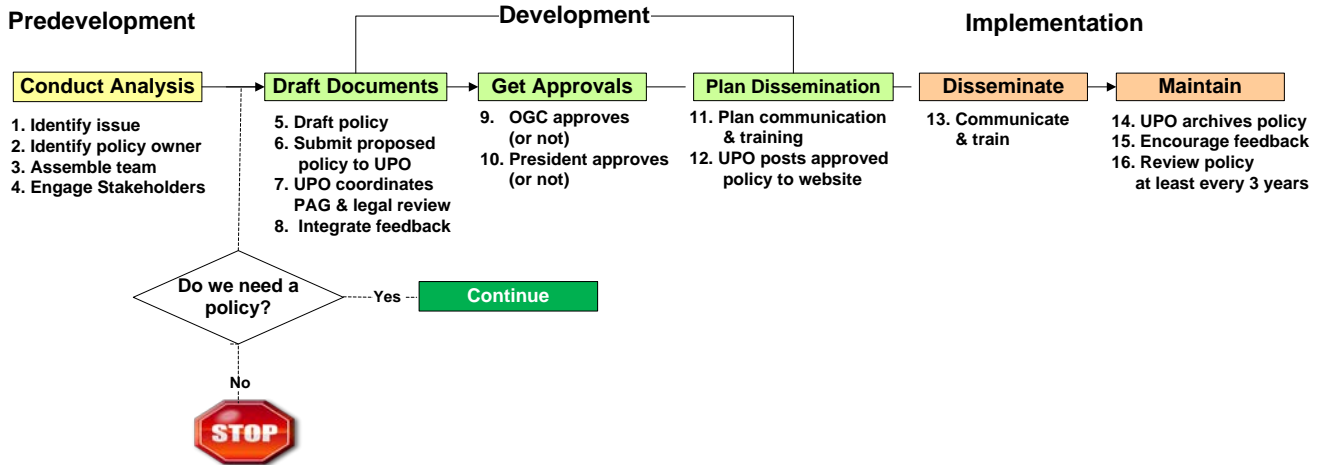
Policy development is a dynamic and cyclical process that requires planning, collaboration, and patience. The process is designed to ensure university policies undergo comprehensive review and meet certain standards. If you have any questions about the policy process, please contact Paulette Jones at [paulette.jones@unt.edu](mailto:paulette.jones@unt.edu) or (940) 565-4535.

### What is the Standard for University Policies?

The University seeks to have policies that are:

- Easy to Understand  
Policies reflect the “rules” governing the implementation of university processes and should be written using simple, clear, concise language that can be well-understood by everyone in the community, including non-subject matter experts.
- Organized  
Policies should clearly differentiate between “policy,” “procedure,” and other appropriate headings within the section. This will allow members of the university community to make a distinction between what is university policy and what is not.
- Consistent with Existing Policies  
Policies should use consistent terminology and complement (not conflict) with each other.
- Reflective of Current Law  
Policies that are derived from laws and regulations must be reviewed regularly to ensure the university is in compliance with current federal and state requirements.
- Reflective of Best Practice  
Policies support the university’s mission, initiatives, and strategic goals and should use cost-effective and efficient operating methods that reflect industry best practices.

University policies may be developed using the following process\*:



\*The timeframe between the predevelopment and implementation phases will vary from policy to policy.

**Predevelopment**

**1. Identify the issue.** Identifying the issue is a necessary and crucial first step. Issues may emerge from trends within an operational unit, through federal or state legislation or regulation, as a result from an incident on campus, or in a variety of other ways. A well-defined, clearly stated issue will help you determine a solution and develop the substantive procedures needed for successful policy implementation.

\_\_\_\_\_ Are there new mandates, Regents Rules, or changes in best practice that require a policy change or new policy to be written?

\_\_\_\_\_ Can this issue be integrated with or addressed by other policies or documents?  
(If so, do not write a new policy. Contact the policy owner to discuss the identified issue.)

**UPO Tip #1:**

*Issues surrounding policies are usually complex and multifaceted. In some cases, there is intense disagreement on how serious the issue is or what can be done about it. If you're uncertain about the scope of the issue, talk with stakeholders, peer institutions and individuals at all levels of the university to get a broader perspective of the issue.*

2. **Identify policy owner(s).** Since policies often require a commitment of resources, all university policies must have a policy owner. The policy owner is responsible for implementing, communicating, reviewing, updating, and monitoring policies that fall under his or her operational area for compliance and effectiveness. The policy owner(s) decides if the identified issue requires policy action or not.

\_\_\_\_\_ Have we identified the policy owner(s)? Who is the contact person(s) for this policy?

\_\_\_\_\_ Has the policy owner approved the request to create or revise the policy?  
(Approval is obtained when the policy owner, typically the unit VP, signs the Administrative Policy Planning Worksheet).

**UPO Tip #2:**

*Be sure to get direction from the policy owner before you write or revise a policy. Given the scope of their responsibilities (and finite resources), the policy owner can help you narrow or expand your list of policy options.*

3. **Assemble a team.** Establish a small workgroup to assist with policy development. Involve individuals with topical and process expertise, policy users, those impacted by policy, and others.

\_\_\_\_\_ What are the industry best practices?

\_\_\_\_\_ What resources may be required to effectively implement the proposed policy?

\_\_\_\_\_ Will the proposed policy conflict with or complement another university policy?

\_\_\_\_\_ Did we contact UPO to find out if another group is writing a similar or related policy?

**UPO Tip #3:**

*Writing university policy may take longer than you might anticipate. Assemble a team to help you coordinate the many moving parts of the task. Generally, policies developed within a small group are more accurate and clearer than policies written in solitude.*

4. **Engage stakeholders.** Consultation with stakeholders is essential at all stages of policy development. Since university policies have broad application, workgroups should solicit feedback from stakeholders, evaluate it and, where appropriate, integrate it into the policy draft.

\_\_\_\_\_ Who are the stakeholders?

\_\_\_\_\_ What units may be impacted by the proposed policy?

\_\_\_\_\_ How and when will we solicit feedback from stakeholders?

**UPO Tip #4:**

*Generally, members of the university want to comment on policies that affect them. The collection of ideas and reactions (both positive and negative reactions) at the initial stages of policy development could save time and effort later.*

**Development**

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5. **Draft policy.** Develop the policy draft using benchmark and best practice information, stakeholder feedback, and direction from the policy owner.

\_\_\_\_\_ Is the proposed policy written using clear and concise language?

\_\_\_\_\_ Are specialized or unfamiliar terms in the policy defined?

\_\_\_\_\_ Is your use of terminology consistent with related university policies?

\_\_\_\_\_ Have forms (or associated documents) been created or updated to correspond with the proposed policy change?

\_\_\_\_\_ Did we consider stakeholder feedback?

**UPO Tip #5:**

*University policies are intended to address policy at a high level. Internal administrative procedures should generally not be part of the policy. Consider pulling out the administrative procedures and placing them into a separate document that can be linked to from the policy.*

6. **Submit policy draft to the University Policy Office (UPO).** When the final policy draft is complete, submit it to UPO. UPO reviews for quality control purposes and may provide preliminary comments as to the completeness, clarity, consistency, style, and format of the proposed policy.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Is the proposed policy in the template format?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is the Administrative Policy Planning Worksheet complete (with signature from the appropriate vice president)?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Did we highlight changes or use “track changes” so that proposed changes are apparent?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Did we provide UPO with the latest policy draft, associated documents, and any specific questions to guide feedback (if desired)?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have we informed UPO of the desired effective date (see approval form)?  
*(Note: The approval date is the effective date unless indicated otherwise).*

**UPO Tip #6:**

*When a policy draft is submitted to UPO, it undergoes multiple reviews. To expedite the review process, be sure to complete the necessary paperwork and conduct the appropriate analyses before the policy draft is submitted.*

7. **UPO coordinates PAG and Legal review.** For tracking purposes, UPO coordinates review by the Office of General Counsel (OGC), the Executive Cabinet, and/or the Policy Advisory Group (PAG).

**UPO Tip #7:**

*The policy process is designed to ensure policies align with the university’s mission, are legally sufficient, and written using simple and concise language. Although the process takes time, the rigorous review helps to balance the intentions of the policy writer with the needs of various stakeholders and members of the university community.*

8. **Integrate feedback.** Revise the policy draft using feedback from OGC, PAG & the Executive Cabinet.

**UPO Tip #8:**

*Remember to keep stakeholders in the loop as you revise the policy to integrate feedback. If substantive changes are required, you may want to inform stakeholders, and solicit further feedback, as appropriate.*

9. **OGC approves policy (or not)**. OGC reviews the proposed policy for legal sufficiency. OGC may approve the proposed policy, ask for additional information, or not approve the proposed policy as it is written.

10. **President approves policy (or not)**. The President may approve the proposed policy, ask for substantial revisions, determine that a policy is not needed on the subject, or not approve the proposed policy as it is written.

11. **Plan communication and training**. Create a plan to communicate and train the university community on the proposed policy. This typically includes communications to all stakeholders, individuals who are expected to carry out or enforce the policy, and administrators.

\_\_\_\_\_ How (and when) will we communicate the new policy or policy changes to the university community?

**UPO Tip #9:**

*The timing of policy implementation should be a deliberate and strategic decision. Consider developing a communications plan for the policy roll-out.*

12. **Post to website**. UPO posts the new or revised policy to the University Policy Web site on the effective date.

**Implementation**

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13. **Communicate and train**. The policy owner communicates and trains according to communications plan.

14. **UPO archives policy**. Upon final approval, UPO archives the superseded or deleted policy.

15. **Encourage feedback**. Encourage and collect feedback about existing policies for use in the next policy revision. Retain for the next revision of the policy.

\_\_\_\_\_ How will policy feedback received during implementation be collected and tracked?

16. **Review policy**. The policy owner reviews, updates, or confirms policies as current on a 3 year cycle.