

**University Policy: Policy on Policies and Procedures**

**Policy Category:** Operational Policies -- University

**Subject:** Writing, Issuing and Maintaining University Policies

**Office Responsible for Review of this Policy:** General Counsel’s Office

**Procedures:** n/a

**Related University Policies:** n/a

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**I. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all University departments, offices and programs and addresses the process for developing, issuing and maintaining all Suffolk University policies and procedures except for Board policies and procedures, the provisions of the Faculty Handbook, school-specific faculty procedural manuals, and school-specific and department-specific academic standards.

**II. POLICY STATEMENT**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Suffolk University has well-developed and understandable university policies which are readily accessible to the Suffolk community. Policies that are easy to find, read and understand will:

- 1. Support the University’s mission.
- 3. Provide faculty, staff and students with clear, concise guidelines.
- 2. Enhance accountability by clearly identifying the offices responsible for Policies.
- 4. Document the practices and procedures under which University conducts business.

University policies will be:

- 1. Presented in a common format.
- 2. Approved by the authorized body or official.
- 3. Maintained centrally and accessible to all relevant parties.
- 4. Linked electronically, where applicable, to procedures for implementing the policy.
- 5. Kept current, reviewed and revised periodically pursuant to this policy.

Policies will be clearly distinguished from related procedures according to the definitions in section III below.

Internal procedures that apply to the operations of individual units or departments may not conflict with University-wide policy.

*Special Note:* Many University policies pre-date this policy. Those policies are grandfathered until such time as they are reviewed according to a schedule developed by the General Counsel's Office in consultation with other offices. At that time, the respective grandfathered policy is required to comply with this policy.

### **III. DEFINITIONS**

*Policy:* A policy is a statement of institutional philosophy and direction, established to provide guidance and assistance to the University community in the conduct of University affairs. A University policy:

- is a governing principle that mandates or constrains actions,
- has broad institutional application,
- generally changes infrequently and sets a course for the foreseeable future,
- helps insure compliance with applicable laws and regulations,
- helps manage institutional risk, and
- is approved at the appropriate level of university leadership (Board, president, provost, senior vice presidents).

*Procedure:* A procedure is a guideline or series of interrelated steps or process required to accomplish policies and institutional business.

University procedures:

- should identify and link to the applicable university policy,
- should be written in a format that is easy to follow using numbers or bullets to delineate steps to be followed, and
- should be reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure compliance with the most recent revision to the policy and current University practices as well as applicable law.

*Policy Owner:* The Policy Owner is the appropriate University officer (Board, president, provost, vice president) whose jurisdiction covers the subject matter of the policy.

*Stakeholder:* Stakeholders are university community members who are affected by the university policy being developed.

### **IV. POLICY**

#### **A. Policy Development**

University management is responsible for monitoring issues that may necessitate a new policy or a policy revision. Issues can arise as a result of federal, state, or local legislation or regulation; incidents or trends that emerge within or outside of the university; a shift in university values or priorities; concerns raised by the university community; or a host of other reasons. Some issues may be better addressed through training and/or improved communication strategies rather than a new university-wide policy.

1. Policy Owner or their designee will develop a draft Policy or revise a current Policy (“Draft”) for which they proactively seek input from appropriate members of the university community knowledgeable about the subject including legal and, if appropriate, faculty senate review (but not approval). If a Policy involves compliance with regulatory issues, the Office of General Counsel must review the initial draft.
2. After review and input, the draft policy will be submitted to the Senior Staff for recommendation to the president or appropriate SVP/VP for final approval.
3. Once the policy is approved, the Policy Owner will forward an electronic copy to the Policy Website Administrator.
4. The Policy Website Administrator will maintain copies of approved university policies and policy revisions and place an electronic copy on the University’s Policy website.
5. The Policy Administrator also notifies responsible parties when particular policies are scheduled for review or revision and is available to work with the responsible parties during any phase of the policy development process, including, if applicable, implementation of a training schedule.
6. The Policy Owner or their designee is ultimately responsible for training, education and interpretation of the Policy for those affected by the Policy.
7. The Policy Owner or their designee is responsible for announcing and communicating the Policy to those directly affected by the Policy and to broader Suffolk community (*for example through Inside Suffolk*).
8. As identified in the particular policy, the responsible office will monitor compliance and, as appropriate.

## **B. Policy Format**

A standard policy format ensures clarity and consistency. Although not all policies will contain all of the format elements, University policies will be written and maintained generally following the format described below:

1. **Header information:** (mandatory element)
  - a) University policy name.
  - b) Policy category.
  - c) Subject.
  - d) Policy Owner.
  - e) Designated Office responsible for review.
  - f) Procedures link(s), if applicable.
  - g) Related university policy link(s), if applicable.
2. **Scope:** (mandatory element) Identification of parties governed by the policy.
3. **Policy Statement:** (mandatory element) Purpose of the policy and the statement of philosophy, position, rule, regulation or direction.
4. **Definitions:** (optional element) Meaning and interpretation of terms used in the policy.
5. **Policy:** (mandatory element) Description of the actual policy covering topics which include: duties assigned to responsible parties and other parties as necessary; other information specific to a particular policy subject as needed; and a description of the compliance review process and specific authority to impose penalties or other remedies when noncompliance occurs, if applicable.
6. **Effective Date(s):** (mandatory element) Initial effective date of policy, revision history, and latest revision date, if applicable.
7. **Frequency of review and update:** (optional element) Measure of time during which the policy must be reviewed and updated. It is recommended that a policy be reviewed biennially, unless changes in laws or university business needs require a different review/revision schedule.
8. **Signature, title, and date of approval:** (mandatory element) Required for initial approvals and all subsequent reviews and updates.

### C. Location of Policies

TBA

### D. Systematic University Policy Review

The Owner of any document subject to this policy must ensure that the document is reviewed at the appropriate time (generally no less than every 3 years). Documents may also be reviewed sooner than 3 years as needed and as deemed appropriate.

If no substantive changes are required, the Policy owner may present an updated draft to the Senior Staff of the University for approval.

If substantive changes are required; the policy must go through the process above for approving a University policy.

#### **E. Establishing an interim policy**

When a policy or policy revision is needed in a timeframe that does not allow for the full feedback and approval process due to regulatory, accreditation, or other urgent needs, it can be proposed to Senior Staff as an interim policy. Interim policies may be in place for up to 9 months, unless a longer period is authorized by the President. The interim policy should normally undergo the complete policy process within 9 months of its issuance.

#### **F. Structure and Organization of University Policies**

The University Policies web site will list all policies by name and category and will provide links to related procedures. Policies will be assigned to one or more of the following categories each of which is followed by the presumed policy owner or designee:

1. **Governance Policies** – Umbrella policies that provide the framework for administration to implement and comply with the intent of the Board of Trustees. [President]
2. **Operational Policies** – Policies that are of a general administrative or operational nature regarding the University as a whole. [President]
  - a. **Ethics, Integrity and Legal Compliance Policies** – Policies concerning appropriate conduct and/or compliance with the law. [Board and President]
  - b. **Risk Management and Environmental Health and Safety Policies**– Policies concerning security and safety of faculty, staff, students, and guests. [Risk Management]
  - c. **Internal Administrative Policies** – Policies that relate to the administration or operational nature regarding the internal functions of sub-parts of the University. [SVP F&A]
  - d. **Information Technology Policies** – Policies that cover systems, access, data, and related issues. [CIO]
  - e. **Financial Policies** - Policies related to accounting, budgeting, procurement, travel and other financial functions. [SVP F&A]
  - f. **Facilities, Equipment, and Property Policies** – Policies concerning the use and care of university property. [SVP F&A]

- g. **Public Safety Policies** – Policies related to the activities of the University police and all compliance issues related to those areas. [Director of Public Safety]
  - h. **Sustainability Policies** – Policies promoting development and growth without significant deterioration of the environment and depletion of natural resources. [SVP F&A]
3. **Academic/Research Policies** – Policies that relate to teaching, research and outreach. [Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost]
  4. **Student Policies** - Policies applicable to status as a student. [Vice President for Student Affairs]
  5. **Employment, Benefits, and Workplace Policies** – Policies, rules, and related procedures impacting working relationships with the University for all groups of employees. [Chief HR Officer]

#### **V. EFFECTIVE DATE(S)**

This Policy is effective February 1, 2021.