

We need a policy about that...

Tips on Policy Development for Managers

Step 1: We need a policy ---- Or do we?

Does the situation call for a policy?

- *Or is it an internal procedural issue?*
- *Or a performance (people) or implementation (systems) issue?*
- *Or just plain old unpredictable bad luck, calamity, or the perfect storm?*

Note: If an applicable policy or current policy does not address the situation, it still may not need a new or rewritten policy; it may just need flexibility.

Note: Avoid the tendency to “policy for particulars”.

Note: Current policies are not the “holy grail;” this is the test run phase.

Step 2: Identify stakeholders

Stakeholders are:

- people whom the change will affect.
 - people without whose support or agreement the change will not work .
 - people whose expertise is imperative to understanding how the current system works and to determining what, if anything, to change.
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- **Only after going through steps 1 & 2 are you ready to develop a successful policy.**

Step 3: Overview

Overview:

- What are the central issues/situations this policy will address?
- What specific problems need to be resolved (or prevented from occurring)?
- To what or whom does this policy apply?
- Is upper management ready to support the policy and its development?

Step 4: Resource Identification and Involvement

Resource Identification:

- Determine the extent and timing of stakeholders' role/ involvement – by class or category.
 - Who is involved in initial discussions?
 - Who determines the policy's direction and scope?
 - Does the stakeholder's input/involvement shift? When?
- To what extent and when will you seek input from those affected?
- Now that you know who has knowledge and expertise, design a plan for using those resources in policy development.

Step 5: Outline

Outline:

- It is important to organize issues related to the policy.
- An outline is essential for complicated policies (e.g. Facilities Use Policy and Copyright Policy) to keep the writer out of the weeds, and very helpful with less complex policies.
- What is policy and what is procedure? Nebulous concept; varies with subject. Review current policies for guidance/examples.
- Why distinguish? Procedure is sometimes easier to revise than policy and causes less uncertainty.

Step 6: Implementation Plan

Implementation Plan - 2 Aspects:

- What must happen to ensure successful policy development? (stakeholder contributions; drafting; review; presentation to COO direct reports, Deans & EC; Chancellor or BOT approval; web posting and EFE circulation)
- What must be in place to make the policy WORK? (i.e., what has to happen “on the ground”)
- Careful development of this plan saves **enormous** time and energy down the road.

Step 6: Implementation Plan (Cont.)

What must happen to ensure successful policy development and passage?

- Stakeholder contributions – gathering, delegating tasks, drafting.
- Draft review (initial review may be more narrow than later).
- What additional information is relevant when presenting policy for review and approval?
- Get on BOT agenda if applicable (See Statement on Policies).
- Final approved version to Amanda Balwah in Word format.
- Prepare and submit policy summary for EFE circulation.

Step 6: Implementation Plan (Cont.)

What must be in place to make the policy WORK?

- Does the policy's procedure require completing specific forms?
If so, who develops those and ensures that they are available?
- Is the office that will be furnishing, reviewing and receiving the form in the loop?
- Do a dry run of the procedure to check to see that it works. ***Stakeholders are key in this step.***

Specific Issues: Why do I have to do it that way?

- Introduce template (<http://policy.uncsa.edu/>)
- Why use the template?
 - Policy manual uniformity
 - Enhances user ease and comfort
 - Helps organize the material

Specific Issues: Template

- Source of Authority: check w/ legal
- Authority: Who can revise? Chancellor or BOT? See Statement on Policies for guidance.
- History: Is this the first time this policy exists? Or are you revising an old policy? If so, add the revision date after the “first issued” date.
- Related policies: Scan the table of contents to try to identify related policies; legal will help.
- Responsible Offices: What areas of our school are responsible for oversight, implementation, etc. ?

Specific Issues: Template

- **Effective date:** Date of Approval or Date of Implementation
- **Purpose:** Use your overview to guide you.
 - Don't begin with: "the purpose of this policy" - just state the purpose. Ex: This policy governs use of campus facilities...
 - **Scope:** To whom or to what functions does this policy apply?
 - "This policy applies to all SPA employees."

Specific Issues: Template (cont)

- **Definition section:**

- Generally, words have their common meaning, but be open to identifying ambiguity. Ex: is a day 24 hours or a business day?
- If a word or term has a special meaning in the policy (ex: external activity for pay), or if the word or phrase is unique to the policy (ex: Class A activities), define it.
- Use the format in the manual. Ex: “Abbreviation” means..... Not “In this policy ‘abbreviation ‘ refers to the”

Specific Issues: Template

- **Policy:**

- This is the meat of your document.
- Don't define terms in the policy section; use the definition section for that.
- Use your outline to organize your material.
- Use outline format. If you find that you are down to the third level or lower under a particular section, that may be a clue that you have wandered into procedure when writing your policy.

Revision History: Most of our policies don't have much of this yet. If drafting new policy, simply add : Approved by (Chancellor/ BOT) on (Date). If revising existing policy, add a tagline briefly stating the revision, if possible. (E.g., Revised to include health risks of illegal drugs ; Approved by BOT on (Date)).

Specific Issues: Template

- Procedures
 - Distinguish between procedures that everyone needs to know about and procedures with internal steps applicable to (and relevant to) one division only. (Ex: After EC policy approval, the GC will send an electronic copy of the approved policy to her assistant. Her assistant will check the references in the policy and will inform the GC when the policy is ready to post on the web.)
 - Use the headings from the policy section of the template to organize your procedures as appropriate; this helps the reader find the right section.

Specific Issues: Drafting Tips

- **Look at the policy manual to get an idea of writing style; drafting in a manner similar to other policies will save you time down the road.**
- Flag any reference to forms to ensure that you do not overlook developing them.
- Redline makes some folks crazy; consider redlining only substantive changes if you are making extensive changes to an existing policy.

Specific Issues: Drafting Tips (cont)

- Keep a running “executive summary” of your proposed changes or proposed policy provisions, reasons therefore, and stakeholder input. This will save you from the “gee-I-know-we-had-a-reason-but-I-don’t-remember – what-it-was” moment.

Specific Issues: Drafting tips (cont)

- **Eschew passive voice. Period.**
- **Why?** Because passive voice generally takes more words and often enables the writer to omit identifying the actor. Thus, the policy states that a certain action is to occur but does not assign responsibility for doing it. The result is like a broken link on the web --- we get nowhere.

Specific Issues: Drafting Tips (cont)

What is passive voice?

Passive Voice

WORDY:

- The form required by the business office should be completed by the employee prior to the copy being made by the employee. (22)

RESPONSIBLE PERSON

UNIDENTIFIED:

- The form should be completed.

Active Voice

- Before using the copier, the employee should complete the form the business office requires. (14)
- The vendor should complete the form.

Specific Drafting Issues: Mandatory Language

- Ex: The Provost shall inform..... The COO must respond...
- Use sparingly. Considerations include:
 - How critical is performing the action to the policy's success?
 - How likely is failure to perform the action to occur – through oversight or because of work load, schedules, etc. Ex: faculty manual reconsideration hearing
 - Where should we create some flexibility? Consider phrases like “within a reasonable time (generally x days)” **or** the “COO should respond...”