

DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF UNIVERSITY POLICIES

POLICY SUMMARY

Northern Arizona University promulgates its official University Policies in accordance with the standards set forth in this Policy. University Policies are maintained in a common format and housed in a centralized online library. All University community members must follow these requirements when proposing, drafting, approving, disseminating, revising, or withdrawing University Policies.

REASON FOR THIS POLICY

Policies are important tools designed to serve, support, and protect the University and its community members. A clear, consistent, standardized process for University Policy development and administration promotes transparency, institutional efficiency, and effectiveness, mitigates risk, and enhances compliance and accountability. A centralized online University Policy Library helps to eliminate duplicative or erroneous documents while enhancing University Policy accessibility, awareness, and ease of use.

ENTITIES AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

- All units of the University community

WHO SHOULD KNOW THIS POLICY

- Anyone interested in proposing, drafting, issuing, revising, or withdrawing a University Policy
- Responsible Executives
- Responsible Offices

DEFINITIONS

Academic Policies: internal directives that establish or guide the University's academic standards or pedagogical mission. Academic Policies are part of the [Academic Catalog](#).

Director for Policy: a member of the Office of the President charged with leading and directing the Policy Advisory Committee, serving as a resource for University Policy developers and administrators, maintaining the University Policy Library, and updating University Policy and Procedure documents as appropriate.

Policy: a formally approved internal directive that imposes duties, obligations, rules, or practices, sets behavioral expectations, or that extends provisions for a member, group or unit of the University community.

Policy Advisory Committee: a standing committee of University officials that advises across campus on and promotes higher education best practices for University Policy development and administration.

Policy Liaisons: members of the Policy Advisory Committee that serve as key advisors, facilitators and advocates for University Policy-related matters originating from or related to their respective areas or units.

Procedures: specific actions or instructions that supplement and serve to implement a University Policy. Many University Policies are associated with Procedures designed to accomplish specific tasks. A University Policy may mandate certain Procedures, or a University department or unit may develop its own informal Procedures to assist with or to support University Policy efficiency, effectiveness, and/or compliance.

Responsible Executive: the senior executive and member of the President's Executive Team that sponsors, creates, implements, ensures compliance with, is responsible for, and continually oversees a University Policy and any associated Procedures within his or her area of jurisdiction. University Policies with broad application may have more than one Responsible Executive.

Responsible Office: the unit charged by a Responsible Executive with developing and administering a University Policy, communicating, and training the University community in its requirements, monitoring and enforcing compliance with, and updating or revising the University Policy as appropriate. The Responsible Office serves as the primary point of contact and advocate for the University Policy.

Unit-Level Policies: policies promulgated by and applicable only at the divisional, college, office, program, or activity level. Neither the Policy Advisory Committee nor the Director for Policy provide support for Unit-Level Policy development or administration. Unit-Level Policies are not housed within the University Policy Library.

University Policies: internal directives that govern the operations of the University or the delivery of its programs or services. University Policies often substantially affect the procedural or substantive rights, duties or obligations of University community members and are housed within the University Policy Library.

POLICY

Section I. – Academic Policy

The Academic Standards Committee of the Faculty Senate is charged with the development and administration of Academic Policies that apply to undergraduate students. The Graduate College's University Graduate Committee is responsible for Academic Policies that pertain to graduate students. Academic Policies are part of Northern Arizona University's Academic Catalog. This University Policy on the development and administration of University Policies does not apply to or govern Academic Policies.

Section II. – University Policy

A. Criteria

University Policies are formally approved internal directives that: 1) support the University's mission and goals; 2) have broad application across one or more of the University's areas or functions; 3) extend provisions for University community members or set behavioral expectations by imposing duties, obligations, mandates or constraints; 4) help achieve compliance with applicable laws and policies; 5) help mitigate institutional risk; 6) are administered on a day-to-day basis by a Responsible Office; 7) are sponsored, recommended for approval, and overseen by a senior Responsible Executive; 8) are reviewed by the President's Executive Team; and 9) are approved by the President or the President's duly authorized designee. University Policies are often accompanied by mandatory Procedures for accomplishing given tasks.

B. Proposing and Sponsoring

Any University employee, office, or unit may propose a new University Policy or University Policy revision for consideration and potential development in accordance with the standards and procedures set forth in this University Policy. Such proposals must be sponsored in writing by the prospective Responsible Executive(s) with jurisdiction after initial consultation with the prospective Responsible Office(s), the appropriate Policy Liaison, the Director for Policy, and the Policy Advisory Committee.

C. Formulating and Drafting

When directed by the Responsible Executive(s) with jurisdiction, the prospective Responsible Office(s) may initiate the process as outlined herein for developing a new, or revising an existing, University Policy. Prospective Responsible Offices, or University Policy drafters working under their direction, must consult with potentially affected stakeholders or their representatives when formulating University Policy concepts and drafting proposed University Policy or Procedure documents to carefully consider the anticipated impact and ramifications. Policy drafters must utilize, to the maximum extent practicable, the University's standardized University Policy and Procedure templates when preparing these documents.

D. Review and Approval

University Policies are approved by virtue of a *University Policy Decision Memorandum* generated by the Director for Policy and routed for signature in the following sequence: i) to the Responsible Office representative; ii) to the Responsible Executive; iii) to the General Counsel; iv) to the Director for Policy; and v) to the President who grants final approval. Following submission of a University Policy approval memorandum signed by the Responsible Office representative and the Responsible Executive, the Office of General Counsel will review the draft materials to ensure appropriate consideration of and compliance with all applicable legal considerations and requirements. Following any resulting adjustments, the Director for Policy will submit the final draft of the proposed University Policy materials to the President for final approval. The General Counsel's signature will indicate that the Office of General Counsel has reviewed and advised regarding the proposed policy. The Director for Policy's signature will indicate the policy materials as presented to the President for final approval comply with all applicable voicing, editing, style, content, quality, and formatting standards necessary ensure a systematic and professionally cohesive University Policy system.

E. Periodic Review

Because University Policies must continually adapt to and reflect changing circumstances, Responsible Executives and Responsible Offices are charged with keeping the University Policies under their jurisdiction current by regularly reviewing and updating, revising or withdrawing their University Policy documents as necessary or appropriate. The Policy Advisory Committee may also issue recommendations for updating, revising, or withdrawing a University Policy as circumstances may warrant.

F. Updating or Revising

1. University Policy updates (as distinct from revisions) are minor corrections to University Policy or Procedure documents that do not alter the University Policy's overall substantive intent or meaning, such as correcting names, titles, addresses, hyperlinks, typographical or grammatical errors, or making minor language improvements to enhance clarity or readability. The Director for Policy updates University Policy documents as needed, which do not trigger the formal re-approval process or require a new revision date. Changes to Procedures or other ancillary documents that do not alter a University Policy's substantive meaning or intent may also be implemented without formal re-approval.
2. University Policy revisions (as distinct from updates) are substantial alterations or amendments to an existing University Policy document designed to implement significant substantive changes in light of changed circumstances or new imperatives. Revising a University Policy requires the same formal approval process as establishing a new University Policy. Responsible Executives and the heads of Responsible Offices are jointly accountable for revising their University Policies as necessary or appropriate. Revised University Policies are appended with a new "Last Revised" date. The Director for Policy will maintain a record of each University Policy's revision history.

G. Dissemination and Training

The Responsible Executive and Responsible Office must ensure that all those affected by a University Policy are afforded with meaningful opportunities to become properly aware of and knowledgeable about its meaning, purpose, intent, requirements, standards, or constraints. The Responsible Office must develop or identify, and provide or make available, appropriate training for all affected parties.

H. Withdrawal and Archiving

Responsible Executives are responsible for rescinding University Policies that are no longer useful, advisable or warranted. The process and approvals for withdrawing a University Policy, and the notice and training requirements, are the same as for enacting a University Policy. The Director for Policy will maintain a perpetual archive of all withdrawn or superseded University Policy materials.

I. Practicality and Minimum Burden

University Policies and their associated Procedures must maximize practicality in their approach while imposing the minimum burden of time, cost or other resource expenditure, training, and complexity.

J. Interim Policies

In circumstances that require an immediate response, Responsible Executives may, with the approval of the President and in coordination with the Responsible Office, implement an interim University Policy on a short-term, provisional basis when time is too limited to allow for the normal University Policy-making process. Special situations that may necessitate an interim University Policy include, without limitation, changes in applicable law or the emergence of a substantial institutional risk. An interim University Policy may remain in force for no more than one year from its date of issuance.

K. Compliance

All members of the University community, including faculty, staff, students, alumni, and volunteers, and all persons or entities who provide services to the University or act in the University's name, including contractors, vendors and consultants, and the public are responsible for knowing and complying with all University Policies applicable to their duties, responsibilities or activities. Responsible Executives and Responsible Offices are charged with ensuring the effective implementation of, and ongoing compliance with, all University Policies.

L. University Policy Library

University Policies are maintained by the Director for Policy and published in a centralized electronic library located at <https://nau.edu/university-policy-library>. All University webpages referencing University Policies must link directly to the University Policy's official University Policy Library landing page. Individual University departments, offices or units may not create or post duplicate University Policy documents. Should a conflict or inconsistency arise between an official University Policy Library document and a copy or version obtained from any other source, the University Policy Library document will govern.

M. Policy Advisory Committee and Policy Liaisons

The Policy Advisory Committee is charged with promoting higher education Policy-making best practices while supporting University Policy proposers, developers, administrators, and stakeholders on all Policy-related questions or issues of concern. Policy Advisory Committee members are appointed by the President. Policy Liaisons act as key advisors, facilitators and advocates for Policy-related matters associated with or originating from their respective areas. Policy Liaisons are appointed by their area's senior executive leader.

Section III. – Policy Hierarchy

The University's Policies exist within a hierarchy of federal and state statutes and regulations, and Arizona Board of Regents ("ABOR") Policy directives. Some ABOR Policies directly control University functions. Others authorize the University to adopt university-level Policies to guide its internal management and affairs. This legal hierarchy is as follows:

1. Federal law, statutes, and regulations
2. State law, statutes, and regulations
3. Arizona Board of Regents policies and procedures
4. University-level policies and procedures
5. Unit-Level (division, college, department, program, or activity) policies and procedures

The University's Policies must comply with all applicable laws and ABOR policies. If a conflict or inconsistency arises between an applicable law and a University Policy, the applicable law will govern. If a conflict or inconsistency arises between an ABOR policy and a University Policy, the ABOR policy will govern. If a conflict or inconsistency arises between a University Policy and a Unit-Level Policy, the University Policy will govern.

Section IV. – Presidential Authority

Nothing in this University Policy shall be construed to limit the President's authority as the institution's chief executive officer to issue, revise, or rescind a University or Unit-Level Policy on an emergency basis when necessary to respond to a new external directive, an emerging risk, or in other extraordinary circumstances.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Director for Policy: chairs the Policy Advisory Committee, assists all parties engaged in University Policy development and administration, and maintains and administers the University Policy Library.

Policy Advisory Committee: advises on the University's system for developing and administering University Policies and serves as a support resource for University Policy-drafters and administrators. The Committee reviews University Policy materials for compliance with applicable guidance and promotes higher education Policy-related best practices. Its members also serve as Policy Liaisons for their respective areas.

Responsible Executives: ensure that University Policies within their jurisdiction are developed and administered in accordance with this Policy and enforce compliance with all University Policies. Responsible Executives identify Policy needs, sponsor meritorious University Policy proposals, designate Responsible Offices to develop new and administer existing University Policies, and ensure that their University Policies are updated, revised, or withdrawn as appropriate.

Responsible Offices: draft prospective University Policy documents, consult with stakeholders, administer University Policies under their jurisdiction on a day-to-day basis, work to ensure Policy compliance, and regularly review and make recommendations for updating or revising their University Policies as appropriate.

PROCEDURES

[Developing a New University Policy](#)

RELATED INFORMATION

Forms or Tools

[Policy Development Process Diagram](#)

[University Policy Impact Statement](#)

[University Policy Proposal Responsible Executive Sponsorship Form](#)

[University Policy Template](#)

Cross-References

[Academic Standards Committee Bylaws](#)

[University Graduate Committee Bylaws](#)

Sources

[Arizona Board of Regents Bylaws](#)

APPENDIX

None.