
Subject: Policy on Policies

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1. Purpose

This policy lists guidelines for the issuance and review of University policies and their inclusion on the University Web Site. The University Web Site is the official repository of University policies and procedures and is maintained by the Office of the Vice President for Policy and Governance.

2. Policy

The University Council and the University Commissions constitute the main resident bodies for UNIVERSITY policy formulation. The University Commissions formulate and recommend policies to the University Council, which in turn makes recommendations to the President of the University. Final authority rests with the President of the University and the Board of Visitors. (See Preface of the University Council Constitution and Bylaws http://www.governance.vt.edu/uc_constitution_and_by-laws.html.)

Only vice presidents have the authority to issue ADMINISTRATIVE policy. Directors and department heads may issue procedures associated with a policy.

Administrators are responsible for the accuracy and timeliness of policies and procedures relating to their areas or departments. This responsibility includes proper notification of changes and updates to these policies and procedures, and conducting a review of policies at least every four (4) years.

The President may approve exceptions to any university policy when it is deemed to be in the best interest of the university, with the exception of matters prescribed by state or federal law or those policies that require approval of the Board of Visitors.

2.1 Policy Management

For the consolidation and standardization of University policies, the University Web Site has been established as the official location of University policies and procedures. This format makes policies and procedures available to the University community in an electronic format, which reduces the need to publish and distribute paper copies.

The Office of the Vice President for Policy and Governance serves as the role of policy manager for the university. Key administrators are responsible for identifying areas of operation within their areas that are in need of new or revised policy or procedure changes, for recommending appropriate policy statements and procedures, and for assuring adherence to established policies and procedures in the conduct of their department's affairs.

The University Web Site includes only those policies and procedures that are generally applicable to more than one office or department of the University. Matters pertaining only to the internal procedures of a given department or office are not considered within the scope of this policy.

3. Procedures

The Office of the Vice President for Policy and Governance will maintain the master list of policies and policy numbers. An approved copy of each policy will be kept on file. An archive of previous versions of policies will be maintained. The policies and procedures will be maintained on the University Web Site, and users may print copies directly from this system.

The procedures to initiate, review, and approve new or revised policies are as follows.

1. The need for a new or revised policy is identified by the appropriate vice president or University Council. Once identified, an initial draft of the required policy should be prepared and submitted to the Vice President for Policy and Governance, who will complete a review to determine the specific requirements of the policy and highlight the presence of any potential conflicts with existing policies or procedures. For guidance on formatting new or revised policies, please refer to the Policy Standards/Style Guide (<http://www.policies.vt.edu/UniversityPoliciesStyleGuide.pdf>). For a template, please refer to the Policy Template (<http://www.policies.vt.edu/UniversityPoliciesTemplate.docx>).
2. The resulting preliminary draft of the new policy or procedure will be circulated for review and comment to those responsible for the subject matter, including approval by Legal Counsel.
3. Files will be maintained by the Office of the Vice President for Policy and Governance that contain pertinent backup materials applicable to the development of each new policy and procedure.
4. Once a final policy has been approved, the policy will be posted on the university web site by the Office of the Vice President for Policy and Governance.
5. Information about new or changed policies may be announced in University publications, through VT News and e-mail messages or released in a memorandum by the administrator responsible for the policy.

3.1 Updates

When changes or updates are made to an existing policy, a red-lined version of the existing policy should be sent to the Vice President for Policy and Governance (well before the effective date of the change), who will seek approval of the changes by Legal Counsel when warranted. The policy will be updated, the date and revision number changed, the revision noted in Section 6.0, and then returned to be approved and released.

Each senior management area is responsible for timely updates to university policies within their respective areas.

4. Definitions

POLICIES are statements of management philosophy and direction, established to provide direction and assistance to the University community in the conduct of University affairs.

PROCEDURES are statements that prescribe specific actions to be taken to conform with established policies -- allowing for the orderly implementation of those policies. These may be approved at the department level.

5. References

University Council Constitution and Bylaws, July 1, 1988, and as revised.
http://www.governance.vt.edu/uc_constitution_and_by-laws.html

Policy Standards/Style Guide
<http://www.policies.vt.edu/UniversityPoliciesStyleGuide.pdf>

Policy Template
<http://www.policies.vt.edu/UniversityPoliciesTemplate.docx>

6. Approval and Revisions

Approved January 14, 1992, by Executive Vice President and Chief Business Officer, Minnis E. Ridenour.

- Revision 1

Changed responsibility for policy management from Administrative Display Manager to Assistant to the Executive Vice President.

Approved October 6, 1998, by the Executive Vice President, Minnis E. Ridenour.

Annual Review December 2, 2001 by the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Minnis E. Ridenour. No revisions.

- Revision 2

May 12, 2008: Updates to position titles and/or responsibilities due to university reorganization.

September 4, 2008: “Assistant Vice President for Administration” position title updated to “Assistant Vice President for Finance” due to university reorganization.

- Revision 3

Minor updates for clarification.

Approved June 14, 2009 by the University President, Charles W. Steger.

- Revision 4

The Office of the Assistant Vice President for Finance changed to the Office of the President, and the Assistant Vice President for Finance changed to the Chief of Staff of the Office of the President, due to reorganization.

Approved June 3, 2013 by the University President, Charles W. Steger.

- Revision 5

Clarifies that the President may approve exceptions to any policy, excluding matters prescribed by state or federal law or those policies that require approval of the Board of Visitors.

In the case of revisions, approval of Legal Counsel will be sought when warranted, and an archive of previous versions of policies will be maintained.

In Section 3, added paragraph on guidance on formatting new or revised policies, to include links to the Policy Standards/Style Guide and the Policy Template.

Approved March 18, 2016 by the University President, Timothy D. Sands.

- Revision 6

Changed responsibility for policy management from the Office of the President to the newly created position of Vice President for Policy and Governance and changed the interval for policy review from annually to at least every four (4) years.

Approved January 18, 2018, by Vice President for Policy and Governance, Kim O'Rourke.