



## Policy on Policies

### No. 1000

**Policy Effective Date:**  
01/14/1992

Last Revision Date:  
04/11/2022

**Policy Owner:**  
Kim O'Rourke

**Policy Author:** *(Contact Person)*  
Dee Harris

**Affected Parties:**  
Undergraduate  
Graduate  
Faculty  
Staff  
Other

**1.0 Purpose**  
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### 1.0 Purpose

All official university policies are formally adopted, promulgated and maintained in a standard format by the university in a web-based policy library. Individuals responsible for formulating, implementing and maintaining university policies must comply with the requirements outlined in this document for drafting, vetting, endorsing and/or approving adoption, amendment or retirement of policies. Faculty, staff, and students are required to follow policies that apply to their respective roles. This policy addresses the issuance and review of UNIVERSITY COUNCIL and ADMINISTRATIVE policies and their publication on the university's governance website.

### 2.0 Policy

Policy Governance is a part of the structure that governs university activities by:

- Ensuring a university-wide approach to the development, establishment, review and communication of policies to ensure relevance, clarity, objectivity, and consistency with internal and external regulations.
- Defining the roles, responsibilities and authorities in relation to the development, establishment and review of policies.

The Office of the Vice President for Policy and Governance (OVPPG) maintains the official repository of university policies and has responsibility for managing the official library of university policies and procedures that is published on the university's governance website.

The University Council and the university commissions constitute the main resident bodies for UNIVERSITY COUNCIL 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](#))

The Board of Visitors also has delegated safety and security policy making authority to the Safety and Security Policy Committee. Policies adopted by this body have the same force as those adopted by the Board of Visitors.

Vice presidents have the authority to issue ADMINISTRATIVE policy without referral to University Council. Administrative policies address operational matters and include policies required for federal, state, or other regulatory and legal mandates. Administrative policies do not address matters that traditionally are primarily within the purview of the faculty, including but not limited to curricular changes, professional ethics and conduct, promotion and tenure, and faculty classes and categories. The OVPPG can provide advice as to whether a policy must be referred to University Council.



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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. The Board of Visitors retains ultimate authority to set university policy.

### 2.1 Policy Management

The OVPPG serves as the policy manager for the university and has responsibility for publishing policies on the university's governance website and maintaining the official university policy archive including the master list of policies and policy numbers, an approved copy of each policy, and all previous versions of policies. The OVPPG administers the policy review lifecycle and coordinates communication of new and revised policies to the university community in association with the policy owner/author.

The university's governance website hosts the official library of university policies and procedures, and users may download and/or print copies directly from this online resource, which reduces the need to publish and distribute paper copies. All online references to these policies should be linked to the university's governance website, rather than storing copies of policies on distributed websites. The university's governance website includes only those policies and procedures that are generally applicable to more than one office or department of the university or are of institution-wide importance. Matters pertaining only to the operations or functions of a given department or office are not considered within the scope of Policy 1000.

Vice presidents are responsible for identifying areas of operation within their purview that are in need of new or revised administrative policies. Vice presidents function as owners of administrative policies relating to their respective senior management area and are responsible for policy development, implementation, and oversight. This includes ensuring the accuracy and timeliness of policies; development and implementation of any related procedures, processes, standards, guidelines, and forms; communication of changes and updates to affected constituencies; training appropriate audiences; enforcing and monitoring compliance with the policy, and conducting a review of policies within their respective area at least every four (4) years. There may be instances where the President is the signatory for a policy in which a Vice President is the owner of a policy that involves other functional areas.

Directors and department heads may be delegated the authority to issue procedures associated with a policy by the respective vice president. Other guidance (guidelines, standards, directives, etc.) that are applicable only to specific departments or units may be developed outside this framework as long as such documents are consistent with higher level university policies and the development of such documents follows the same principles for development, review, approval and promulgation.

### 2.2 Retirement of Policies

In special circumstances, the Vice President/Policy Owner may deem it appropriate to retire an existing policy or consolidate with another policy. The respective Vice President/Policy Owner will send a written request to the OVPPG with a justification for the desired action and reference other policies or procedures that may be impacted. The OVPPG will review the request carefully to determine if additional university vetting and/or review by Legal Counsel is required. The OVPPG will also determine if it is necessary to seek additional approvals through University Council or the Board of Visitors and will initiate that action in consultation with the respective Vice President/Policy Owner. Upon withdrawal or retirement approval, the OVPPG will issue an announcement of a withdrawn policy. The Policy Owner will deliver any additional communication.



### 3.0 Procedures for Administrative Policies

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

1. The need for a new or revised administrative policy is identified by the appropriate Vice President, who functions as the Policy Owner. The Policy Owner designates a Policy Author, who then develops an initial draft of the new policy or red-lined version of the revised policy and circulates it for review and feedback to those responsible for the subject matter. For guidance on policy development, please refer to the [Policy Development Process](#) and for guidance on formatting new or revised policies or to use the policy template, please refer to the [Policy Standards/Style Guide](#).
2. The preliminary draft of the new policy or procedure or the red-lined revision is then submitted to the Vice President for Policy and Governance (VPPG) for review. The VPPG may bring it for review to the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC), an established standing committee of subject matter experts, including Legal Counsel. The role of the PAC is to provide feedback on policy content and highlight the presence of any potential conflicts with existing policies, procedures or regulatory mandates.
3. A final draft incorporating feedback received is developed by the Policy Author and submitted to the VPPG for final review.
4. Once a final policy has been approved, the policy will be posted on the university website by the OVPPG. In the case of a policy revision, the revision date and number will be noted on the policy, the description of the revision will be noted in Section 6.0 of the policy, and the policy will be posted on the university website by the OVPPG.
5. Information about new or changed policies may be announced in university publications, through VT News and e-mail messages, and/or released in a memorandum by the administrator responsible for the policy. The Policy Author will be engaged in providing communication to the respective area within the university.
6. Files will be maintained by the OVPPG that contain pertinent backup materials applicable to the development of each new policy and procedure.

### 4.0 Definitions

**Directive:** An official instruction, typically at the departmental or unit level, that may establish rules, assign responsibilities, define objectives and delegate authority to those working within the unit. Failure to comply with a directive may result in disciplinary action.

**Guidelines:** General statements, recommendations, or administrative instructions designed to achieve the policy's objectives by providing a framework to implement procedures.

- Can change frequently based on the environment and should be reviewed more frequently than standards and policies.
- Is not mandatory, but rather is a suggestion of a best practice.



**Policy:** A formal, high-level statement with broad application throughout the university designed to support the university's mission, promote operational efficiencies, or reduce institutional risk. Policies state required actions, and may include linkages to standards or procedures. Policy attributes include the following:

- Focus on desired results, not on means of implementation
- Require compliance (mandatory)
- Failure to comply results in disciplinary action
- Further defined by standards, procedures and guidelines

**Policy Advisory Committee (PAC):** An advisory committee comprised of subject area experts and convened by the Vice President for Policy and Governance to review draft policies and proposed revisions to existing policies in order to ensure that policies are clear, practical, and consistent within the context of Virginia Tech's operations. The PAC may provide feedback on policy content and highlight the presence of any potential conflicts with existing policies, procedures or regulatory mandates.

**Policy Author:** The individual designated by the Policy Owner to be responsible for determining the details of a policy's workflow process. Such details include the due date, individuals responsible for reviewing the proposed policy or revision, and any stakeholders who will provide feedback. The Policy Owner may also delegate to the Policy Author additional responsibilities such as communication, training, etc.

**Policy Owner:** A university administrator responsible for oversight of a university policy.

**Policy Reviewer:** Within the policy workflow process, a policy reviewer is an individual identified by the Policy Author to review and edit the proposed policy or revision.

**Policy Workflow Process:** Automated process that models the review lifecycle to support timely policy reviews

**Procedures:** The operational processes necessary to implement institutional policy and describe the process: who does what, when they do it, and under what criteria. Procedures may integrate:

- A series of steps taken to accomplish an end goal.
- Define "how" to protect resources.
- Specify the structure to enforce the policy and provide a quick reference in times of crisis.

**Stakeholder:** Within the policy workflow process, a stakeholder is an individual identified by the Policy Author to receive a copy of the proposed policy or revision for review and comment.

**Standard:** A mandatory action or rule designed to support and conform to a policy.

- A standard should make a policy more meaningful and effective.
- Must include one or more accepted specifications, typically developed in accordance with published federal, state or industry regulations, requirements or standards.

## 5.0 References

University Council Constitution and Bylaws, July 1, 1988, and as revised  
<https://governance.vt.edu/bylaws.html>



Policy Style Guide & Template

<https://policies.vt.edu/assets/style-guide.docx>

Policy Development Process

<https://policies.vt.edu/PolicyProcess>

## 6.0 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.



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- **Revision 7**  
Comprehensive revision to the policy and procedures reviewed by the Policy Advisory Committee.  
Approved May 1, 2018, by Vice President for Policy and Governance, Kim O'Rourke
- **Revision 8**  
Technical changes to update links, clarify terminology referring to University Council policies, and move some language from 3.0 to 2.1, where it is more appropriately located, and remove redundant language.  
Approved April 11, 2022, by Vice President for Policy and Governance, Kim O'Rourke.