AMERICAN UNIVERSITY WASHINGTON, D.C.

University Policy: Policy on Policies

Policy Category: Operational Policies

Subject: Writing, Issuing and Maintaining University Policies

Office Responsible for Review of this Policy: Office of Finance and Treasurer

Procedures: Academic Policy Development Procedures, Administrative Policy Development Procedures, and Student Policy Development Procedures

Related University Policies: Not Applicable

I. SCOPE

This policy addresses the process for developing, issuing and maintaining all American University policies and applies to all university departments, faculty, staff and students.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

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

1. Support the university's mission.
2. Achieve accountability by identifying the offices responsible for Policies.
3. Provide faculty, staff and students with clear, concise guidelines.
4. Document how the university conducts business.

University policies will be:

1. Presented in a common format.
2. Formally approved by the authorized body.
3. Maintained centrally and accessible to all interested parties.
4. Linked electronically to procedures for implementing the policy.
5. Kept current within the framework of an organized system of change control.

Policies will be clearly distinguished from related procedures according to the definitions in section III below. Individuals who are responsible for writing, updating and distributing university-wide policies must comply with this policy.

Internal policies that apply to the operations of individual units or departments may not conflict with university-wide policy, but may be more restrictive.

III. DEFINITIONS

Policy: A policy is a statement of management 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 institution-wide application,
- changes infrequently and sets a course for the foreseeable future,
- helps insure compliance with applicable laws and regulations,
- reduces institutional risk, and
- is approved at the executive levels of the university (president, provost, vice presidents) or Board of Trustees.

Academic Policies: Academic Policies are policies which directly affect the pedagogical and research mission of the university.

Administrative Policies: Administrative Policies are non-academic policies governing the operations of the university.

Student Policies: Student Policies are policies which directly affect student life at the university.

Procedure: A procedure is a guideline or series of interrelated steps taken to help implement the policy. 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,
- should be reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure agreement with the most recent revision to the policy, and
- generally do not require formal approval by senior university officials.

Policy Initiator: The Policy Initiator is any faculty, staff member, or student who identifies a university-level issue and develops a policy proposal.

Policy Owner: The Policy Owner is the appropriate University officer (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.

Policy Administrator: The Policy Administrator is the Executive Director of Risk Management and Safety Services.

IV. POLICY

A. Policy Development

The Policy Initiator may identify a university-level policy issue and develop it into a policy proposal. The Policy Initiator will submit the policy proposal for review and endorsement. If the policy is endorsed, a draft policy is created following the format outlined in Section IV(B) of this Policy.

The Policy Owner will review the draft policy and consult with various stakeholders regarding the policy's likely impact on the members of the university community, including legal and, if appropriate, faculty senate committee review. After review and input, the Policy is formally approved.

Once the policy is approved and signed, the Policy Owner will forward an electronic copy to the Policy Administrator.

The Policy Administrator will maintain copies of signed university policies and policy revisions and place an electronic copy on the University's Policy web site. 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.

As identified in the particular policy, the responsible office will monitor compliance and facilitate remedies for noncompliance as directed by the policy.

a) **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 following the format described below:

1. **Header information:** (mandatory element)
   - **a)** University policy name.
   - **b)** Policy category.
   - **c)** Subject.
   - **d)** Office responsible for review.
   - **e)** Procedures link(s), if applicable.
   - **f)** 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.

7. **Effective Date(s):** (mandatory element) Initial effective date of policy, and latest revision date, if applicable.

8. **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.

9. **Signature, title, and date of approval: (**mandatory element) Required for initial approvals and all subsequent reviews and updates.

- **NOTE:** For American University policies that predate this policy, the format described above is not applicable. If it is feasible, revised policies should be written in the approved policy format.

C. Location of Policies

To ensure ready access to University policies, American University will maintain an official University Policies web page (http://www.american.edu/policies) with the most current approved version of all university policies, with links to applicable procedures. The web page will be maintained by OIT in a standard electronic format and will follow the structure described in Section IV (D) below. The documents on the University Policies web page will constitute the official electronic depository for university-wide policies for American University.

To maintain an organized system of change control, and to ensure consistency throughout the university, individual departmental web sites should not contain separate copies or versions of university policies or applicable procedures. Instead, departmental web sites that reference university policies and procedures must use hyperlinks to the documents on the official University Policies web page. This does not preclude departments from maintaining internal departmental policies and procedures on their web sites, provided the internal departmental policies and procedures are not identified as official university policies and procedures, and do not conflict with official university policies.

D. 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:

Operational Policies – Policies that are of a general administrative or operational nature.

Governance Policies – Umbrella policies that provide the framework for administration to implement and comply with the intent of the Board of Trustees.

Ethics, Integrity and Legal Compliance Policies – Policies concerning appropriate conduct and/or compliance with the law.

Academic/Research Policies – Policies that relate to teaching, research and outreach.

Student Policies - Policies applicable to status as a student.

Employment, Benefits, and Workplace Policies – Policies, rules, and related procedures and information impacting working relationships with the university for all employee groups.

Information Technology Policies – Policies that cover systems, access, data, and related issues.

Financial Policies - Policies related to accounting, budgeting, procurement, travel and other financial functions.

Facilities, Equipment, and Property Policies – Policies concerning use and care of university property.

Public Safety and Environmental Health and Safety Policies– Policies concerning security and safety of faculty, staff, students, and guests.

Sustainability Policies – Policies promoting development and growth without significant deterioration of the environment and depletion of natural resources.

V. EFFECTIVE DATE(S)

This Policy was effective October 10, 2008. Last reviewed in July 2010; December 2010

VI. SIGNATURE, TITLE AND DATE OF APPROVAL

This policy needs to be signed by the appropriate officer (listed below) before it is considered approved.

Approved:

CFO, Vice President and Treasurer

Date Approved: February 4, 2009