UW-Madison Policy Terms and Definitions

Revised 01-20-21

Approval Authority

Position or office with the right to issue, approve, or enforce policy. Typically, this authority is granted by Wisconsin statute or Board of Regents or UW System Administrative policies and can be delegated to others by the relevant authority.

Definitions

Explanation of key terms or concepts specific to this policy

Effective Date

Date when policy goes into effect. It may be a past, present of future date.

End Date

Date when the policy is no longer in effect.

External References

Any federal/state laws or regulations, other Board of Regents or UW System policies that mandate, authorize or otherwise affect this policy.

Issuance Date

Original date when the policy is released to the university as approved. Unless otherwise noted, this date is assumed to be identical to the Effective Date.

Next Review Date

Date of next scheduled review. This field should automatically change after any revision or completed review.

Policy

A general written document that establishes a standard by which the institution manages its affairs. This written statement mandates, specifies, or prohibits conduct that enhances the institution's mission, ensures coordinated compliance with applicable laws and regulations, promotes operational efficiency, and/or reduces institutional risk.

Policy Contact(s)

The policy contact is generally the subject matter expert designated by the Responsible Office to be the first point of contact to answer policy questions and assist in policy interpretation.

Policy History

Background information on a policy's development, such as issuance date, approval date(s) for any prior revisions of the policy as well as the policy's initial approval date. Policy history will include any information about when a policy has been re-numbered, repealed or reviewed.

Policy Library Coordinator
Position responsible for maintaining the policy library and for acting as a supportive collaborator to help shepherd a proposed policy through the appropriate process. The Coordinator serves as a neutral party acting as an impartial facilitator of the process and responsible for implementing consistent standards across the university. The Coordinator is responsible for notifying Policy Managers about policies that will be up for review, facilitating the review process as appropriate, and collaborating with stakeholders throughout the process.

Policy Manager
Position (and by extension, the incumbent in a position) designated by the Responsible Office to fulfill its responsibilities for developing and administering policies within a relevant domain; administration of policy includes policy interpretation and enforcement, as well as related procedures, processes, instructions, forms, and revisions. Depending on the scope of the subject matter, a policy may have more than one Policy Manager.

Rationale/Purpose
A brief summary of the policy's primary objectives; may include the need for the policy (e.g., federal or state statutory requirements, meet the goals and objectives of the University, critical needs, etc.)

Related UW-Madison Documents
Other UW-Madison related documents/websites that provide relevant information and may be necessary to ensure compliance with the policy. Could include links to procedures or forms, for example.

Related UW-Madison Policies
Other UW-Madison policies that are closely related to the policy itself and may need to be known to users of the policy.

Responsible Office
The unit responsible for developing, administering, and maintaining the policy, including accountability for policy accuracy and appropriate, timely review.

Scope
Who and/or what the policy applies to: Lists groups who must know and adhere to the policy. In the absence of a scope statement, the policy is assumed to apply to all members of the UW-Madison community (including, but not necessarily limited to faculty, staff, students, users, and visitors).

Other relevant terms:

Guidelines
General non-mandatory recommendations that provide readers with helpful information about how to achieve a particular aim; these might include recommendations, administrative instructions, best practices guidance, or frameworks in which to operate.

Institution-wide/University-wide
Refers to policy, procedures and guidelines that apply generally to all members of the UW-Madison community, including, but not necessarily limited to, faculty, staff, students, users, and visitors regardless of where the document originated.

Policy Making Process(es) [also: Policy Development]
Policy development and review through an established process to ensure that policies are developed, approved, and reviewed consistently. Documentation of policy development process(es) provides a single point of reference for information related to policy development and review.

Policy Management
A system for all of the elements and practices in the policy life cycle, including a framework and process for policy making or development, and the tools and techniques for policy curation and distribution.

Procedures
A description of the operational processes necessary to implement policy. Procedures include information on the offices and positions responsible for policy implementation, instructions to university constituents regarding how to affect the policy, where to turn for information, and the like. Some are referred to as "Standard Operating procedures" or SOPs.

Standards, Requirements, or Specifications Documents
Standards, requirements, or specifications establish specific mandatory measurements, usually for materials or processes, and are often driven by federal, state, or industry regulations, requirements or standards. These are not generally considered policy.

In addition to these types of documents, there are bylaws, which detail an organization's or body's foundational rules for regulating itself, and rules, which sometimes appear similar to policies in that they prescribe behavior, though they are usually much narrower in scope and apply to very specific situations with fewer consequences for violations.

Systemwide Policy
UW System Policies are broadly applicable across all UW System institutions and are designed to promote efficiency, reduce risk, and/or enhance the operational objectives of the UW System.

Unit Policy
College/School//Division/Department/Unit policy that has application only within the issuing entity (e.g., applies only to unit employees, staff, and students working for or studying within the unit). A unit policy can create additional specifications, requirements, or restrictions as compared to higher-order policy (e.g., University-wide or UW System-wide policy) but cannot contradict or be less restrictive than a higher-order policy.