



Best Practices for Publishing Policy

The UW–Madison Policy Library is the single, up-to-date resource for all university policies at UW–Madison. Any policy that is not included in the library cannot be considered an official university policy. While links to university policies may be published on unit web pages, in KnowledgeBases, or in other places, these links must go directly to the policies in the UW–Madison Policy Library; if they do not go to policies that are housed in the library, then they are not official university policies.

In order to maintain the integrity of the UW–Madison Policy Library, units are encouraged to follow the best practices below when publishing policy on their websites or in other places.

Avoid...

- Copying and pasting all or part of a policy from the UW–Madison Policy Library to publish it on a web page or in a KnowledgeBase or other document.

You may not be aware of changes that are made to the policy, so the version you've copied and pasted (and published) could become out-of-date and cause confusion with users (as well as liability for the university).

- Providing only the summary of a policy without making it clear that it is not the full policy and without referring and linking to the full policy.

Taking portions of a policy out of context, or trying to summarize a policy, can substantively change the intent/meaning of the policy.

- Using the term “policy” to refer to other types of documents that really aren’t, such as expectations, guidelines, procedures, etc.

Using the term “policy” interchangeably with other terms can muddy the waters on what conduct or behaviors are required and what are merely suggested.

- Printing out and saving copies of policies in files or other places to refer to later.

You may not be aware of changes that are made to the policy, so the version you've printed out and stored may not be the most current version when you go to refer to it later.

Instead...

- Publish the direct link to a policy where it resides in the UW–Madison Policy Library. Web pages, KnowledgeBases, or other documents should link to the policy in the library. This way if any changes are made to the policy, the link will continue to take users to the most current and up-to-date version of the policy.

- If you want to provide a brief summary of a policy as a service to users, always:
 - Clearly label the summary text as a “summary of [policy name].”
 - Include a statement that refers and links to the full policy in the UW–Madison Policy Library. For example: “This is a summary of the [policy name] policy. Click **here** to view the official policy in its entirety in the UW–Madison Policy Library.” Then, add a hyperlink to the word “here” that goes directly to the specific policy.

- Reserve using the term “policy” for those documents that meet the definition of policy provided in the [UW–Madison Policy Terms and Definitions](#) document.

- Simply access the UW–Madison Policy Library at policy.wisc.edu at any time and use the search function to find the policy.