Writing Guide

About this Guide

This guide contains information about writing and revising Dixie State University policies. This writing guide provides a standardized format and writing style for institutional policies, which will accomplish the following:

- make policies more consistent from one to the next,
- make policies easier for members of the campus community to read and understand,
- make the process of writing and revising policies easier for those involved, and
- produce better quality policies for the university.

Questions

Please refer to this guide and template to compose or revise policy. For questions not addressed in this guide, refer to the current edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* or contact the Policy Steering Committee (PSC) at policies@dixie.edu

Before Composing

Any University employee, stakeholder, subject expert, or student can submit a request form to the policy office through the policy website. A policy request and/or best practice draft will be submitted to and reviewed by the PSC and Policy Office for review, creation, or deletion and will be given due consideration.

Once a request has been made to create or revise a policy, the Policy Office works with the PSC to assign a policy owner and a steward. The office may work with Faculty Senate, Staff Associations and Student Associations where needed for review. Once an owner and steward are established, the policy can begin revised or written in accordance with the following template.
Policy Template

This section of the guide provides direction on how to fill out the header of the policy template and write appropriate policy sections. The template document can be obtained through the policy website under the Policy Resources tab.

Policy Number, Name, and Approval date

The owner and steward may recommend a policy number and name if not already assigned. As well, the official policy number will be assigned by the Policy Office and PSC in consultation with the owner and steward. Once the number is assigned, enter the number and exact name for the proposed policy into the template. The approval date is the date of approval by the Board of Trustees. This date will be entered by the Policy Office.

I. Purpose

This section provides the rationale for the policy. Questions to consider when writing the purpose section:

- Does it clearly state the objective(s) of the policy?
- Does it reflect the mission, values, and strategic directions of the institution?
- What applicable legal and regulatory mandates are being addressed by the policy?
- What conflicts or problems are being addressed by the policy?
- What financial, operational, or technological needs are being addressed by the policy?

Purpose statements should be written in full sentences.

II. Scope

This section notes the stakeholders for the policy and the areas at the university that the policy impacts. Questions to consider when writing the purpose section:

- How does the policy affect the university?
- Who are the stakeholders?

III. Definitions

This section defines key terms of the policy. Questions to consider when writing the definitions section:

- Does it define new, uncommon, and/or specialized terms?
- Does it define terms that can have different meanings in different contexts?
- Does it list terms in alphabetical order?
• Are terms italicized, followed by a colon, and defined with a complete sentence? (e.g.,
  Term: The definition of the term goes here.)

IV. Policy

This section contains the statement of policy. The policy statement is the governing principle,
plan, or understanding that guides the action. It states what we do, but not how. Questions to
consider when writing the policy statement section:

• Does it accomplish the purpose of the policy?
• Does it clearly articulate what the policy is and what it is to accomplish?
• What is the scope of the policy?
• Does this section contain only policy (not procedures)?
• Are the responsibilities for entities or individuals clearly stated?
• Is the policy section consistent with the applicable laws, regulations, and policies listed in
  the reference section?

V. References

This section lists related laws, regulations, and policies. Questions to consider when writing the
references section:

• Does it cite applicable authority (federal and state laws, Regent’s policies, etc.)?
• What institutional policies should be read in conjunction with this policy?
• Are legal references cited with the full name of the law, volume number, page number,
  and year? Provide URL when available.
• Are institutional policy references cited with index number, full policy title, and URL?

Reference to Regents or USHE policies should be termed “Board of Regents Policy R321” for
example. Order references alphabetically, then numerically.

VI. Procedure

This section prescribes the means of implementing and complying with the policy. Procedures
articulate how the policy will be implemented. Questions to consider when writing the procedure
section:

• Is it consistent with the policy statement section?
• Does it contain the specific actions or steps needed to comply with the policy?
• Does it contain implementation plans and dates for policies that require a phased
  implementation?
• Are procedural requirements reasonable?
• Does this section contain only procedures (not policy)?
Is the procedure section consistent with the applicable laws, regulations, and policies listed in the reference section?

Closing Material

At the end of the policy, the policy owner and steward need to be identified. Both the owner and steward should be identified in the early stage of composing the document. Also, this section will note whether the policy is newly created or a revision, the approval date, and the revision date.

Formatting Policy Documents

All policy drafts are to be written in Microsoft Word and formatted to the specifications outlined below.

Revision Marks

For revisions to current policies, use strikethrough for deletions and underline for additions. In cases of extensive revisions where strikethrough and underline would be overly cumbersome, two separate documents are required. One document will be the proposed policy without revision marks. The other document will be the current policy with strikethrough throughout the entire document.

Do not use colored text or highlighting to indicate additions or deletions to the text of a proposed policy.

Fonts and Margins

Use Times New Roman, 12 pt font, bold for headings. Use Times New Roman, 12 pt font for text. Use 1” margins on all sides. Paragraphs are to be left justified (i.e., left aligned with a ragged right edge).

Spacing

• Do not use the tab key or spacebar to align paragraphs or individual lines.
• Set default tab stops to .25”.
• Use a single space after punctuation.
• Use single spacing for paragraphs. Make sure to leave one blank line above and below every paragraph.
Additional Tips for Policy Writing

This section of the guide provides direction on language usage standards in DSU policies.

Wording
- Use position titles (e.g., Vice President for Academic Affairs) rather than names.
- Use Acronyms only after the full compound term has been written out.

Intent
- Use terms that accurately convey the intention of the policy.
- Be careful about using absolute terms (shall, must, will, all, etc.) versus conditional terms (could, may, some, etc.).
- Do not put unreasonable obligations or duties on the institution or the members of the institution. For example, the institution cannot “ensure” an environment free from sexual harassment.

Voice
Policies should be written in the third person.