

## I. Definitions

*Policy:* A policy is a statement of philosophy and direction, established to provide guidance and support to the university community in pursuing the university's mission.

A university policy:

- \* reduces institutional risk,
- \* changes infrequently and sets a course for the foreseeable future,
- \* is a governing principle that either mandates or constrains actions,
- \* has institution-wide application,
- \* helps ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations,
- \* is approved at the executive level of the university (president, provost, vice presidents) and sometimes also of the Board of Trustees, and is archived in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA).

*Procedure:* A procedure is a guideline or series of interrelated steps taken to help implement a policy.

The procedure should:

- \* be written in a format that is easy to follow, using numbers or bullets to delineate steps to be followed,
- \* identify and link to the applicable university policy (through a related document),
- \* be reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure agreement with the most recent revision to the policy, and reflect input from the respective Responsible Executive and stakeholders.

*Metadata:* Policy-related data documented in the policies database which includes:

- \* *Approving Body:* The Executive Team of the university (president, provost, vice presidents), and sometimes also the Board of Trustees
- \* *The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment(OIRA):* OIRA is responsible for the Policy Library, serves as the custodian of all prior versions of archived policies, updates the AUA policy web-page, communicates to the community of approved policies, and monitors the Policy Review Periods set forth in each policy.
- \* *The Executive Team:* This entity endorses policy proposal for development or review.
- \* *Policy Initiator:* The Policy Initiator is any faculty, staff member, or student who identifies a university-level issue and develops it into a policy (revision) proposal.
- \* *Responsible Executive:* The Responsible Executive is the appropriate university officer (President, Provost, Vice -President) whose jurisdiction covers the subject matter of the policy. The Responsible Executive oversee compliance with the Policy Revision Process.
- \* *Responsible Office:* The AUA unit head, designated by the Responsible Executive to develop and administer a policy, communicates with and train the university community on the new policy or existing revision's respective implications. The Responsible Office is responsible for compliance with active policies under the respective AUA unit.
- \* *Stakeholders:* Stakeholders are university community members who are affected by the university policy being developed. Typically, stakeholders' input is sought in the process of preparation and/or review of the policy.
- \* *Presidential Decree (also referred to as an Executive Order):* Policies issued by the university's President which may be related to any of the categories noted in Section V.(D).

## II. Who is Affected by this Policy

All AUA units of the University.

## III. Who is Responsible Executive of this Policy

The President.

## IV. Policy Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the American University of Armenia engages in transparent policy development and that the AUA community has ready access to well-developed, clearly-written and understandable university policies. Policies that are clear, concise and easily accessible will:

1. promote the university's mission.
2. achieve accountability by identifying the offices responsible for policy adherence.
3. provide faculty, staff and students with clear, concise guidelines.
4. document how the university conducts business.

University policies are:

1. presented in a common format and include the date and process of adoption and/or revision.
2. formally approved by the Approving body(ies).

3. maintained centrally at the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment and accessible online to all relevant parties.
4. linked electronically to procedures for implementing the policy.
5. kept current within the framework of an organized system of review.

Policies are clearly distinguished from related procedures according to the definitions provided above. Internal policies that apply to the operations of specific units or programs may not conflict with university-wide policy.

## V. Policy Statement

### A. Policy Development

The Policy Initiator may identify a university-level policy issue and develop it into a policy proposal or existing policy revision. The Policy Initiator notifies the AUA unit head that is closest to the subject matter of the policy. The AUA unit head identifies and informs the Responsible Executive for the policy in question.

The Responsible Executive decides on the most relevant AUA unit head to act as Responsible Office, making sure that the Policy Procedure is followed in all aspects, i.e. metadata flow and time-line.

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment is asked to review the policy proposal against the policies data base. The OIRA prepare this information and may give additional suggestions on relevant metadata for the process.

The Executive Team reviews the input to the process, the metadata flow and alignment with the university mission.

If the Executive Team endorse the policy proposal for further development or review, the Responsible Office develops a draft policy following the format outlined in Section V(B) of this policy, and follows the time-line outlined for the policy process.

The Responsible Executive will review the draft policy regarding the policy's likely impact on the members of the university community, including legal and, when appropriate, the review of the Faculty Senate and/or Staff Assembly. The Responsible Office assembles the inputs from various reviewers and makes necessary revisions to the draft policy.

After review and input, the policy is formally approved as outlined in the metadata.

Once the policy is approved, the Responsible Office forwards an electronic copy to the OIRA.

The OIRA will maintain copies of signed university policies and policy revisions, and ensure that the current approved version of the policy is published on the University's policy web site. The OIRA will inform all relevant AUA units to update information about the new or revised policy as appropriate to their own internal procedures and communications.

### B. 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/Footer information: (mandatory element)

- a. Policy name and Policy number
- b. Policy category (see list of categories below)
- c. Effective date
- d. Page number
- e. Responsible Office for review

2. Approval process includes date of initial approval and/or recommendation dates by relevant entities. This information is maintained in the policies database.

3. **Definitions:** (optional element) Meaning and interpretation of terms used in the policy.

4. **Scope:** (mandatory element) Identification of parties governed by the policy.

5. **Policy Rationale:** (optional) Purpose of the policy and the statement of philosophy, position, rule, regulation, or direction.

6. **Policy:** (mandatory element) The actual policy covering topics which include: duties assigned to responsible parties, 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. **Related Documents:** Other policies referred to in the policy. This should also include references to the procedures and guidelines that need to be followed for implementation of the policy.

**\*\* NOTE:** For AUA policies that predate this policy, the format described above is not applicable. Revisions to any predated policies should be written in the approved policy format.

### C. Location of Policies

To ensure ready access to University policies, AUA maintains an official University Policies web page (<https://policies.aua.am/>) with the current approved versions of all university policies and links to applicable procedures and other related documents. The web page will be maintained by the University's Office of Institutional Research and Assessment in a standard electronic format and will follow the structure described in Section V (D) below. The documents on the University Policies web page will constitute the official electronic depository for all university-wide policies. The depository will also include the archive of previous policies.

To maintain an organized system of change control, and to ensure consistency throughout the University, individual departmental or program web sites should not contain separate copies or edited 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, number and category and will provide links to related procedures and other relevant documents. Policies will be assigned to one or more of the following categories:

**Academic** – Policies related to teaching, learning and outreach at the University and focusing on faculty and students.

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

**Admissions** – Policies related to all activities from initial contact with prospective students to the admission of students to the University.

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

**General** – Policies covering a range of topics and/or stakeholders that is wider than a single category.

**Human Resources** – Policies related to the employment status of faculty and staff.

**Information Technology** – Policies that cover information technology systems, access, and related issues.

**Institutional Advancement** – Policies governing the university's external and internal communications as well as public and donor relations.

**Library** – Policies related to the operation of the university library.

#### **Related Documents**

[Policy Approval Form](#)

[Procedure For 'Policy on Policies'](#)