

Auburn University

POLICY ON POLICIES

I. POLICY STATEMENT

Auburn University's (the University's) "Policy on Policies" mandates the process that ultimately approves, issues, and maintains, in a consistent format, official University Policies in a central policy database. Individuals engaged in developing and maintaining University Policies must follow the requirements, outlined hereafter, for drafting, revising, approving, withdrawing, and promulgating University Policies. University Policies constitute living documents and are subject to change at any time by the Board of Trustees and/or executive officers of Auburn University.

A University Policy is a written plan or general course of action, having broad application throughout the University, intended to govern the actions of Auburn University's employees, faculty, students, visitors, and others who come in contact with Auburn University. A University Policy helps to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations, promotes one or more of the University's missions, contains guidelines for governance, and sets limits within which people are expected to operate. There is an expectation of compliance with University Policies, federal and state laws, and other applicable regulations.

II. POLICY PRINCIPLES

The purpose of this University Policy is to ensure that university-wide policies and procedures extend the mission of the institution and are promulgated in accord with a standardized approval process. In the event of a conflict between a university-wide policy and a unit-level policy, the University Policy will supersede.

- Any policy in any format (print or online) developed or revised that is inconsistent with the standard format and official procedural requirements set forth in the *Policy on Policies'* procedures outlined below, are not official University Policy.
- University Policies designed and displayed in a standard format will help the University accomplish its mission, maintain accountability, and provide accessible explanations of how the institution functions.
- No colleges, schools, departments or units may adopt a policy, procedure or practice that is inconsistent with or expands the obligations of the University under official University Polices without the express written approval of:
 - the Board of Trustees, with respect to [Board Policy](#), or,
 - the [University President](#) in all other instances.

III. **EFFECTIVE DATE**

APPROVED and REVISED: October 15, 2009

IV. **APPLICABILITY**

This University Policy applies to all entities, groups, units and visitors of the University.

V. **POLICY MANAGEMENT**

Responsible Office: Office of the General Counsel

Responsible Executive: University President and President *Pro Tempore*

Responsible Officer: General Counsel

VI. **DEFINITIONS**

Policy Statement: proclamation on the front page of a University Policy document that encapsulates the University Policy's purpose, namely its core provisions.

Policy Procedures: are established methods and requirements for the orderly implementation of a University Policy.

Responsible Executive: the Administrator, Dean, Director, or Department Head in charge of the Functional Field and Responsible Office adopting, revising, or withdrawing a University Policy.

Responsible Office: the university-unit responsible for initiating, drafting, and implementing the University Policy under the purview of the appropriate Responsible Executive and execution of the Responsible Officer.

Responsible Officer: the individual working under the direction of the appropriate Responsible Executive (Administrator, Dean, Director, or Department Head) responsible for developing, coordinating, and maintaining the University Policy.

Functional Field: one (1) of twelve (12) institutional categories by which University Policies are organized.

Adoption Date: official declaration that a University Policy has been approved via the *Policy on Policies* and is *in effect* – this date should be noted on the last page of each policy document.

Revision Date: official declaration that a University Policy has been changed, resubmitted, and reapproved via the *Policy on Policies* and *remains in effect* – this date should be noted on the last page of each policy document.

Reaffirmation Date: official declaration that a University Policy has been reviewed by the Responsible Executive, with no changes made, and *remains in effect* – this date should be noted on the last page of each policy document.

VII. POLICY PROCEDURES

[STEP 1] Analysis, Approval to Proceed, & Drafting

The **Responsible Officer** for implementing and administering the University Policy is responsible for analyzing the issues and drafting the initial policy document. The Office of the General Counsel's website provides this [University Policy Adoption, Revision, or Withdrawal Form](#) to construct the initial policy document and/or make revisions to existing University Policies.

1. The **Responsible Officer** routes a standardized policy document (rough draft) of the proposed University Policy to the appropriate **Responsible Executive**. The **Responsible Executive** determines whether University Policy development will proceed. Please refer to this [University Organizational Chart](#) to help determine proper administrative hierarchy and decision-making channels.

[STEP 2] Development & Approval for Submission

2. The **Responsible Officer** routes the proposed University Policy throughout the **Responsible Office** and relevant **Functional Field** encouraging feedback from policy stakeholders, decision-makers, and constituencies involved in the University Policy issue.

After considering opinions from the constituencies, the **Responsible Officer** routes the proposed University Policy, with supporting policy analysis, to the **Responsible Executive**, who considers one of the two following actions regarding the proposal:

- A. Route the proposal back to the **Responsible Officer** noting that the University Policy is approved for submission and not to be further edited.
- B. Route the proposal back to the **Responsible Officer** for further analysis and/or redrafting.

[STEP 3] Submission for Final Approval*

3. Determination of the appropriate authority for final approval of a University Policy is dependent upon the judgment of the General Counsel. As a general rule, final approval must come from the University President, Provost, or Vice President with administrative responsibility within the relevant **Functional Field**.
4. Email and mail the final MS WORD document (revised policies must show redline track-changes) and the [University Policy Authorization Form](#) to:

University Policy Coordinator
Samford Hall 101
Auburn University, Alabama 36849-5163
policy@auburn.edu
334.844.5176

* The General Counsel of Auburn University is ultimately responsible for determining if the University Policy has been properly approved and is in effect. The General Counsel's signature on the [University Policy Authorization Form](#), located on the last page of the [University Policy Adoption, Revision, or Withdrawal Form](#), indicates final approval.

[STEP 4] Implementation and Promulgation

5. After the proposed University Policy is approved by the General Counsel, the University Policy Coordinator notifies the **Responsible Executive/Officer**, catalogues and publishes the University Policy in the University's searchable database.

The **Responsible Officer** may be asked to help provide the University Policy Coordinator with a brief description and keywords for inclusion of the University Policy in the searchable database, as well as contact and administrator information which will be added to the University Policies and Procedures web application. Other mediums, such as AU Access, could potentially be utilized in the future for announcements regarding University Policy matters.

Revising a University Policy: Departments follow the process delineated above when revising existing University Policies and Procedures.

Withdrawing a University Policy: In special circumstances, a **Responsible Executive** may deem it appropriate to withdraw an existing University Policy or consolidate it with another University Policy. In this situation, the **Responsible Executive** will inform the University Policy Coordinator of his/her intent to withdraw. The University Policy Coordinator may issue an announcement of a withdrawn University Policy. The **Responsible Office** will deliver any additional communication.

Retention of Superseded University Policies and Procedures: The **Responsible Office** administering approved University Policies is accountable for retaining these policies and procedures for at least six (6) years after they are superseded.

***UNIVERSITY POLICIES ARE NOT CONTRACTS. THEY ARE A COLLECTION OF CURRENT BOARD OF TRUSTEES' AND ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES THAT GOVERN ACTION PERTAINING TO AUBURN UNIVERSITY. THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND AUTHORIZED EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF THE UNIVERSITY MAINTAIN EXCLUSIVE DISCRETION TO EXERCISE THE CUSTOMARY FUNCTIONS OF MANAGEMENT TO REVISE UNIVERSITY POLICIES AS THEY DEEM APPROPRIATE.**

REVISED: October 15, 2009
RATIFIED: June 10, 2016