

**Guide to Writing University**

**Administrative Policy and Procedure**

June 2012

This Guide contains information about the process to develop, review, maintain and distribute University-wide administrative policies, procedures, instructions and forms. Prior to being reviewed by Legal Affairs, new and revised Administrative Policies and Procedures (“AP&P”) should first be reviewed within the responsible Division. Final consideration and approval will be made by the Administrative Council, Academic Council and President’s Council (“P.C.”).

This Guide contains formatting requirements including headings representing major sections of AP&P information. These major sections, (Rationale, Policy, Scope and Applicability, Definitions, Procedures, Related Policies and Forms, and Appendices) appear in every AP&P document, providing the framework for the information, which can be further divided into subheadings when necessary.

Updates and edits to existing documents must be in track changes until the document receives final approval for issuance to the online library of AP&P’s. Begin by copying and pasting the current approved AP&P from the AP&P webpage into a MS Word document and then edit the document with track changes using the standard format outlined in this Guide. At the end of the AP&P (See Template Attachment – 1) include the version number to aid in tracking changes and AP&P review. The date and time is formatted to update automatically.

**Section 1 – Administrative Policy and Procedure Format (Document Contents):**

The Title Block is located in the top section on the first page of each University AP&P and contains:

* AP&P number (or “New AP&P” until a number is assigned)
* Subject (Title of AP&P)
* Authorizing Body (e.g., President’s Cabinet, Board of Trustees)
* Responsible Office (e.g., Student Business Services)
* Date Issued (Original Date of Issue, to be added upon approval by President’s Cabinet)
* Last Update (to be added only after review is complete)

**Rationale:**

Reasons for an AP&P are often not clear to an end user, so this section is intended to provide a basic explanation for the considerations and requirements that call for an AP&P. It does not describe procedures and is generally one to three sentences long.

**Policy:**

This section specifies the basis for the AP&P and states what requirements this AP&P establishes. Generally it is a succinct statement from a few sentences to a few paragraphs in length. The details for managing and interpreting this AP&P statement should be expanded upon in the following sections.

**Scope and Applicability:**

This section details the members of the University community who are impacted by or have the responsibility to adhere to the AP&P, such as faculty, staff and students.

**Definitions:**

This section defines unique terms that, by being defined, would add to the reader’s understanding of the AP&P.

* List terms in alphabetical order
* Define unfamiliar or technical terms
* Define terms with special meanings
* Defined terms must be capitalized throughout entire document

**Procedures:**

Some University AP&P’s must contain procedures for compliance. Generally this is the largest section, with topics and content of the AP&P laid out in various sections. This section allows for a fuller description of the issues that are being conveyed to the reader. Within these sections, headings for each topic or subtopic should be considered in order to help the reader navigate and understand the AP&P components and requirements.

The level of detail contained in the Procedures section of the AP&P is determined by the Responsible Office.

General Department procedures should be created and stored on Departmental websites and do not need to be AP&P’s.

When creating procedures use the following format:

* List steps to follow in order to comply with the AP&P
* Use headings (when necessary)
* Use an introduction section for complex procedures or those with options
* Clearly identify options, cautions, or warnings
* Refer reader to related documents, relevant appendix entries, relevant special situations
* Notify the reader if procedure is time sensitive

**Related AP&P’s and Forms:**

The Related AP&P’s and Forms section contains a list of related University AP&P’s and forms that are relative to this AP&P, or that provide helpful or relevant information.

**Appendix:**

Appendices can be used for informational materials that are directly related to the implementation or use of the AP&P.

**Section 2 – Writing an Administrative Policy and Procedure:**

**Basic Tips for AP&P Writing:**

* For clarity, AP&P’s should, in general, be written in the third person.
* Because AP&P’s are written for a diverse audience, they must be complete yet simple and easy to read.
* Select your words carefully. Words like “should” and “may” imply a choice. Words like “must” imply there is no choice.
* Be as concise as possible.
* AP&P’s must be prepared using MS Word, Arial Font, 12 pt.
* The best written AP&P’s are written with the reader in mind.
* Follow the prescribed format at all times.

**Section 3 – Formulation and Issuance of University Administrative Policy and Procedure**

**AP&P Update Cycle:**

Each AP&P should be reviewed a minimum of every five (5) years on a continual rotating basis and be updated more frequently if needed. Yearly, twenty percent (20%) of all AP&P’s should be forwarded to the Division Vice Presidents for their review and updates.

**AP&P Format:**

As AP&P’s are reviewed and updated, policies must be converted to the AP&P format that is outlined in this Guide in Section I.

**Definition of an Administrative Policy and Procedure:**

AP&P’s are University-wide standard policies and procedures that are managed by administrative departments of the University, are considered separate from education and research policies and separate from governance policies. Following are examples:

* A University AP&P that governs a business transaction. (e.g. business travel, leaves of absence, signature authority).
* A University AP&P that outlines a required procedure for an administrative transaction or activity. (e.g. payroll transactions, road closures, e-mail).

**Update Process:**

1. The responsible Division/Unit should prepare a draft of the revised/proposed AP&P and obtain their respective Vice President’s (VP) approval. The responsible Office should e-mail the updated file to the Budget Manager for Finance and Administration (“BMFA”). **AP&P’s that do not require changes still must be moved through this process every five years for input from Administrative Council, Academic Counsel and Cabinet.** In the event that an AP&P is reviewed and no changes are required, the responsible Division VP’s Office should notify the VPF&A’s Office.

2. All documents must be prepared using MS Word, Arial Font, 12 pt. in the previously described required format. Questions concerning format should be directed to the BMFA. Upon approval, documents will be converted to web pages through the CMS Careworks system so avoid the use of “tables”, “sectioning”, and “multi column” formats that will cause conversion issues; this conversion will be completed by the BMFA.

3. All AP&P changes should be evident by use of the track changes option in MS Word. If the policy is a complete re-write, the use of track changes is not required. New and completely rewritten policies should be marked as such.

4. Once the BMFA has received the revised/proposed policy, the policy will be reviewed for format and content. The revised/proposed AP&P will then be reviewed by a representative of the Office of Legal Affairs before it proceeds to the committees.

5. The revised/proposed AP&P will be added to the agenda of the next regularly scheduled bi-monthly Administrative Council meeting. A representative from the responsible Division must present the AP&P to the Council.

6. The Administrative Council will review the AP&P and make recommendations for changes/edits. If there are substantive changes requested by the Council the AP&P will be reviewed at the next regularly scheduled bi-monthly meeting of the Administrative Council prior to review by Academic Council.

7 Upon approval by the Administrative Council the AP&P is referred to the Academic Council for review at their next regularly scheduled meeting. The Assistant to the Provost will communicate the outcome of Academic Council review to the BMFA. Any revisions to the AP&P by Academic Council will be reviewed for substantive changes and either sent back to Administrative Council for a second review or recommended for Cabinet review. EXCEPTION: The Division of Academic Affairs will review AP&P’s for their Division with Academic Council prior to review by Administrative Council. Otherwise, the process will be followed as indicated.

8. Once approved by Legal Affairs, Administrative Council and Academic Council, the BMFA will forward the completed AP&P by email to the P.C. for final review and approval.

9. Approved policies will be added to the OU Administrative Policies and Procedures webpage. The new AP&P date will be the month and year it is added/updated to the web site. The BMFA will announce the new or updated policy by email to the ou-faculty and ou-staff list serves.

**NOTE:**

Exceptions to this process must be approved by the Vice President for Finance and Administration.

**Attachment 1**



**NUMBER:**                       AP&P Number, or “New AP&P “ until number is assigned

**SUBJECT:**                      Title of AP&P

**AUTHORIZING BODY:** President’s Cabinet/Board of Trustees/Division

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** Department/Unit

**DATE ISSUED:**                  Original Date of Issue

**LAST UPDATE:** Do not change this date

**RATIONALE:**  Reasons for an AP&P are often not clear to an end user, so this section is intended to provide a basic explanation for the considerations and requirements that call for an AP&P. It does not describe procedures and is generally one to three sentences long.

**POLICY:**  This section specifies the basis for the AP&P and states what requirements this AP&P establishes. Generally it is a succinct statement of no more than a few sentences. The details for managing and interpreting this AP&P statement should be expanded upon in the following sections.

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**DEFINITIONS:** This section defines unique terms that, by being defined, would add to the reader’s understanding of the AP&P.

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**RELATED POLICIES AND FORMS:** The Related AP&P’s and Forms section contains a list of related University AP&P’s and forms that are relative to this AP&P, or that provide helpful or relevant information.

**APPENDIX:** Appendices can be used for informational materials that are directly related to the implementation or use of the AP&P.

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