

WRITING UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Policy and Operational Excellence

Business Day

March 7, 2017



"Are these just guidelines, or are they actual new policies?"

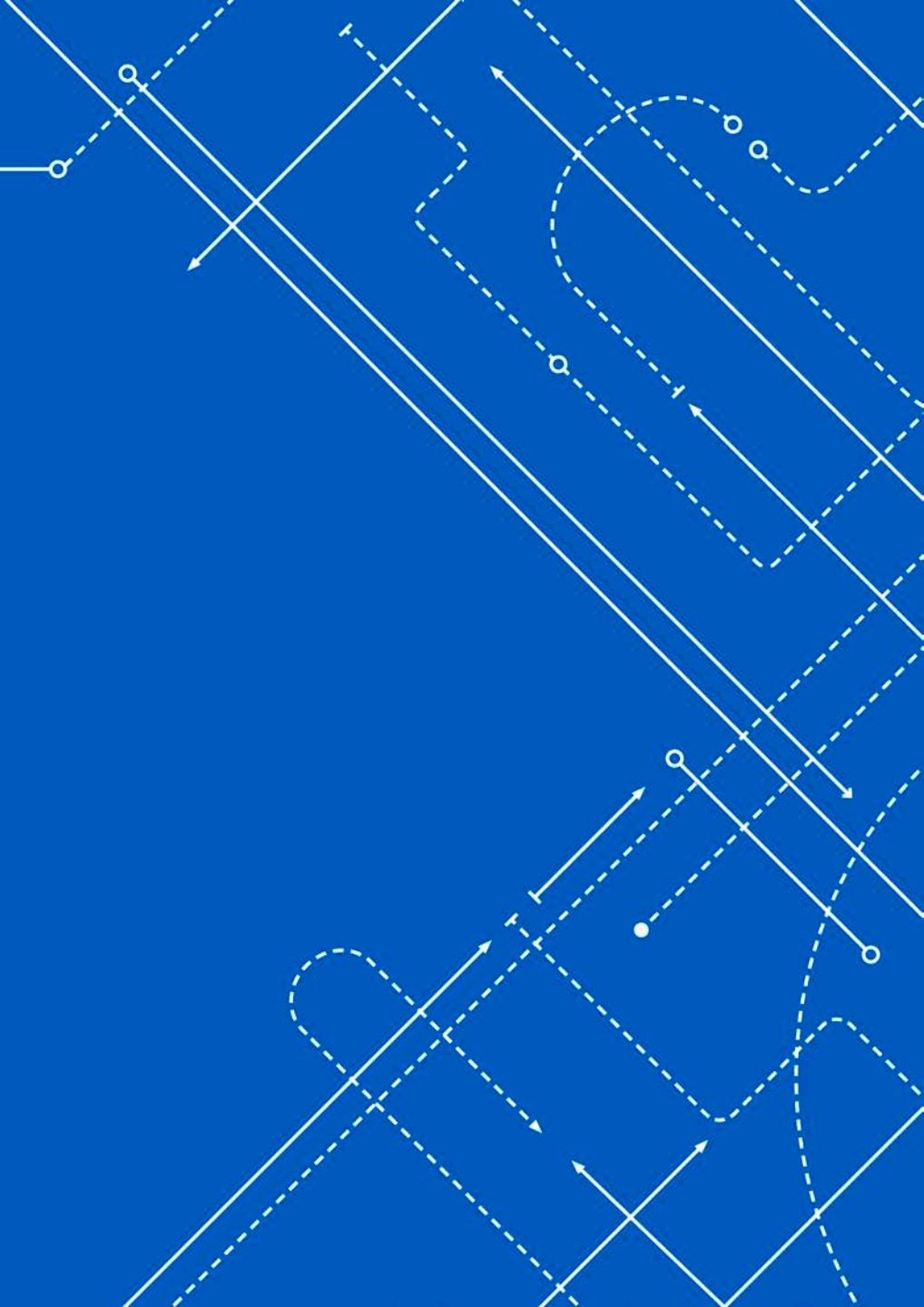
TODAY'S TOPICS

University Policies

Develop a University Policy

Policy Writing Style Guide

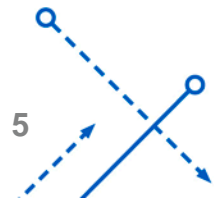
UNIVERSITY POLICIES



University Policy

UB's official position on a particular issue

- Has broad application throughout the university
- Mandates actions or constraints
- Helps achieve compliance with laws and regulations
- Supports the university's mission
- Promotes quality and operational efficiency
- Helps manage institutional risks
- Supports equity and integrity in practices across the university
- Requires presidential review and approval



Policies Are Important

- Align operations
- Set behavior expectations
- Endure across time and administrations
- Connect the university's mission to individual conduct
- Support compliance with laws and regulations
- Manage institutional risk
- Communicate responsibilities
- Enhance productivity and efficiency



Department Policy

- Requirements or guidelines that apply to a particular unit or area
- May be more restrictive and specific than a university policy
- May not be more permissive



Policy vs. Procedure vs. Guideline

- Policy
 - Governing rule or principle that requires or prohibits conduct
- Procedure
 - Required steps to implement or comply with a policy
- Guideline
 - Optional steps outlining suggested ways to perform a function or adhere to a policy or procedure



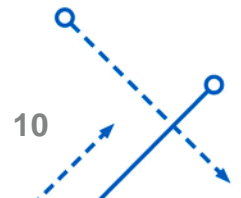
Policy and Operational Excellence

- Design and implement the process to develop, review, issue, maintain, and revise university policies
- Guide the responsible office through the process to develop or revise a policy
- Provide feedback on structure, format, writing, and other editorial aspects
- Arrange and chair Policy Review Group (PRG) meetings
- Announce new policies
- Maintain the [UB Policy Library](#) and [Policy Glossary](#)



Policy on Policies

- Developing University Policies
- Policy development
- Review and approval requirements
- Standard format



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[Administrative Services](#) > [Policy](#) > [UB Policy Library](#) > [Developing University Policies](#)



UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO POLICY LIBRARY

REVISED POLICY

Developing University Policies

Summary

University policies must be reviewed, approved, and published in the web-based UB Policy Library to promote awareness, compliance, and accountability.

Policy Statement

The University at Buffalo (UB, university) establishes policies to align operations, set behavior expectations, and communicate roles and responsibilities. University policies:

- endure across time and administrations
- connect the university's mission to individual conduct
- clarify institutional expectations
- support compliance with laws and regulations
- manage institutional risk
- enhance productivity and efficiency in university operations.

The university has established a standard policy document and review process to achieve consistency and appropriateness, and formally approves, issues, and maintains university policies in a central policy library.

[Return to Top](#)

POLICY INFORMATION

Date Established: 2/19/2007

Date Last Updated: 7/6/16

Category:

Administration and Governance

Responsible Office:

Policy and Operational Excellence

Responsible Executive:

Vice President for Finance and Administration

POLICY CONTENTS

- > [Summary](#)
- > [Policy Statement](#)
- > [Background](#)
- > [Applicability](#)
- > [Definitions](#)
- > [Responsibility](#)
- > [Contact Information](#)
- > [Related Information](#)
- > [History](#)



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[Administrative Services](#) > [Policy](#) > [UB Policy Library](#)

Policy

[UB Policy Library](#)

[Develop and Maintain a UB Policy](#)

[Glossary of Terms Used in UB Policies](#)

[Modify a UB Policy](#)

Related Links

- > [SUNY University-wide Policies and Procedures](#) 
- > [Research Foundation \(RF\) Policies](#) 
- > [SUNY Board of Trustees \(Select Policies\)](#) 

UB Policy Library

Search Policy Library Titles

Search Policy Library Content



By Category

A-Z

-  [Academic](#)
-  [Administration and Governance](#)
-  [Facilities, Health and Safety](#)
-  [Financial](#)
-  [Human Resources](#)
-  [Information Technology](#)
-  [Procurement](#)
-  [Research](#)

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Administrative Services > Policy > **Glossary of Terms Used in UB Policies**

Policy

- [UB Policy Library](#)
- [Develop and Maintain a UB Policy](#)
- [Glossary of Terms Used in UB Policies](#)**
- [Modify a UB Policy](#)

Related Links

- > [SUNY University-wide Policies and Procedures](#)
- > [Research Foundation \(RF\) Policies](#)
- > [SUNY Board of Trustees \(Select Policies\)](#)

Glossary of Terms Used in UB Policies

Look up key words used in UB policies to see definitions and links to their associated policies.

Search Glossary of Policy Words

**A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S
T U V W X Y Z**

A

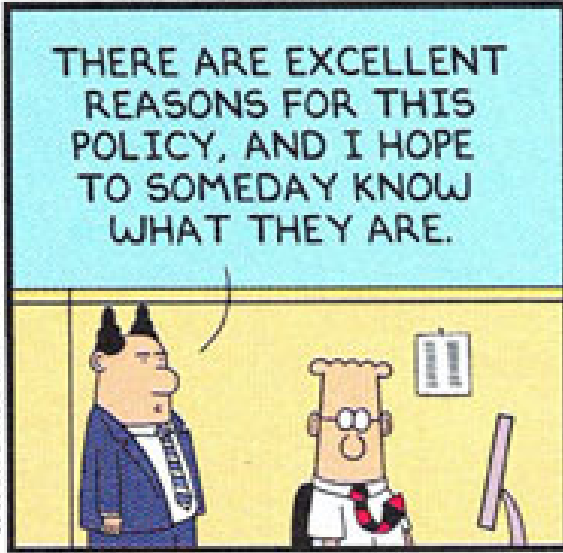
Word or Phrase	Definition
Abuser	A person who perpetrates a pattern of coercive tactics which can include physical, psychological, sexual, economic, and emotional abuse against an adult intimate partner, with the goal of establishing and maintaining power and control over the victim. In Policy: • Domestic Violence and the Workplace
Academic Adjustments	Modifications to academic requirements made to ensure that requirements do not discriminate or have the effect of discriminating, on the basis of disability, against a qualified applicant or student with a disability. Academic requirements that are essential to the instruction being pursued by the student or to any directly related licensing requirement will not be subject to modification. Modifications may include changes in the length of time permitted for the completion of degree requirements, substitution of specific courses required for the completion of degree requirements, and adaptation of the manner in which specific courses are conducted.

DEVELOP A UB POLICY

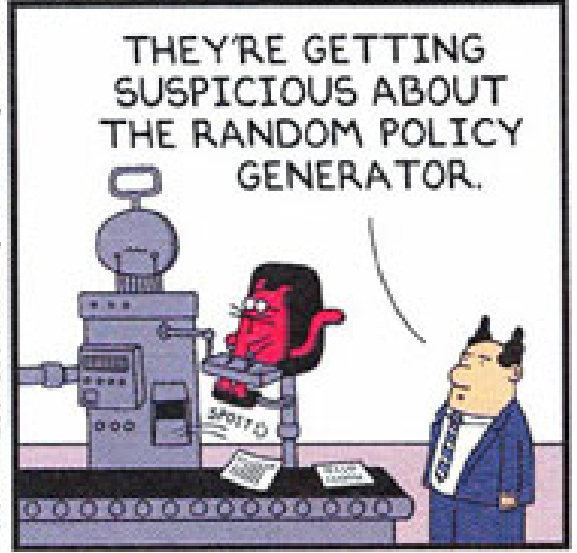




www.dilbert.com scottadams@aol.com



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Policy Development Process

- Step 1: Identify a need for a university policy
 - Issues emerge through federal or state legislation, SUNY or RF policies, changes in best practices, campus incident or other ways
- Step 2: Know the definition of a university policy

Policy Development Process

- Step 3: Complete the [University Policy Proposal](#)
 - Formulate need
 - Evaluate risk
 - Initiate legal review and guidance
- Step 4: Consult with university legal counsel
 - Current UB, SUNY, and RF policies
 - Compliance with federal and state laws
 - Review for legal risks, obligations, and defensibility
 - Determine best interest of the university



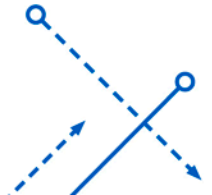
University Policy Proposal

Complete this University Policy Proposal to:

- Assess the need for a proposed university policy
- Evaluate risk and determine if the risk is sufficient to warrant the resources needed for policy development, maintenance and implementation
- Request university legal review and guidance

Policy Information	
Policy Title	Click here to enter text.
Contact Person	Click here to enter text.
Phone/address/email	
Responsible Office	Click here to enter text.
Responsible Executive	Click here to enter text.
Policy Summary	Click here to enter text.
Factors driving the need for the policy	Click here to enter text.

Risk Evaluation	
Is there a federal or state law that requires the university to have this policy?	Yes or No: Choose an item.
If yes, what is the law? Attach document or provide link.	Click here to enter text.
Is there a SUNY or RF policy that requires the university to have this policy?	Yes or No: Choose an item.
If yes, what is the SUNY or RF policy? Attach document or provide link.	Click here to enter text.
In the absence of the proposed policy, what is the... Likelihood that unwanted behavior will occur? Severity of financial consequences? Severity of reputational consequences? Severity of health and safety consequences? Severity of management or operational consequences?	Risk: Low, Medium or High Choose an item. Risk: Low, Medium or High Choose an item. Risk: Low, Medium or High Choose an item. Risk: Low, Medium or High Choose an item. Risk: Low, Medium or High Choose an item.



Policy Development Process

- Step 5: Assemble a policy writing group
 - Define roles and expectations
 - Establish a timeline
- Step 6: Know the characteristics of a good policy document
 - Begin with a strong, clear policy statement
 - Use simple, clear, concise language
 - Are general enough to apply to unanticipated situations

Policy Development Process

- Step 7: Research and gather information
 - Review policies issued by SUNY, other SUNY campuses, and other universities
 - Identify current practices, problem areas, and potential impact of changes
 - Expand a related policy
- Step 8: Prepare a draft policy
 - Download the University Policy Template

Policy Title

Select a policy title that clearly conveys the key policy purpose and objective

Category: University Area (e.g., Academic, Financial, Human Resources)

Responsible Office: Office Name

Responsible Executive: Provost, Vice Provost, or Vice President

Date Established: to be determined

Date Last Updated: -

Summary

Describe main purpose of the policy in one or two sentences.

Policy Statement

The policy statement:

- is the governing principle, plan or understanding that guides the action
- states what to do, but not how
- should be clear and understandable
- should be concise, to the point, and action-oriented
- is supplemented by the information in the other sections of the policy document
- does not include background details, historical information or procedural steps

Sub-section Title

Depending on the complexity of the policy, the policy statement may be organized into sub-sections to improve clarity and readability.

Policy Development Process

- Step 9: Draft supporting documents
 - Procedures
 - Guidelines
 - Forms
 - Instructions
 - Department web pages

Policy Development Process

- Step 10: Obtain stakeholder input
 - Share with those who can offer a broad perspective
 - Consider feedback and update as appropriate
- Step 11: Obtain POE and PRG review
 - POE reviews for clarity, coherence, structure, format, expression, and editorial aspects
 - PRG reviews for understandability, practicality, and impact

Policy Review Group Members

UNIT	REPRESENTATIVE
Academic Affairs	Larissa Kowalczyk
Academic Budget, Planning and Evaluation	Diane Stolarski
Athletics	Nathaniel Wills
College of Arts and Sciences	to be determined
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	Faren Gault Wilson
Financial Management	Brendan Davis
Internal Audit	Kara Kearney-Saylor
Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences	Sandra Drabek
Policy and Operational Excellence	Susan Krzystofiak Pamela Lojacono
Research and Economic Development	Kenneth Tramosch
Resource Planning	Joseph Lewandowski
School of Dental Medicine	Mark Mariglia
School of Engineering and Applied Sciences	Eileen Hassett
School of Management	Kenneth Suski
School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences	Kristin Gniazdowski
School of Public Health and Health Professions	Sharon Roberts
University at Buffalo Foundation	Elaine Schaffer
University Communications	Daniel Baker
University Facilities	to be determined
University Life and Services	Beth Rogan



2016-17 Meeting Schedule

The Policy Review Group meets every other month, on the second Monday of the month, at 2:30 p.m. in 324 Crofts Hall.

MEETING DATE	POLICY AGENDA
September 12, 2016	External Audit Activity Sponsored Project Residual Balance on Fixed Price Contracts
November 14, 2016 142 Crofts Hall	Protection of University Data Data Classification Policy Data Access Procedure Remote Access to Administrative Systems and Data Policy Safeguarding Cash and Cash Equivalents
January 9, 2017	Emergency Management Program Policy Change in Scheduled Operations Policy Adverse Weather Operations Policy
March 13, 2017	Approved Entity for Fiscal Administration of Sponsored Activities Policy Captioning Policy Distinguishing Between Gifts and Sponsored Activity Policy Information Technology Procurement Policy Student Preferred Name Policy Web Accessibility Policy
May 8, 2017	to be determined
July 10, 2017	to be determined
September 11, 2017	to be determined
November 13, 2017	to be determined

Policy Development Process

- Step 12: Obtain final legal approval, as appropriate
- Step 13: Obtain presidential approval

Policy Development Process

- Step 14: Communicate the new policy and procedures
 - POE publishes the policy in the Policy Library and posts an announcement on the Administrative Services Gateway and monthly Business Services recap
 - Responsible department sends message to list servs and announces at meetings
- Step 15: Conduct education and training
 - Responsible department conducts education and training and updates website

Administrative Services Gateway

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- HR For Faculty and Staff
- Managing People
- Managing Procurement
- Managing Money
- Forms
- UB Policies

Administrative Services > Announcements > Policy Announcements

- Announcements
- Administrative Services Announcements
- Financial Announcements
- Human Resources Announcements
- Policy Announcements**
- Procurement Announcements
- SIRI Announcements
- Training Announcements
- Travel Announcements
- Search Results

Policy Announcements



[Policy for Managing Research Foundation \(RF\) Residual Balances Signed 2/1/17](#)

The [Residual Balance on Fixed Price Contracts for Sponsored Projects Policy](#), approved and signed by President Tripathi, is available in the [University Policy Library](#).



[Safeguarding Cash 1/20/17](#)

The [Safeguarding Cash and Cash Equivalents Policy](#), approved and signed by President Tripathi, is available in the [University Policy Library](#).



[Policy on Agency Fund Activities and Services Available 11/28/16](#)

The State University of New York (SUNY) policy, [Agency Account Guidelines](#), is available in the [University Policy Library](#).



[Find SUNY and RF Policies in UB Policy Library 11/16/16](#)

SUNY and RF policies recognized as the authoritative source for a particular subject are included in the UB Policy Library.

UPCOMING EVENTS

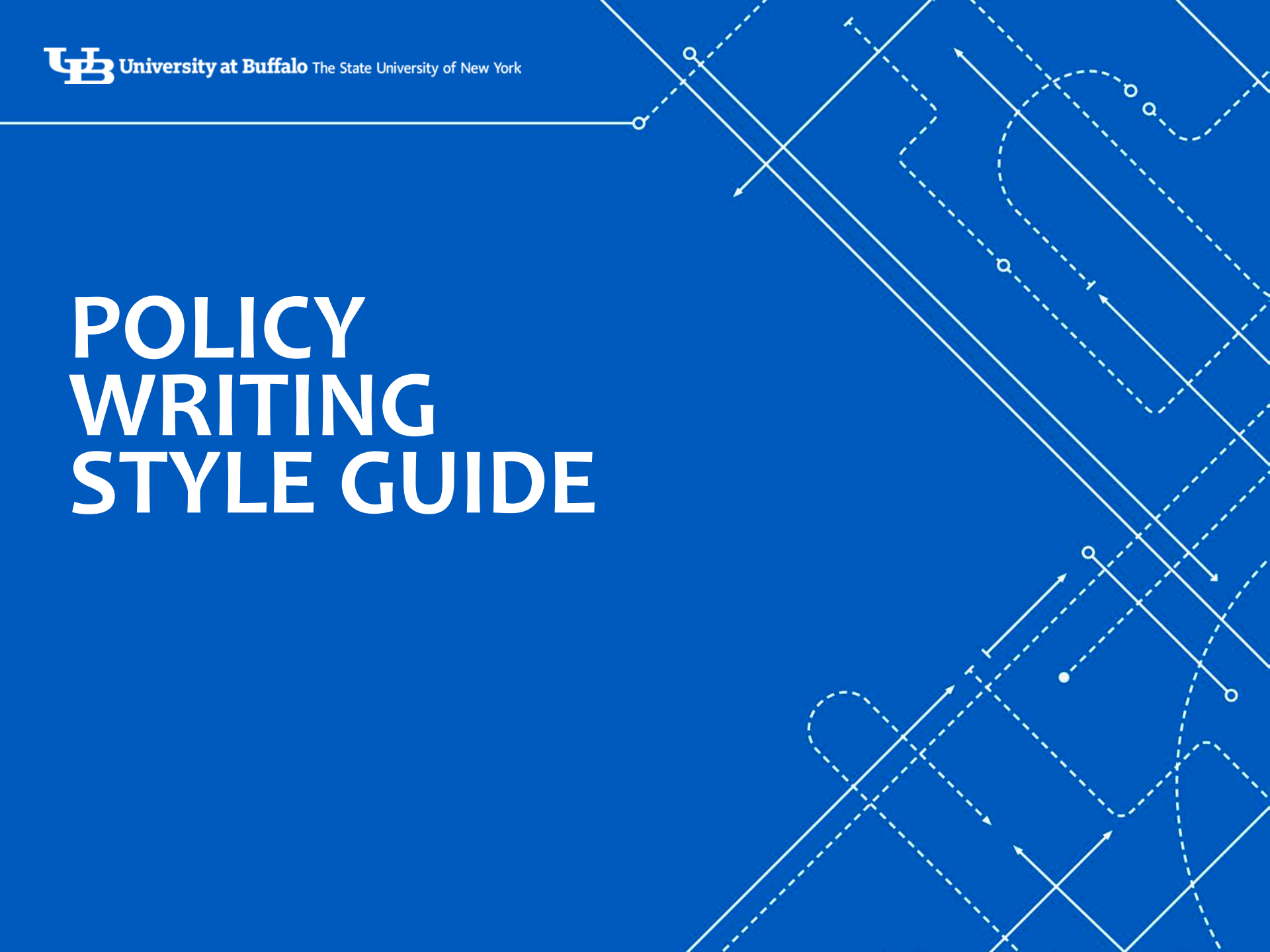
- MAR 8 2017** [Tools for Analyzing Data in Excel 2007/2010](#)
 9:00 a.m.
 320 Crofts Hall, North Campus
- MAR 9 2017** [Intro to Critical Behavior Interviewing](#)
 9:00 a.m.
 324 Crofts Hall, North Campus
- MAR 9 2017** [Establish & Manage Your Database in Access 2010](#)
 9:00 a.m.
 320 Crofts Hall, North Campus
- MAR 14 2017** [Medicaid Planning](#)
 12:00 p.m.
 280 Park Hall, North Campus
- MAR 15 2017** [Build a Strong Team](#)
 9:00 a.m.
 324 Crofts Hall, North Campus
- MAR 16 2017** [Make Meetings Worthwhile](#)
 9:00 a.m.
 324 Crofts Hall, North Campus
- MAR 16 2017** [Create Flyers &](#)

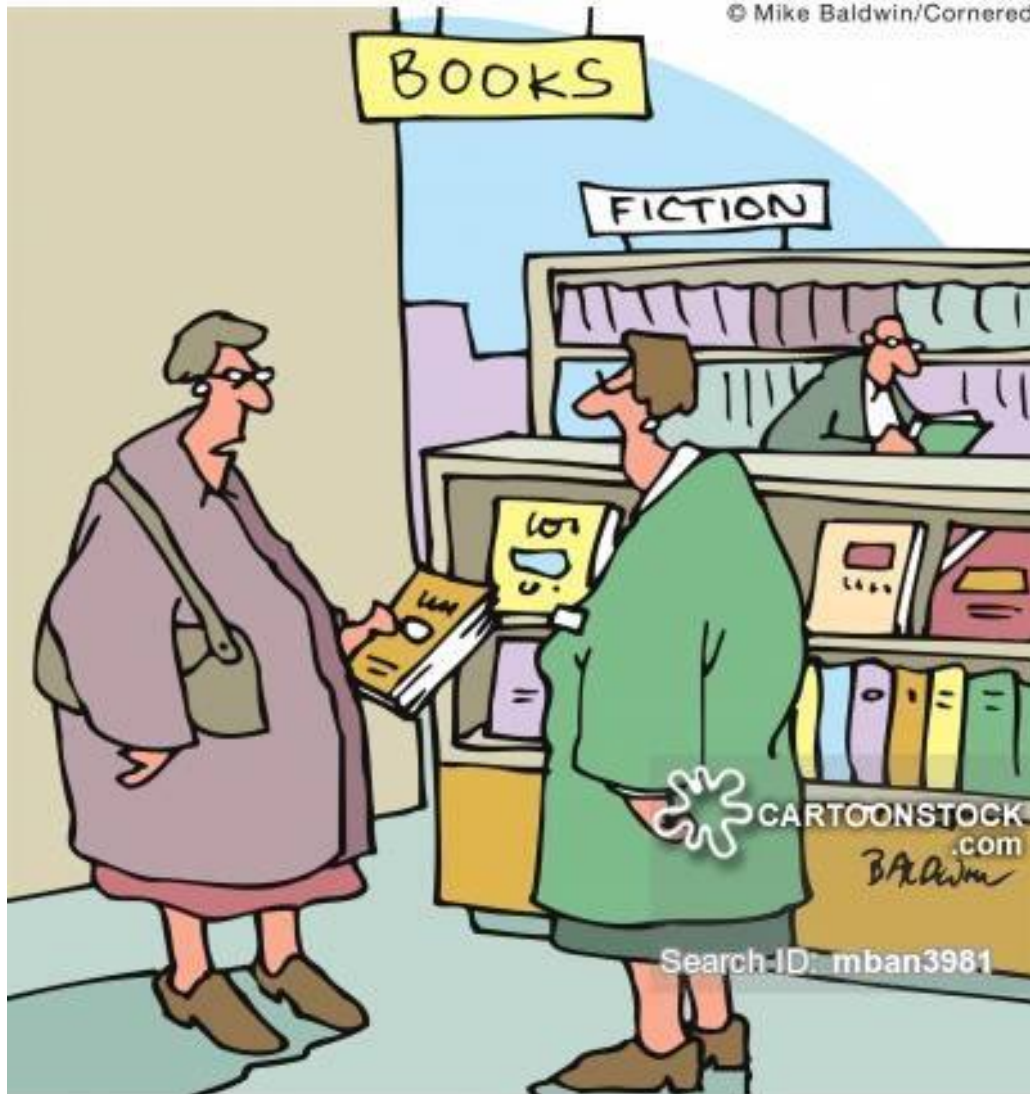


Policy Development Process

- Step 16: Maintain the policy
 - Review the policy every three years, or more frequently as circumstances require

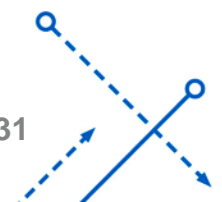
POLICY WRITING STYLE GUIDE





© Mike Baldwin/Cornered

“Couldn’t finish it. I got reader’s block.”



Policy Writing Style Guide

Good policies are easy to read and help readers:

- Find what they need
- Understand what they find
- Use what they find to meet their needs

Policies

Good policy and procedure documents and related web pages:

- Consider why the user needs the information
- Give the user knowledge and confidence to do the right things the right way
- Are written assuming the reader has:
 - Basic knowledge of the campus
 - Novice knowledge of the specific policy and procedure
- Are reviewed regularly and updated as needed

Policies

Good policy and procedure documents:

- Use simple, clear, concise language
- Avoid jargon and overly technical descriptions
- Begin with a strong, clear policy statement
- Are general enough to apply to unanticipated situations
- Differentiate between policy, background, procedure, and other sections within the policy
- Link to procedures and guidelines on the department website
- Provide accurate contact information

Policy Writing Style Guide

Use plain language and common words that can be easily understood by everyone

- Create a policy the reader will understand the first time and in the way you intended
- Use clear, precise, and straightforward language so that busy readers understand the message
- Use simple words that are easier and faster to read for all levels of readers

Policy Writing Style Guide

Use plain language and common words

Omit unnecessary words

Try to avoid:

The university seeks to promote and increase participation of underrepresented suppliers and contractors in the procurement process with a program that reflects the broad diversity of our local New York State communities and to become more inclusive of the variety of locally relevant businesses that encounter difficulties with market entry, customer access and financial growth.

Write instead:

The university seeks to promote and increase participation of New York State businesses that encounter difficulties with market entry, customer access and financial growth.

Policy Writing Style Guide

Write in the present tense with a positive tone

Try to avoid:

Staff may be unaware that the new regulations require written consent from the participant.

Write instead:

The new regulations require written consent from the participant.

Policy Writing Style Guide

Write in the active voice, rather than the passive voice

- In an active-voice sentence, the person or department/unit taking the action is the subject of the sentence
- Passive-voice sentences often do not identify who is performing the action

Try to avoid:

New regulations have been proposed by the Department of Labor.

Write instead:

The Department of Labor proposed new regulations.

Policy Writing Style Guide

Write short sentences

Omit unnecessary words

Try to avoid:

Built on the efforts of campus policy and procedure "owners," this site is designed to make policy and procedure information widely accessible so that members of the campus community can make decisions and streamline campus administrative processes with the knowledge that their actions conform with official campus policies and procedures.

Write instead:

This is the official website for university policies.

Policy Writing Style Guide

Write short sentences

Omit unnecessary words

Try to avoid:

Use of the UB owned fiber optic cable plant, known as the UB Regional Fiber Network, is governed by the relationship that the university has with current and prospective partner institutions in support of UB's outreach mission to deepen UB's impact and outreach in the regional community, strengthening programs and partnership and contribute to the social, cultural and economic vitality of Western New York.

Write instead:

The University at Buffalo provides access to the UB-owned fiber optic cable plant to deepen the university's impact and outreach in the regional community and strengthen programs and partnerships that contribute to the economic vitality of Western New York.



Policy Writing Style Guide

Use verbs instead of nouns from verbs

- Verbs express action and are often the most important part of sentences
- Be aware of words ending in “ion” as they are usually the verb in noun form (e.g., notify/notification, apply/application, identify/identification)

Try to avoid:

The project manager has the responsibility for the creation of the safety manual.

Write instead:

The project manager is responsible for creating the safety manual.

Policy Writing Style Guide

Avoid stating the subject negatively and the verb positively

Try to avoid:

No single prize in any raffle may exceed \$100,000.

Write instead:

A single prize in any raffle may not exceed \$100,000.

Policy Writing Style Guide

Avoid legalese

Try to avoid:

aforementioned

during such time as

for the duration of

Write instead:

previous

while

during

Policy Writing Style Guide

Avoid redundant words

Try to avoid:

mutual cooperation

uniformly consistent

past history

Write instead:

cooperation

consistent

history

Policy Writing Style Guide

Avoid wordy phrases

Try to avoid:

a percentage of

at this point in time

due to the fact that

in the event that

on a monthly basis

Write instead:

some

now

because

if

monthly

Policy Writing Style Guide

Use bulleted lists to:

- Highlight or emphasize a series of requirements or complex information in a visually clear way
- Allow readers to scan for information
- Facilitate reading comprehension

Policy Writing Style Guide

Use tables or charts to:

- Organize information so that it is easier to understand
- Help the reader see relationships that may be hidden in dense text
- Allow readers to scan for information

Campus Situation

One of the following options will be considered during the recommendation and decision process for severe winter weather. A combination of options may be considered as well.

1 - All Classes and Events are Canceled

All classes and events are cancelled at the University at Buffalo. Only those individuals designated as essential personnel should report to work. Scheduled performing arts or athletic events may or may not be affected by this announcement. Ticketholders are advised to check with the sponsoring unit of any public event. This situation means the weather conditions are severe enough to threaten the safety of the campus community. As the situation improves, this restriction should be altered as necessary to resume scheduled operations.

2 - Classes and Events Delayed

All classes and events at the University are delayed for a specific time period based on current conditions and forecasts. All essential personnel should report for work if conditions allow.

3 - Early Departure for Employees

Weather conditions have deteriorated to the point where transportation and health and safety of employees may be jeopardized and an early departure may be authorized. Employees should not be required to leave, but instead permitted to leave then or any time thereafter.

4 - Classes and Campus Operations Conducted as Usual

All classes and events will continue as scheduled but officials will continuously monitor campus conditions and communicate any changes as necessary. Winter weather can sometimes affect only certain parts of the Western New York region. Although the University is open during periods of adverse conditions, supervisors and department chairs may alter work schedules to make allowances for unique travel problems. This means employees must still account for their normal workday by working or taking vacation leave.



Change in Scheduled Operations Options	Description
All Classes and Events are Canceled	<p>All classes and events are canceled. Weather conditions are severe enough to threaten the safety of the campus community. As the situation improves, this restriction will be altered, as necessary, to resume scheduled operations.</p> <p>Only those individuals designated as essential personnel should report to work.</p> <p>Scheduled performing arts or athletic events may or may not be affected by this announcement. Ticketholders are advised to check with the sponsoring unit of a public event.</p>
Classes and Events Delayed	<p>All classes and events are delayed for a specific time period based on current conditions and forecasts.</p> <p>Essential personnel should report for work if conditions allow.</p>
Early Departure for Employees	<p>Weather conditions have deteriorated to the point where transportation and health and safety of employees may be jeopardized.</p> <p>Employees should not be required to leave, but instead permitted to leave then or any time after the early departure announcement is made.</p>
Classes and Campus Operations Conducted as Usual	<p>All classes and events will continue as scheduled, but officials will continuously monitor campus conditions and communicate any changes as necessary.</p> <p>Although the university is open during periods of adverse conditions, supervisors and department chairs may alter work schedules to make allowances for unique travel problems.</p>



Policy Writing Style Guide

Develop procedures and guidelines and maintain on a department website to:

- Suggest methods for accomplishing tasks
- Clarify complex aspects of the policy



Policy Writing Style Guide

- Use terms consistently within the policy and across related policies
 - Consult the [Policy Glossary](#)
- Spell out acronyms the first time they are used
- Avoid the words “shall” and “ensure”
 - Use “must” for an obligation
 - Use “must not” for a prohibition
- Use lowercase “university” when referring to the University at Buffalo
- Follow the University Communications [Editorial Style Guide](#)
- Exception – Oxford (or serial) comma

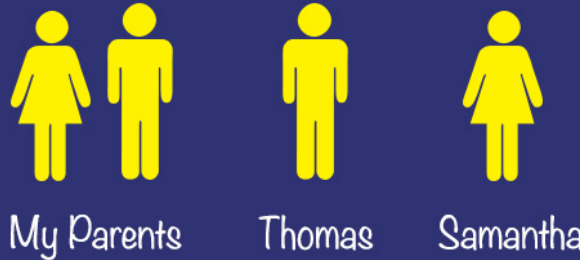
MY PARTY GUESTLIST

My Parents, Thomas and Samantha



My Parents

My Parents, Thomas, and Samantha



SERIAL COMMA = BETTER PARTY



Questions ???

Contact Information

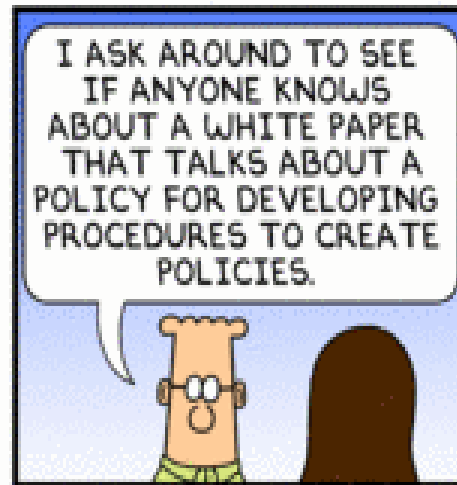
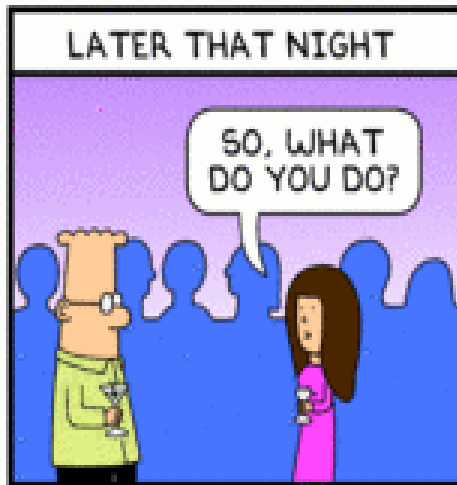
- Policy Library
 - <http://www.buffalo.edu/ub-policy>
- Develop and Maintain a UB Policy
 - <http://www.buffalo.edu/administrative-services/policy1/develop-policy.html>
- Policy and Operational Excellence
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