POLICY FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policy Statement

All University policies must be developed, approved, and published in accordance with the standards outlined in this Policy. All University policies must be published on the University’s central policy web page.

Reason for Policy

This policy is required for the effective communication of University policies and for the ease of use and identification of approved University policies. University policies must be reviewed at a minimum of every four years.

Who Needs to Know This Policy

All members of The University of Southern Mississippi community.

Website Address for this Policy

www.usm.edu/institutional-policies

Definitions

Administrative Divisions: The primary administrative divisions of the University, including the Office of the President, the Provost, the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Vice President for University Advancement, the Vice Provost for Research, the Vice President for the Gulf Coast campus, and the Vice President for Finance and Administration.
Appendices: Laws, regulations, and checklists that may pertain to the policy or supplement the information provided in the policy and procedures.

Definitions: A policy section that lists and defines the meanings of specialized terms in the policy.

Departmental/School/Operating Unit Policy: A policy that does not have broad impact on the University community and that is limited in its scope and application to a specific area.

Forms/Instructions: A list of forms the reader must use to comply with the policy, explains the purpose of each form, and may provide a hyperlink to the applicable form(s).

History: A section of a policy that contains a brief summary of the dates, locations, and nature of any changes to the policy.

Policy: An adopted and approved policy or practice, consistent with the requirements of this Policy, that has broad applicability throughout the University, beyond the internal operating procedures of a single office, department, or division.

Policy Statement: A section of a policy that provides a brief, general description of the University’s stance on particular subjects and/or its response to specific situations, including the policy’s intent, who must follow the policy, when the policy applies, and any mandated actions or constraints.

Procedures: Descriptions of the means by which policies are implemented.

Reason for Policy/Purpose: A section of a policy that states the legitimate interests of all parties, describes the problem or conflict the policy addresses, and cites any legal or regulatory reasons for the policy.

Related Information: A section of a policy that may include references to related policies or procedures, including a hypertext link to such related policies or procedures.

Responsible University Administrator: The Policy Owner. Generally, University policies are organized by administrative division. Each division head is considered the Responsible University Administrator for the development, authorization and implementation of that division’s University policies.

Responsible University Officer: Under the direction of the Responsible University Administrator, the Responsible University Officer is the office, department, or official that is the primary contact for questions concerning the implementation and administration of a particular University policy. The Responsible University Officer is charged with the responsibility for creating, implementing, and updating University policies in his/her area of jurisdiction. The Responsible University Officer also assures that a particular University policy is reviewed consistent with that University policy’s Scheduled Review.

Review: A section of a policy that provides the name of the Responsible University Officer responsible for review of the policy and the time period for review.
1.0 General University Policy Standards

1.1 All policies and procedures that meet the above definition and that have been developed and approved in accordance with this Policy must use the University Standard Policy Template (see Forms/Instructions) and must be included on the official Institutional Policies web site www.usm.edu/institutional-policies. All such policies and procedures are governed by this Policy.

1.2 Many other important school or departmental policies and procedures do not meet the above definition. They are not governed by this document. For example, departmental tenure and promotion guidelines, governance documents, or annual evaluation guidelines are unique to their respective departments and are not covered by this policy. However, these local policies should be clearly written and well communicated. The Standard Policy Template attached in the Forms/Instructions section of this Policy should be used as a guide for content.

1.3 Every University policy must fall within the jurisdiction of a Responsible University Administrator. The Responsible University Administrator will designate a Responsible University Officer within his/her division. Both the Responsible University Administrator and the Responsible University Officer will be listed at the top of the first page of the policy document. The Responsible University Officer generally will be the office that develops and administers the policy and procedures and will be accountable for the accuracy of its subject matter, its issuance, and timely updating.

1.4 Policies should be drafted so that they are clear and concise. Policies should contain sufficient information on the subject without being excessive in length.

2.0 Development and Approval of University Policies

2.1 Idea

2.1.1 If a University standing committee, an ad hoc committee, or any member of the University community (Proposing Member) wishes to propose a new policy or a change to an existing policy (Policy Idea), the Proposing Member shall submit the Policy Idea to the Responsible University Officer. If the Proposing Member is not certain which University office, official, or department is the Responsible Officer, the Proposing Member shall consult the Director of Compliance with regards to which Responsible Officer would be most directly responsible for implementing and administering the Policy Idea.
2.1.2 The Policy Idea should ideally follow the University Standard Policy Template for a Policy Idea, found at the University’s Policy Directory, www.usm.edu/institutional-policies. The Policy Idea template differs slightly from the standard template in that it includes a statement of how the policy supports, supplements, conflicts, or negates existing policy.

2.2 Proposal Evaluation

2.2.1 The Responsible Officer shall initially determine if the Policy Idea has merit and whether to further develop and pursue the Policy Idea. If the Responsible Officer determines that the Policy Idea does not have merit and should not be further developed and adopted, the Responsible Officer shall report this determination to the Responsible University Administrator to which the Responsible Officer reports.

2.3 Policy Development

2.3.1 If the Responsible Officer or Responsible Administrator to which the Responsible Officer reports determines that the Policy Idea has merit, the Responsible Officer shall prepare a draft Policy on the University Standard Policy Template, found at the University’s Policy Directory, www.usm.edu/institutional-policies.

2.4 Comment and Review by Executive Cabinet and Affected Parties

2.4.1 The draft policy will be submitted to the Responsible Administrator who shall in turn place the draft policy on the agenda of the Executive Cabinet for review. The Executive Cabinet shall distribute the draft policy to deans, chairs, and other affected parties, as necessary, to provide appropriate expertise or input from various University constituencies. Executive Cabinet members will have 30 days to review the draft policy with their respective deans, chairs, and other affected parties and to submit suggested changes in writing to the Responsible Administrator. Failure of the Executive Cabinet members to respond within 30 days will be considered an acceptance of the draft policy.

2.4.2 After the 30 day comment period, the Responsible Administrator, in conjunction with the Responsible Officer, will review the suggested changes and comments from the affected parties and will revise the draft policy as appropriate, prior to submission for compliance and legal review.

2.5 Compliance and Legal Review

2.5.1 The Responsible Administrator and/or Responsible Officer shall then submit the revised draft policy to the University Director of Compliance for review to ensure compliance with existing University policies,
applicable federal and state laws, and Board of Trustee regulations. After review, the Director of Compliance shall forward the revised draft policy to the University Office of General Counsel for legal review.

2.6 Policy Approval by Executive Cabinet

2.6.1 When the revised draft policy has cleared the Office of General Counsel, the Responsible Administrator shall place the revised draft policy on the agenda of the Executive Cabinet for review. The Executive Cabinet may approve the revised draft policy, reject the revised draft policy, or return the revised draft policy to the Responsible Administrator for additional development, consideration, or suggested changes. If approved, the finalized draft policy will be presented to the President for review and approval as soon as possible.

2.6.2 In the event the policy is returned by the Executive Cabinet for additional development, consideration, or suggested changes, the Executive Cabinet must provide a written justification or rationale for any substantive changes. If there is a question whether or not a change is substantive, it should be treated as substantive.

2.7 Policy Approval by President

2.7.1 The Responsible Administrator or Responsible Officer, in consultation with the University Director of Compliance and the Office of General Counsel, will determine which changes, if any, to include in the finalized draft policy. The finalized draft policy will be presented to the President for review and approval as soon as possible. All University-wide policies, with the obvious exception of Board of Trustee policies, must be approved by the President.

2.8 Submission of Policy to Office of Institutional Research

2.8.1 Upon approval by the President, a copy of the policy will be sent by the Office of the President to the Responsible Administrator and the Responsible Officer. The original signed policy, however, is to be forwarded to the Office of Institutional Research for publication and maintenance. The Office of Institutional Research will appropriately number, format, and maintain the policy on the Official University Policies web page. The Office of Institutional Research will assist in the coordination of announcements and distribution of newly released policies to ensure the University community is made aware of changes when they occur. Newly released policies will be communicated to the University community at large via targeted e-mail messages and/or other means as appropriate.
2.9 Submission of Policy for External Approval

2.9.1 In the event that external approval is required for a particular University policy, the Responsible Officer shall submit the President-approved University policy to the appropriate external entity for its consideration and approval. Until external approval is received by the Responsible Officer and forwarded to the Office of Institutional Research, the Office of Institutional Research shall publish the University policy with its Status as “pending” rather than “effective.”

3.0 Revisions

3.1 The Office of Institutional Research shall be responsible for, and have authority to make, minor or routine changes to policy, such as the correction of typographical errors or the updating of a title or department name listed in a policy. Minor changes shall be made in consultation and agreement with the Responsible Officer of the particular policy to be changed.

3.2 Furthermore, certain information within a University policy may become obsolete due to changes in legislation or other higher authority, organizational structure, or administrative initiative. When such information is not open for interpretation or debate, the document will not be subject to the standard process for Development and Approval of University Policies as outlined in this Policy. Instead, it will be revised and submitted directly to the individuals indicated in the Authorization section for approval signatures.

3.3 Any other revisions or amendments to an existing University policy must go through the standard Development and Approval of University Policies process as previously outlined herein.

4.0 Interim Policies

Policies may be put into place on an interim basis in situations where a University policy must be established in a time period too short to permit the completion of the process delineated in this policy. An interim policy will remain in force for up to six months from the date of issuance when signed by the President.

5.0 University Policy Archive

The Office of Institutional Research shall be the repository of all original policies signed by the President under this Policy. Likewise, the Office of Institutional Research will archive all known copies of University policies, including repealed policies and previous versions. It will also maintain an online Institutional Policies directory, which shall be the official publication of all University-approved versions of University policies.

This Policy does not apply to the policies and procedures contained within the Faculty Handbook, Employee Handbook, or the Academic Bulletin. The policies and procedures contained therein are governed by the processes of the appropriate governance body/committee. Regardless, links to the latest versions of the Faculty Handbook, Employee Handbook, Student Handbook (Student Survival Guide), and Academic Bulletin will reside on the University’s Institutional Policies website.

The official version of the Faculty Handbook will reside on the website of the Provost. The official version of the Employee Handbook will reside on the website of Human Resources. The official version of the Student Handbook (Student Survival Guide) will reside on the website of Student Affairs. The official versions of the Academic Bulletins will reside on the website of the Office of the Registrar.

Any administrative division, department, or other academic unit may post these manuals or any portion(s) of their content on its own website but must do so via a link to the official version on its respective University website as noted above.

7.0 Maintenance and Publication of University Policies

7.1 The Office of Institutional Research shall maintain original copies and the revision histories of all University policies. The Office of Institutional Research shall publish and maintain on the University’s website a searchable electronic Institutional Policies Directory of all University policies. This online policy directory, found at www.usm.edu/institutional-policies, contains all official, University-approved versions of University policies. This Policy Directory shall also include a link to the Policies and Bylaws of the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning.

7.2 At the beginning of each month, the Office of Institutional Research, via campus e-mail, will inform all University administration, faculty, and staff of all policy changes during the preceding month. If a policy change affects students, the Vice President of Student Affairs will be responsible for informing students of any changes during the preceding month.

7.3 Likewise, upon notice of the approval of a new policy, the President, Provost, Vice Presidents, General Counsel, Deans, Directors, and Department Heads shall inform those within their division/unit of the new policy.

7.4 All University brochures, pamphlets, web pages, or other literature/information affected by the new policy are to be updated as soon as possible.
7.5 Units may not have separate websites with duplicate versions of the policies. All University websites and paper documents must reference the specific policies and link to the policy on the University Institutional Policies website at www.usm.edu/institutional-policies. Otherwise, departmental or other unit policies, which may be important but are relatively narrow in applicability, may appear on departmental web pages but not on the University’s policy website.

8.0 Conflicts of Authority

8.1 Should there occur at any time a conflict between a University policy and a document of higher authority (e.g., federal law, state law, policies/bylaws of the Board of Trustees), the document of higher authority will prevail.

8.2 Should there occur at any time a conflict between two University policies, the most recently approved University policy will prevail.

8.3 Should there occur at any time a conflict between a University policy and any other written or oral statement developed by any operating unit at the University, the University policy will prevail.

8.4 Should the Director of Compliance become aware of any conflicts as noted above, the Director of Compliance shall have the authority to make the necessary changes to eliminate the conflict without going through the usual revision/amendment steps as outlined in this Policy.

9.0 Identification Plan

9.1 Each University policy must have a unique Policy Code. The Policy Code is made up of three sets of digits separated by two periods.

- The first set is four digits long, consists of letters only, and designates the Responsible University Administrative division that is responsible for the policy.

- The second set is two or three digits long, consists of letters only, and designates the Responsible University Officer within the division that the policy covers.

- The third set is three digits long and consists of only numbers. This set is provided for internal division or department notation.

9.2 University policies/procedures will be classified and numbered by the Office of Institutional Research according to the following:

Policy Code Prefixes: (1st and 2nd sets of digits)
**PRES** President  
ATH Intercollegiate Athletics  
AUD Internal Auditor  
GC General Counsel

**ACAF Academic Affairs**  
PRO Provost and VP for Academic Affairs  
CAL College of Arts and Letters  
COB College of Business  
EDP College of Education & Psychology  
COH College of Health  
GRS Graduate School  
HON Honors College  
LIB University Libraries  
IE Institutional Effectiveness  
IR Institutional Research  
IT iTech  
LEC Learning Enhancement Center  
NUR College of Nursing  
PDE Professional Development and Educational Outreach  
OLI Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

**ADMA Administrative Affairs**  
AA Affirmative Action  
BUD Budget Office and Tax Compliance  
BUS Business Services  
CGA Contracts and Grants Accounting  
FIN Finance and Controller  
HR Human Resources  
PP Physical Plant  
PUR Procurement and Contracts

**GUCO Gulf Coast**  
RL Gulf Coast Research Lab  
STE Center for Higher Learning – Stennis

**RSCH Research**  
VP VP for Research  
SPA Sponsored Programs Administration  
URF University Research Foundation

**STUA Student Affairs**  
ADM Admissions  
CS Career Services  
DS Dean of Students
10.0 Standard Policy Template

10.1 To ensure consistency, a standard policy template has been created. Use of the standard policy template facilitates the adoption of clear, concise policies and procedures at all levels of the organization. All policies must be in the standard University Policy Template, and all sections must be included. If a section does not contain any information or is not applicable, the drafter must put “N/A” under the section heading. Some of the information on the policy, such as Policy Number, may be assigned to a policy by the Office of Institutional Research. Please refer to the Forms/Instructions section of this Policy for the official University Policy Template.

10.2 Beginning with the origination date of this Policy, any new University-approved policies or any revised or amended policies must be in the standard University Policy Template. Furthermore, regardless of whether any revision or amendments need to be made, all University policies must be converted to the new standard policy template as soon as possible but no later than December 15, 2013. The Responsible University Officers are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that all policies within their administrative purview are converted to the new standard policy template by the above deadline.

11.0 Origination Date

Every policy must have an origination date (if known) so that it is clear when and for how long the policy has been in effect.
12.0 Policy Applicability/Who Needs to Know the Policy

A brief statement must be provided, indicating who should observe the policy, who may be affected by the policy, and/or who should understand the policy in order to perform his/her job.

13.0 Review Period

13.1 To maintain an effective set of operating policies and procedures, all University policies must have a regular schedule of review. Every policy shall be reviewed periodically as determined by the Responsible University Administrator but at a minimum of once every four years.

13.2 If the Responsible Officer determines that changes to a University policy are necessary at any time, the Responsible Officer may propose a policy change consistent with this Policy.

13.3 The Review section of the policy must specify the policy’s Responsible Administrator and the frequency of reviews.

14.0 History/Revision Dates

14.1 The History section of the policy must include the date and a brief summary of the nature of any previous changes within the policy.

14.2 The Origination Date (month, day, year), if known, must be included in the inset box on the Title Page so that it is clear when the policy was implemented and for how long the policy has been in effect.

14.3 The Current Revision Date (month, day, year) must be included in the inset box on the Title Page so that it is apparent when the most recent revision occurred.

14.4 The Next Review Date (month, day, year) indicates the specific date of the next scheduled review and must be included in the inset box on the Title Page. This date is an important management tool, as it will be used to notify the Responsible University Officer when it is time to review the policy.

14.5 The End of Policy Date (month, day, year), where applicable, must also be included in the inset box on the Title Page if the policy has a specific termination date.

15.0 Authorization

The Authorization section of the policy must provide signature lines for those individuals responsible for the University policy’s recommendation, review, and approval. The policy must be signed by the Responsible University Administrator and Responsible University Officer who
are recommending the policy, the Director of Compliance and the Office of General Counsel as reviewers of policy, and the President for approval.

Review

The President is responsible for the review of this policy every four years (or whenever circumstances require immediate review).

Forms/Instructions

Official University Policy Template

Official University Policy Idea Template

Appendices

N/A

Related Information

N/A

History

Amendment(s): Month, Day, Year – summary of changes

Authorization

RECOMMENDED BY:

[Signature]
Responsible University Administrator

3-26-13
Date

[Signature]
Responsible University Officer

3-25-13
Date