HOW TO WRITE A UC BERKELEY CAMPUSWIDE POLICY
(Revised April 2021)

Overview

There are several stages involved in the formulation of a new policy or the major revision of an existing policy. The process was developed in consultation with stakeholders and a wide range of departments throughout as well as outside Policy consultants. Policies are intended to be high-level and provide the overarching campuswide authority on a topic.

This guide is intended to help you:

- Gather information to write a campuswide policy
- Write the policy using the campus's standard template
- Get the policy approved, and
- Issue the policy to the campus

Step One: Gather Information

The [Campuswide Directory of Administrative Policies and Procedures](#) is a central, online directory of policies and procedures with links to the originating departments. It provides information indexed by functional area (Academic Affairs, Business and Finance, Communications, Emergency and Safety Operations, Research Administration, and Student Affairs and Services), originating department, and policy name.

Before you begin writing a new policy, check whether the campus already has a policy on the subject by searching the [Campuswide Policies and Administrative](#) procedures site. If so, make sure you thoroughly understand the application of the policy. How would your new unit policy differ? That is what the campus will want to know. If you think there might have been a policy on your subject years ago but can't find it, please contact, ucbpolicy@berkeley.edu or you can search [UCOP policies](#) or one of the archiving sites such as [Wayback Machine](#).

If the Office of the President (OP) has a policy on your subject, keep in mind that a campuswide policy may be more restrictive than OP's, but not more permissive. Policies from OP and all the UC campuses can be found at UC [Ethics, Compliance and Audit Services.](#)

Review the policies OP and the other UC campuses have issued on your subject for ideas or language you may want to use. If OP and the other UC campuses don't have policies on your subject, check the policy pages at other universities. It always helps to know how other people have handled similar issues.

Talk to campus constituencies affected by your policy. You will probably need to speak with several campus offices, groups, and committees. It may get frustrating at times, but it is vital because the campus has a tradition of moving forward by consensus, and other constituencies may alert you to problems you hadn't considered.

At this stage, you do not need to contact every group that may be affected by your policy. However, you may find it useful to make a presentation to the CERC Policy Subcommittee. The CERC Policy Subcommittee is chaired by the Deputy Chief Ethics, Risk, and Compliance Officer and consists of one representative from each control unit plus selected campus positions with extensive involvement in policy. Fill out the Proposal to Add or Change Policy form and the draft policy proposal template:

Policy Template (Word)

Proposal to Add or Change Policy (Word)

These forms provide the subcommittee with an executive summary of what you intend to do. Send it to [ucbpolicy@berkeley.edu](#) and it will be put on the agenda for the next CERC Policy Subcommittee meeting. You will be invited to attend the meeting so you can introduce the policy and answer questions about it. The subcommittee will make suggestions about the policy and will recommend other campus committees, groups, and organizations for you to consult.

Step Two: Write the Policy

With everybody's feedback fresh in your mind, draft your policy.

Approach. Policies should be easy for novices to understand, which means they should provide comprehensive direction in plain language. Your emphasis should be on fundamentals (grammar and sentence construction) rather than flourishes. Avoid pomposity, jargon, and trendy phrases. For answers to usage questions (Do I capitalize the term vice chancellor or not? Is it email or e-mail?) consult the campus's Editorial Style Guide:

https://campaignidentity.berkeley.edu/language/editorial-style-guide/

If the Editorial Style Guide does not answer your questions, consult the 14th or later edition of the Chicago Manual of Style.

The campus has very specific definitions for three words regularly used in the context of policy writing:

- Policies are principles (or sets of principles) intended to govern actions.

- Procedures are the actions necessary to implement policies.

- Guidelines are abridged, user-friendly versions of procedures, usually published in informal venues like newsletters, pamphlets, or Web sites.

These words are often considered interchangeable, but shouldn't be. Be sure to use them accurately.

The Template. To ensure clarity and consistency, the campus has introduced a standard template for campuswide policies. Find the template at:

Policy Template (Word)

The template has some flexibility for presentation purposes. You may not change the order in which information appears, as the design puts the most frequently requested information first, but you may present the information in the manner that best suits your department's needs.

Let's go through the fields one by one.

Policy Issued. The date the policy is announced to the campus. You will not have this information until later in the process.

Effective Date. The date on which the campus needs to abide by the policy. It is often the same as the issue date, but can be retroactive by exception or sometime in the future. If a policy is going to be phased in, use the date of the first phase.

Supersedes. If there are previous policies on this subject, list them here by name and date of issuance. That way people will know which versions of the policy are outdated.

UCB Seal Here. The Policy Office will add the official seal when putting the policy on this Web site.

Title. Should be no longer than a line or two and very precise. Do not include the word policy or the phrase policy on. Example: a policy about where people can smoke or advertise tobacco products would not be called "Smoking" or "Smoke-Free Policy," but "Smoking and Advertising Tobacco."

Responsible Executive. The name and title of the senior official sponsoring the policy. The Responsible Executive can be the Chancellor, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost, a Vice chancellor, an Associate Vice Chancellor, or the Chief Information Officer.

Responsible Office. The office(s) charged with administering the policy and accountable for the policy's accuracy, interpretation, and updating.

Contact. The individual title/functional role, phone number, and/or email address that members of the campus community can go to for direct answers to questions about the policy. If different sections of the policy are best answered by different contacts, list the various contacts and what type of questions they should be called about.

Policy Statement. A brief, general statement of what the policy is.

Who is Affected by This Policy. A list of campus constituencies expected to abide by the policy, e.g. Faculty, Staff, Students, or subsections thereof (lecturers, casual employees, graduate students, etc.). List as many constituencies as necessary without getting overly detailed. If the policy affects everyone, say "Everyone at UC Berkeley."

Who Administers This Policy: A list of campus staff classifications expected to enforce the policy or process transactions related to it, e.g. Departmental Business Officers/Chief of Staff/Chief Administrative Officer, Departmental Budget Officers, General Accounting, the Police Department, etc. List as many classifications as necessary without getting overly detailed.

Why We Have This Policy. A one page or less explanation of why the policy is necessary. Reasons for the policy can be ethical, legal, regulatory, historical,

financial, pragmatic, or any combination thereof. Include a short statement about the policy's expected impact on the campus. If serious consequences would result from failure to follow the policy, describe them. Add background information only if it will increase the campus community's understanding.

Responsibilities. A bulleted list of what every administrative unit involved in the policy must do, e.g. Deans and Directors must do A, B, and C; Central Administration must do D, E, and F; Departmental Officers must do G, H, and I.

Procedures. Usually the longest and most detailed part of the policy. This section contains the series of steps, described in logical order and plain language, for carrying out the policy. Complex procedures should be presented in outline form. If there is a procedure for requesting exceptions to the policy, be sure to include it.

Web Site Address for This Policy. Where a reader can find an electronic version of the policy on the Internet (will be supplied by the Policy Office after the policy is approved).

Glossary. An alphabetical list defined in plain language terms in the policy that have a specialized meaning. The Policy Office has developed a list of [frequently-used terms and their definitions] you don't have to reinvent the wheel.

Keyword Index. A list of words a non-expert might use to find the policy through the search engine at this Web site. This field will not be displayed in the final version of the policy.

Related Documents. Other policies or documents (such as federal and state laws or regulations) referred to in the policy or of interest to a reader who may want to investigate further. Provide Web links if they exist.

Appendix. Supplementary material that makes it easier for a reader to understand or comply with the policy. Forms referred to in the Procedures section of the policy may be attached as appendices if they are short; longer forms should be listed under Related Documents, with Web links provided if possible. If the policy has more than one appendix, refer to each by letter in the text (Appendix A, Appendix B, etc.) and order them appropriately at the end of the policy.

Help. You do not have to write a policy alone. In fact, we strongly recommend that at least one neutral reader without much background in the policy's subject matter review your work for clarity. For assistance contact [ucbpolicy@berkeley.edu].

Step Three: Getting the Policy Approved

Once your draft is in near-final shape, take it to the CERC Policy Subcommittee with a Proposal to Add or Change Policy form. This step is necessary even if you

took an earlier draft to the subcommittee. The CERC Policy Subcommittee will invite you to a meeting so you can present the policy and answer questions about it.

The CERC Policy Subcommittee will probably have suggestions for revision. The suggestions will be summarized in meeting minutes, which will be sent to you after the subcommittee reviews your policy. You are not required to adopt the subcommittee's non-technical suggestions, but you are required to consider them. It is expected however; substantive changes will be incorporated for consideration.

In the unusual event that the CERC Policy Subcommittee is sharply divided about your policy, you may have to involve your Responsible Executive in negotiations. Upon approval by the subcommittee, the policy is recommended to the CERC full committee for consideration. CERC reviews campuswide policies for their impact on the full range of campus departments and operations. Once approved by CERC, the Responsible Executive has delegated authority to issue policies applying to the entire campus.

The ultimate authority for policy on campus belongs to the Chancellor. Any policy that does not have consensus support should have the Chancellor's support before it is issued.

Step Four: Issuing the Policy

The policy should be announced by the Responsible Executive or the Chancellor via the appropriate communication modality that reaches the appropriate campus audience (always err on the side of communicating to too many people). Coordinate with the Policy Office so it can be posted the policy on the [Campuswide Directory of Administrative Policies and Procedures](#) website the day before the memo goes out. If you need help writing the communication, please contact ucbpolicy@berkeley.edu. You may also publicize the policy through any listservs your department may have developed and through other campus media.

Policies should be reviewed every five years to make sure they haven't become outdated, either in whole or in part.