

# Mississippi State University Operating Policy and Procedure System

## **Purpose**

The University Operating Policy and Procedure system was developed to standardize university operating policies and procedures and academic operating policies and procedures (OPs and AOPs) and to provide a consistent and coherent method of defining university policies. The system is intended to:

- Provide a pattern for developing policies and procedures;
- Outline a standard format for policies and procedures;
- Maintain a current and easily accessible online manual for all university policies and procedures;
- Provide notification of policy and procedure changes to the university community;
- Facilitate continuity regardless of personnel assignments changes; and,
- Ensure the timely review and updating of all university policies and procedures.

## **Policy**

All Mississippi State University policies and procedures must comply with the conditions and procedures that are outlined in this document, which defines a policy, explains the standardized policy format, outlines the steps for formulating, approving, revising, and reviewing policies and procedures.

## **Procedure**

### I. Policy Defined

A policy is a written statement that has been approved by the Executive Council and the President and describes the university's stance on a particular subject and/or its planned response to a specific situation.

### II. Format

Although substance is more important than style, the format of new policies should be clear enough to reflect its intended objective. If practical, all policies will have the following five major sections:

#### 1. Purpose

The Purpose section should provide a rationale for the policy. The rationale might be a reference to a legal requirement, a statement of the goals which the policy is attempting to facilitate, or some other description of the reasons for the implementation of the policy.

#### 2. Policy

The Policy section should provide a brief general description of the university's stance on particular subjects and/or its response to specific situations.

#### 3. Procedure

The Procedure section should explain the specifics of implementation (who, what, when, where, and how) of the policy.

#### 4. Review

The Review section should specify the Responsible Executive (Direct report of the President) for the OP and the date the review takes place.

5. Authorization

The Authorization section should provide signature lines for those individuals responsible for the policy's recommendation, review, and approval. The policy should be signed by the Responsible Executive who is recommending the policy, the Director of Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness and General Counsel as reviewers of policy, and the President for approval.

III. Development of an Operating Policy/Procedure and Academic Operating Policy/Procedure

- A. Anyone at Mississippi State University may propose a new policy/procedure, or a revision to an existing one, by routing the suggestion (in the proper format) through administrative channels for review and approval.
- B. The flow for the creation of a new OPs/AOPs is illustrated below:
1. The individual submits the proposal to his/her supervisor.
  2. The supervisor reviews and may recommend to the next higher level within the division's administrative channel until the proposal reaches the Responsible Executive to whom he/she is accountable.
  3. The Responsible Executive reviews the proposal and may request that a draft OP or AOP be developed by the appropriate person(s).
  4. Upon completion of a draft AOP, the Responsible Executive submits the draft AOP to the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President. If approved, the Provost and Executive Vice President shall submit the AOP to the Faculty Senate for their review. When the policy is approved by the Faculty Senate, it shall be forwarded following the procedures for an OP.
  5. Upon completion of a draft OP/AOP, the Responsible Executive submits the draft policy to the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness for review to ensure compliance with existing policies and applicable federal, state, and Board of Trustee's regulations.
  6. After review, the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness forwards the draft policy to General Counsel for legal review.
  7. Should any of the above listed reviews not be accomplished within 30 days, the policy shall be deemed approved by the entity failing to complete the review.
  8. When the finalized draft policy has cleared General Counsel, the Responsible Executive places the proposed policy on the Executive Council's agenda for review. The proposed policy should be accompanied by a statement of reason(s) for and the expected impact of the proposed policy.
  9. Executive Council members will have two weeks to review the policy with their respective divisional personnel and submit suggested changes in writing to the Responsible Executive or such suggestions may be discussed at a meeting of the Executive Council when the proposed policy is submitted for approval. The Executive Council may either vote to approve the policy with the discussed changes or vote to have the policy brought back before the Council with the changes included.

10. Should the Council vote to have the policy brought back with the changes included, the Responsible Executive, in consultation with Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness and General Counsel, will determine which changes, if any, to include in the draft policy. The revised draft policy will be presented to the Executive Council for review and approval as soon as possible.
- C. Upon receipt by the President, he shall either approve of or reject a proposed policy. If approved, the original signed policy is to be forwarded to the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness and a copy sent to the Responsible Executive. The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness will appropriately number, format, and maintain the policy on the Official University Operating Policy and Procedure website. At the beginning of each month the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness shall inform the President, Vice Presidents, General Counsel, Deans, Directors and Department Heads of all policy changes made during the preceding month.
  - D. Upon notice of a new policy, the President, Vice Presidents, General Counsel, Deans, Directors and Department Heads shall inform those within their division/unit of the new policy. All university brochures, pamphlets, websites, or other literature/information should refer to the MSU Operating Policies and Procedures website.
- IV. Review and Revision of a Policy
- A. To maintain an effective set of policies and procedures, all policies must have a regular schedule of review and revision. The Responsible Executive and the timing of the review shall be specified with all policies being reviewed at a minimum of once every four years.
  - B. A policy can be revised at any time, not just during its normal review process. Anyone wishing to recommend revisions should forward a written suggestion through channels to the appropriate Responsible Executive. If a policy should be revised or canceled before the regular review cycle, the memorandum for the suggestion should indicate clearly why the author suggests the review should be undertaken immediately.
  - C. When revision is necessary, the Responsible Executive will follow section III., "Development of an Operating Policy/Procedure and Academic Operating Policy/Procedure."
  - D. When reviewed policies require no substantive revision, the Responsible Executive will, within ninety days of the specified review date, forward a signed copy of the reviewed policy to the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness for review. The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness will review, sign, and forward the draft policy to General Counsel for legal review. Once the policy has been reviewed and signed by General Counsel it will be forwarded to the President for review and approval. Upon approval by the President, the original signed policy is to be forwarded to the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness and a copy sent to the Responsible Executive.

- E. The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness shall be responsible for and have authority to make minor or routine changes to policies, such as the updating of a title or department name listed in a policy or the correction of typographical errors. Minor changes shall be made with the consultation and agreement of the Responsible Executive for review of as is indicated in the Review section of the policy.
- F. Certain information within a 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 review process. Instead, it will be revised and submitted directly to the individuals indicated in the Authorization section for approval signature.

V. Authority

- A. Should there be or should there occur at any time a conflict between a policy and a document of a higher authority (e.g., federal law, state law, policies/by-laws of the Board of Trustees), the document of higher authority will prevail.
- B. Should there occur at any time a conflict between two policies, the most recently approved policy will prevail.
- C. Should there occur at any time a conflict between a policy and any other written or oral statement developed by any operating unit at the university, the policy will prevail.

VI. Identification Plan

Operating policies/procedures will be classified and numbered according to the following plan.

- A. Governance and Mission
  - i. University Governance
  - ii. Equal Opportunity/Diversity/Civil Rights
  - iii. Ethics/Safety
  - iv. Free Speech and Academic Freedom
  - v. Auxiliary Services
- B. University Property
  - i. General
  - ii. Property Use
  - iii. Facilities Management
- C. Information Technology Services
- D. Information Security and Privacy
- E. Academic
  - i. General
  - ii. Undergraduate
  - iii. Graduate
  - iv. Academic Programs
  - v. Faculty
- F. Enrollment Management
- G. Student Life

- H. Human Resources
  - i. Employment
  - ii. Compensation and Benefits
  - iii. Performance and Development
- I. Financial and Related Services
- J. Research
- K. Regulatory Compliance and Safety
- L. Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine
- M. Development and Alumni

VII. Policy Retention, Access, and Copies

- A. The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness shall be the repository of all original policies signed by the President.
- B. Policies and Procedures shall be available to all students, faculty and staff through the University Operating Policy and Procedure website maintained by the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness.

**Review**

The [Director of Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness](#) and [General Counsel](#) is responsible for the review of this OP every four years (or whenever circumstances require immediate review).

**REVIEWED BY:**

/s/ Timothy Chamblee  
Director of Institutional  
Research and Effectiveness

06/12/2014  
Date

/s/ Lesia Ervin  
Internal Auditor

06/16/2014  
Date

/s/ Joan Lucas  
General Counsel

06/18/2014  
Date

**APPROVED BY:**

/s/ Mark Keenum  
President

06/23/2014  
Date