I. **Policy Statement:**

Towson University uses standard procedures for formulating and issuing university policies. Persons responsible for university policies shall comply with the procedures described in this document, which defines a university policy, describes the standardized policy format, outlines the steps for developing, coordinating, approving, and disseminating university policies, and identifies the roles of various groups involved in the process.

II. **Reason for Policy:**

Towson University must develop university policies in order to assure compliance with University System of Maryland policies, and local, state and federal laws, and safeguard its resources. This policy also assures policy relevance, communication and accountability for units across the university.

III. **Definitions:**

A. University System of Maryland Policy: a policy that has been approved by the Board of Regents of the University System of Maryland. These policies provide guidance for actions of institutions in the University System of Maryland.

B. University Policy: A policy that provides guidance for actions throughout the university. A university policy is defined by these criteria:

   1. it provides guidance throughout the university;
   2. it ensures compliance with University System of Maryland policies, and local, state and federal laws;
   3. it enhances the university mission and reduces university risk;
   4. it describes actions and constraints through specific procedures for compliance; and,
   5. it contains subject matter requiring review and approval by the university president.
C. Division, College, Department or Operating Unit Policy: A policy that divisions, colleges, department or operating units may develop to provide guidance to their areas that do not meet all criteria of a university policy. When there is a discrepancy between a university policy and a division, college, department or operating unit policy, the university policy shall guide actions.

D. Responsible Executive: the person charged with the responsibility to develop new university policies and implement approved university policies in that administrative area. This person shall be a vice president.

E. Responsible office: the office reporting to the responsible executive that is charged to develop and administer a particular university policy.

F. Procedures: actions taken to ensure compliance with the policy statement.

IV. Responsible Executive and Office:

Responsible Executive: General Counsel

Responsible Office: Office of the General Counsel

V. Entities Affected by this Policy: All divisions, colleges, departments and operating units.

VI. Procedures:

A. Overview

The procedures ensure that university policies are formulated to assure compliance, relevance, and timeliness, and are disseminated in a standard form to facilitate communication.

1. Development, Coordination, Approval and Dissemination of a University Policy

To assure compliance, relevance, and timeliness, university policies shall be developed, coordinated, approved and disseminated as described here.

a. Development Phase

A document being formulated as a university policy shall be developed by the responsible office best aligned with the topical issue. The draft university policy, containing the sections described in the table of contents given below, shall be transmitted
to the dean/associate vice president accountable for the responsible office.

The draft policy shall be reviewed by the appropriate dean/associate vice president accountable for the responsible office to see if it meets the criteria as a university policy. If the draft policy meets the criteria as a university policy, the dean/associate vice president will forward the draft policy to the Office of the General Counsel where it shall be reviewed to assure its compliance with University System of Maryland policies, and local, state and federal laws. If either the dean/associate vice president, or the Office of the General Counsel, require changes, the draft university policy shall be returned for revisions to the responsible office initiating it. The reviewed draft university policy shall reenter the development phase. Upon positive review by the dean/associate vice president responsible for the unit, and then the Office of the General Counsel, the vice president of the division (the responsible executive) shall submit the draft university policy to the coordination phase.

b. Coordination Phase

The responsible executive shall submit the developed university policy to the Office of the General Counsel for tracking, formatting and numbering purposes.

c. Approval and Comment Phases

The Office of the General Counsel will forward the coordinated draft university policy to the President’s Council, and to representatives of groups for comment on the Council’s behalf. These groups shall include the University Senate, Internal Audit and Towson University Staff Council. Other groups may also be included at the discretion of any of the vice presidents. The comment phase shall last no longer than 30 days after the President’s Council received the draft university policy from the Office of the General Counsel.

The President’s Council will consider comments provided by the various groups, and may return the draft university policy for revision to the responsible office initiating it, or approve or reject the draft university policy. Upon approval (or lack of substantive comment during the 30-day review period) by the President’s Council the policy will be forwarded to the President for signature. A policy approved by the President will be forwarded to the Office of the General Counsel for dissemination.
If there are substantive comments during the 30-day review period, the Office of the General Counsel may either

i. make the substantive changes and submit the policy for a further 30-day review period or

ii. submit the policy and the substantive comments to President’s Council for action.

d. Dissemination Phase

The Office of the General Counsel shall notify the campus of the new university policy through the university’s Web site, and through other electronic means as appropriate. The Office of the General Counsel shall maintain a repository of university policies.

2. Table of Contents for a University Policy

To facilitate communication, a university policy shall use a standardized format that includes at least three sections.

a. Policy Title: a short title indicating the general content area of the policy.

b. Policy Statement: a one or two sentence statement that provides guidance.

c. Reason for Policy: a one paragraph summary describing the need for the policy.

d. Definitions: a listing of terms and their meanings that help clarify the policy statement and procedures.

e. Responsible Executive and Office: the division vice president and the delegated office.

f. Entities Affected by this Policy: the groups that are affected by the policy.

g. Procedures: a description of actions to take to ensure compliance with the policy.

h. Related Policies: a listing of other policies or laws that are related to the policy.
i. Approval and Effective Dates: the date the policy is approved by the President’s Council, and the date the policy becomes effective.

3. Revision of a University Policy

a. Non-substantive changes. The Office of the General Counsel, in coordination with the responsible office for a policy, may make non-substantive changes to a University policy without the need for any other review or approval.

b. Substantive changes. Substantive changes to a University policy may be made by (i) following the process for policy approval set forth in §VI.A.1.c of this policy or by (ii) submitting the proposed changes for approval at a President’s Council meeting. If changes are approved, the revised policy will be forwarded to the President for signature and then disseminated as set forth in §VI.A.1.d of this policy.

Related Policies:

USM Policy VI-10.00, Policy on the Filing of Institutional Policy Manuals with the Chancellor

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