This template is designed to assist policy writers to organize the content of a policy according to the official university research policy template used by Lehigh University’s Office of Research Integrity. University research policies administered by Responsible Offices (departments) within the Office of the Vice President and Associate Provost for Research and Graduate Studies apply to applicable research conducted by Lehigh University faculty, staff, or students.

**Note:** You may delete instructions (on this page, and in italics in the other sections) when you no longer need them.

**Policy Writing**

The Office of Research Integrity will aid you in editing your text to conform to university policy standards. In general, we will apply appropriate formatting, grammar, etc. Below are some general guidelines for drafting policy language.

General Guidelines for Writing Policy:

1. You are writing for a general audience – the university-at-large. To maximize understanding for the **average** individual, use clear and precise language, brief sentences, and common words. Please avoid jargon. When it is not possible to avoid industry terminology, it might be necessary to define certain terms.
2. Avoid absolutes such as the word “ensure,” whereby the university might be in breach of its own policy unwittingly by failing to deliver such a guarantee. For example, instead of “the unit head must ensure compliance,” try “the unit head must implement procedures for compliance.”
3. Avoid “should” and opt for firm language such as “must,” especially as the actions required by a university policy typically are not optional.
4. Where possible, use the active voice rather than the passive. For example, instead of “it is the ultimate responsibility of the unit head to…,” try “the unit head is responsible for…” or “the unit head must…”
5. When describing tasks or a series of items, break up text using lists or headings. Avoid using bulleted or numbered lists simply to separate paragraphs.
6. When appropriate, use graphic illustrations such as tables, charts, and flow charts to display data or information.
7. **Policy Statement**

*Generally, one to two sentences, the “Policy Statement” states the policy’s intent, who must follow the policy, when the policy applies, and any mandated actions or constraints. It doesn't describe procedures. This statement may change during the development, review, and approval of the final draft policy.*

1. **Reason for Policy and Underlying Principles**

*Generally, two to four sentences, the “Reason for Policy and Underlying Principles” cites the university’s commitment to a value or mission, why the policy must exist, the problem or conflict the policy seeks to address, and/or cites any legal, regulatory, stewardship or other requirement the policy aims to meet. This section also briefly outlines the philosophical basis for the policy, states what new requirement(s) or provision(s) this policy establishes, and may set forth general restrictions and expectations. This section allows for a fuller description of these issues than was possible in the “Reason for Policy.”*

1. **Definitions**

*Define terms that have specialized or particular meanings in the policy, or for which a definition would be helpful in understanding or complying with the policy. Include industry-specific terms mentioned in the policy that might not be common knowledge for the average person. Please do not include terms that will not be used in the policy. Additionally, do not include information in a definition that does not pertain specifically to the definition of the term. Background information, additional descriptors, and other restrictions should be included in the body of the policy, and not the definitions.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Term** *(alphabetical order)* | **Definition** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

1. **Procedures**

*A university research policy at Lehigh University must contain some procedures for compliance that outline how the policy’s requirements will be met. This section will mirror the “Responsibilities” section, which outlines actions required according to job function, while here, in “Procedures,” such action is listed according to the tasks themselves.*

***Suggestions:***

* *Subheadings are used to categorize procedures. Because procedures represent tasks, these subheadings are best written in active voice, e.g., “Drafting Procedures.”*
* *When describing a procedure, please include reference to the actual party responsible for the task (e.g., the unit head) rather than using general terms such as “you” or “the unit.”*
* *Unlike the “Reason for Policy and Underlying Principles” section, which is mostly philosophical in nature and not likely to change, the “Procedures” section is informational and will change as frequently as systems and processes change. For that reason, and where possible, we suggest considering this fact when choosing which procedures to include in the policy and which to maintain in a separate, corresponding SOP.*

1. **Procedures subheading 1**

Text

1. **Procedures subheading 2**

Text

1. **Procedures subheading 3**

Text

1. **Special Situations/Exceptions**

*Describe the process for requesting exceptions to this policy, or any particular special situations that may warrant an exception.*

1. **Responsibilities**

*Summarize the responsibilities of all university parties and offices named in the policy. Mirrors the “Procedures” section by presenting a shorter summary of responsibilities according to job function, while the “Procedure” section presents these responsibilities according to tasks.*

***Tips:***

1. *Begin each responsibility with a present tense verb, e.g., “Prepare,” “Develop,” etc.*
2. *Except in instances when a specific position holds responsibility, such as the provost, president, etc., job functions do not refer to individuals, but rather to groups of individuals, such as deans, directors, unit heads, account reconcilers, unit human resource representatives, etc.*

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| --- | --- |
| **Responsible Party** *(alphabetical order)* | **List of Responsibilities** |
| **Job Function 1** | Responsibility 1  Responsibility 2  Responsibility 3 |
| **Job Function 2** | Responsibility 1  Responsibility 2  Responsibility 3 |
| **Job Function 3** | Responsibility 1  Responsibility 2  Responsibility 3 |

1. **Related Resources**

*List related university policy documents (and websites), other university and external documents (and websites), as well as forms and systems that provide helpful, relevant information or that might be necessary to enable compliance with this policy.*

|  |
| --- |
| **University Policies and Documents** |
| *Place text here. All documents go into one cell.*  Document one  Document two |
| **External Documentation** |
| *Place text here. All documents go into one cell.*  Document one  Document two |
| **University Forms and Systems** |
| *Place text here. All documents go into one cell. Typically, “Systems” are online applications or other software that one can use to complete a task required by this policy.*  Form one  Form two |

1. **Contacts**

*The first item* ***must*** *be “Policy Clarification and Interpretation,” which directs the reader to the appropriate contact in the Responsible Office that administers the policy. List all items that relate to subject matter in the document about which the reader may have follow-up questions.*

***Note:*** *It is preferable not to list e-mail addresses of* ***specific staff members****, as individuals often change positions. Instead, use department e-mail addresses.*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject Matter *(****alphabetical order)* | **Office Name** *(not the name of an individual)* | **Telephone Number**  *(XXX) XXX-XXXX* | **E-mail/Web Address** |
| Policy Clarification and Interpretation |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

1. **Web Address for this Policy**

*The Office of Research Integrity will complete.*

1. **Revision History**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date of revision** | **Summary of revisions** |
| *dd-mmm-yyyy* | *Place text here. Enter a summary for each published version into an individual cell.* |
| *dd-mmm-yyyy* | *Place text here. Enter a summary for each published version into an individual cell.* |

1. **Appendix (optional)**

*Appendices are used for informational material that is helpful in understanding the policy, but not directly related to the implementation of the policy, i.e., not procedures. Content may include graphics or text.*

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