
Policy Development Process Procedures

Policy Sponsor:	Office of the University Secretariat
Name of Parent Policy:	Policy Development and Maintenance at AU
Policy Contact:	Policy Coordinator
Procedure Contact:	Policy Coordinator
Effective Date of Procedures:	June 26, 2009
Review Date:	This policy will be reviewed annually.

Purpose

To provide a consistent, effective, established process for the development and maintenance of Athabasca University (AU) policies that ensures sufficient research is completed and that thorough vetting and stakeholder involvement occur.

Definitions

Consultation Group	The group of individuals designated to consider, investigate, provide input in, take action on or report on the development of the policy prior to the approval process.
Development Plan	A plan that includes defining the scope and range of the policy, affirming stakeholders and defining their role in development of the policy, developing a vetting and approval protocol, determining timelines and proposing how the policy would be operationalized.
Policy	A published statement that reflects AU's strategic direction, governing principles and institutional goals. Policies are statements of expectation, outcome or conduct that comply with relevant legislation, regulation and institutional requirements. Policy normally does not include operational procedure, except in very specific circumstances where policy and procedure cannot be appropriately separated.



Policy Coordinator	The designated agent of the Office of the University Secretariat, who provides planning, co-ordination and facilitation support for the policy sponsor and stakeholders in the development and maintenance of policies. The policy coordinator assists the policy sponsor and stakeholders in creating a development plan and workflow and then monitors and facilitates the execution of that plan.
Policy Sponsor	The executive officer or director of the department, centre or office who is responsible for the implementation of the policy and is accountable for the content of the policy. If the executive officer or director delegates the implementation of the policy to another person, a written delegation will be kept on file in the working policy file within the Office of the University Secretariat.
Procedure	The established operational steps to be followed routinely in order to ensure that the outcome and values expressed in the policy are achieved.
Stakeholders	Individuals or groups for whom the policy have an operational impact.
Workflow	Approval process attached to all policies once a development plan has been developed. Workflow is attached to prevent any future changes without all stakeholders and the approving bodies of each document being aware of and agreeing to the changes.

Procedure

1. The policy sponsor or another member of the AU community identifies the need for a new or revised policy. After the need has been identified, the appropriate policy sponsor is notified and development or revision of the policy is initiated.
2. The appropriate policy sponsor completes a Policy Development Form ([Appendix A](#)) and Policy Notification Form ([Appendix B](#)) and submits them to the policy coordinator.
3. Upon receipt of the policy development form and the policy notification form, the policy coordinator will meet with the policy sponsor to prepare a development plan consisting of the identification of stakeholders, the proposed consultation group and an approval plan.
4. Workflow is assigned and the policy sponsor initiates the development plan and completes the summary of due diligence. The policy coordinator is to be utilized for consultation, questions, comments, attendance at stakeholder or working group meetings and for reviews of drafts at any stage in the development including consultation with legal counsel, if applicable. All AU policies will be developed using the AU policy template ([Appendix C](#)) and the following guidelines:



- *review existing policies* – determine whether existing policies are adequate or require revision, or if a new policy should be developed;
- *review relevant legislation that may impact the policy*;
- *establish the policy parameters* - identify stakeholders, quantify problems/demands to be addressed, show how policy will contribute to strategic goals, etc;
- *define the policy objectives*;
- *operational impact* - describe the costs, benefits, risks and other relevant impacts for the policy.

5. A policy must:

- facilitate the implementation of AU's Strategic Plan;
- assign responsibility and accountability to appropriate faculty and staff;
- allow discretion by those accountable;
- include review dates;
- provide broad direction rather than try to address all details;
- be written in clear and concise language;
- identify the desired outcome;
- be sufficiently researched;
- consider the impact on faculty, staff and students;
- comply with legislation and collective agreements;
- when appropriate, allow flexibility in decision making; and
- specify instances where there is no discretion (e.g., legislation mandates a particular course of action).

6. Vetting of the policy should include the Directors Group and any other consultative groups identified in the development plan as being affected by the proposed or revised policy. The policy sponsor or designate must ensure that, where appropriate, feedback received is incorporated into the draft policy.

7. A final draft is forwarded to the policy coordinator for review and confirmation of compliance with the development plan and workflow prior to sending the draft to one of the approving bodies.

8. Policies must be approved by at least one of the following governance bodies: The Board, GFC and Executive Group. The policy coordinator will provide process guidance respecting the appropriate approving body.

9. The policy sponsor will submit the draft policy to Executive Group. Executive Group may

- approve the policy;
- refer the policy to The Board, GFC or both;
- reject the policy;
- request additional information;



- determine that further consideration is required prior to approval.
10. Should Executive Group decide to refer the proposed policy to The Board and/or GFC for approval, the policy sponsor will submit the draft policy and policy development form to The Board and/or GFC, incorporate any required revisions and forward an electronic copy of the approved policy along with a completed policy development form to the policy coordinator.
 11. The policy coordinator will ensure that the policy is posted on AU's website, updated in AU's policy and procedure manual and that the policy sponsor is notified accordingly.
 12. One paper copy of each policy, and each version of the policy, will be kept in a central location within the Office of the University Secretariat and will be considered the official version. Persons who need to rely on the text of the policies for legal and other purposes may obtain an official version of the policy from the policy coordinator. One paper copy of the procedures directly associated and referred to in the policies will also be kept.
 13. Once approved, the policy sponsor is responsible for implementation of the policy and any associated procedures. The policy should be communicated to all affected faculty, staff and students and arrangements should be made by the policy sponsor for appropriate training, interpretation and compliance monitoring.
 14. All policies must be reviewed annually, at a minimum, to ensure currency and relevancy. As part of this review, an annual status report indicating revisions to existing policies and new policy development for the coming year will be prepared by the policy sponsor with the assistance of the policy coordinator. This annual report will be presented to Executive Group, The Board and GFC by the Office of the University Secretariat.
 15. Notwithstanding the formal review process and annual report, policy sponsors are responsible for keeping their policies current and informing the policy coordinator of any changes.

Applicable Legislation and Regulations

[Post-Secondary Learning Act, S.A. 2003, c. P-19.5](#)

Related References, Policies, Procedures and Forms

[Appendix A – Policy Development Form](#)

[Appendix B – Policy Notification Form](#)

[Appendix C – Policy Template \(annotated\)](#)

[Policy Template - Standard Format](#)

[Policy Development and Maintenance at Athabasca University](#)

[Procedure Development and Maintenance at Athabasca University](#)

[Procedure Development Process](#)

[Policy Revision Process](#)



History

N/A

Appendix A

ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY

Office of the University Secretariat

Policy Development Form

Document Type:	Policy	Indicate if this is a new policy or a revision. If the policy is being rescinded please state.
Document Title:		Enter title as it will appear on the document.
Category:		List the category that best applies.
Key Words:		Enter key search words. Separate each with a comma.
Associated Documents:		Enter all associated documents.

Development Plan and Workflow Compliance (completed prior to approval)

Policy Sponsor:	Department/Centre responsible for the document. Mandatory for all documents.
Development Responsibility:	Identify the person responsible and accountable for the development process for the document. Signed and dated by that person. Completes summary of due diligence.



Administrative Responsibility:

Signed and dated by the most senior executive officer accountable for the document.

Development Plan and Workflow Compliance:

Signed and dated by the policy coordinator upon completion of the development plan and workflow.

Copy of the development plan and workflow attached.

Approvals

Approver: i.e. The Governors of Athabasca University, General Faculties Council

Identify the group approving the document.

Approval Date:

Identify the date of the meeting. Attach a copy of the meeting minutes.

Effective Date:

Identify the date the document becomes effective.

Approver Signature:

Signed by the appropriate executive officer, chair or designate once approved.

Summary of Due Diligence

The summary of due diligence is completed by the person responsible for development of the document. List all parties involved and their input into the document development process.

Consultation Group/Stakeholder (list everyone consulted throughout development process – If Individuals: list name and title;

Describe the involvement and results for each Consultation Group/Stakeholder

If Committees/Groups: list name of committee/group/department/centre



Appendix B

ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY

Office of the University Secretariat

Policy Notification Form

Policy Title:

Policy number:

Requested by:

Date:

1. Who is the individual responsible for the accuracy of the information within the policy?

Name: E-Mail:

Phone: Job Title:

2. Is this a new policy?

Yes No

3. If a new policy, please explain why it is necessary:

4. If revising a policy, please check the appropriate boxes:

 Type of Change

 Typo

 Clarification

 New Material

 Format

 Other

Describe Changes (attach old policy and new policy)



5. What will be the major impact and the overall goal of the new/revised policy?

6. Determine whether the new/revised policy will have a financial impact. Will new resources be required in order to implement the policy? Will there be any cost savings that result from the new/revised policy?

7. Will the new/revised policy be impacted by or impact any of the following?

- Federal Laws (including Tax Laws)
- Provincial Laws
- Municipal Laws
- Collective Agreements
- Existing Policy
- Existing Procedures
- Existing Forms

Describe the impact:

8. What are the risks of not establishing/revising the policy?

9. List the individuals or groups for whom the policy has an operational impact or whose activities will be impacted by the policy. (A representative sample of the opinions of the individuals/groups listed here must be obtained during the consultation process.)

10. Who do you intend to include in the consultation process (please provide names and the division they represent)? Which committees will you consult? (The individuals/groups listed in #9 and #10 will form a part of the consultation group along with any others deemed appropriate.)

11. If you require any specific assistance or information please indicate your requirements below.



Appendix C – Policy Template

Enter Title of Policy

- Policy Sponsor:** Enter the name of department/centre responsible for the administration of the policy.
- Policy Contact:** Enter the position title of the appropriate contact for questions, etc. regarding the policy.
- Policy Number:** Enter the departmental policy number.
- Effective Date:** Enter the date the policy will be effective.
- Approval Group:** All policies are approved by either Executive Group, The Board or GFC. List which group provides final approval.
- Approval Date:** Enter the date final approval is obtained.
- Review Date:** Enter the next review date. Policies are to be reviewed annually at a minimum.
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Purpose

Provide a succinct statement indicating the reason for the policy's existence and importance.

Definitions

Define words to specify which meaning of a word or expression is being used in the policy. Be wary of defining a common word that may also be used in its everyday sense elsewhere in the policy. Definitions can also be used to avoid repeating long phrases or qualifiers or to create a shorthand phrase for a complex concept.

Policy Statements

In this section, provide a clear, concise statement of expected behaviour, practice or standard that will guide or channel thinking and action. It must be clear what is or is not required by Athabasca University and why. Do not include procedures. Procedures are prepared in separate documentation. Specific delegations of responsibility or authority for particular decisions may be included. Students, faculty and staff should be regarded as the ultimate user of policies, and policies should be written with these users in mind. Try to avoid the use of strictly technological language unless clear definitions are provided. Remember that policies are public documents and will be published. If an action is mandatory "must" or "will" is used. If the action is recommended, then "should" is used. If the action is permissive, "may" is used. In most cases, the present tense is



preferred. Avoid the use of gender-specific pronouns. Use "their" in place of "he/she." Internal consistency in the use of language is important. In particular, different words and expressions should not be used for the same thing. Ambiguity will cause difficulty for those using a policy. Use the active voice rather than the passive voice. Make it clear who is responsible for the action, rather than leaving it ambiguous. Avoid the use of double negatives. Before using acronyms detail the full term/title.

Applicable Legislation and Regulations

State the relevant legislation this policy must comply with or is referenced to. Regulations are rules or orders issued by an executive authority or regulatory agency of government that have the force of law. State any relevant regulations that affect this policy.

Related References, Policies, Procedures and Forms

If any policy has a number of procedures, guidelines and/or documents associated with it, these should be listed in this section of the policy statement. All procedures, guidelines or forms that have been prepared to assist in the implementation of the policy must be referenced here and provided through hyperlink.

History

List dates the policy was reviewed, updated and/or reformatted.