

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a university policy?

A university policy applies broadly across the university or to major components of the university; enhances the university's mission; addresses issues of compliance with laws, regulations and internal standards; promotes operational efficiencies; or reduces institutional risk. Examples of university policies are the Code of Ethical Conduct, Policy on Appropriate Use of Computer and Network Resources, Policy on Eligibility for Retirement Plans, and the Whistleblower Policy.

Local or "unit-level" policies, on the other hand, apply only to a specific unit or department or address internal operations of a specific division, such as a parking policy for a specific campus, or a policy setting access requirements to certain lab areas within a department or college.

2. What is the difference between policy and procedure?

Policies are the broad rules and principles that provide a framework for compliance. Procedures, are task-oriented, operational details or steps for implementing policies, essentially a set of instructions or protocols for carrying out activities in accordance with the university's policies. For example, the Policy on Asset Disposition provides in broad outline the requirements for disposing of University-owned personal property and capital assets purchased with federal funds, while the Asset Disposition Form includes step-by-step procedures for how to transfer or dispose of different kinds of equipment and property, including what approvals are needed and where to route the request.

3. How do I find out if a policy has changed?

All university policies will have the date of the last revised version at the bottom of each page of the policy and in the box on the left of the first page. If a policy has been updated or revised within the last six months, there also will be an indication on the policy webpage. Similarly, newly approved university policies that have been posted to the policy website within the last six months will be flagged as new.

4. What if I think the university needs a policy on a certain topic and it doesn't already have one?

There is an established process for proposing a new policy. First, read the [Policy on Policies](#), which sets out applicable definitions and requirements, including review and approval authority, for new policies. Talk to the appropriate people within your unit or department, as well as any other units or departments that would have an interest in the policy, to reach consensus as to whether there is an issue that is best addressed by a university policy, and if so, what the focus and scope should be. Obtain approval of the member of the Senior Leadership Team for your area to proceed with the proposed policy. Then fill out the [Policy Proposal Form](#) and submit that form to the Policy Oversight Committee. If the Policy Oversight Committee approves the proposal, you will follow the [Policy Development Guidelines](#) in drafting the policy, and the steps for review set out in the Policy on Policies.

5. What if I notice something in a university policy that is out of date or incorrect?

If a policy needs a small correction or updated citation, send an email to policies@neu.edu. Otherwise, the process for revising or retiring a policy is similar to developing a new policy. Use the Policy Proposal Form. The Policy Oversight Committee will determine the level of review necessary for the proposed revision.

6. My unit wants to list or refer to some university policies (for which we are the Responsible Office) on our website. Can we do that even though there is now a central policy webpage?

Yes; units and departments are encouraged to link to any relevant university policies on their individual webpages, even if they aren't the Responsible Office, as long as they provide a link to the policy on the policy webpage. Do not download, or scan and post a stand-alone version of the policy, as these may become out of date. The only approved version of a university policy is the one on the policy webpage. Instructions for linking to the university policy webpage can be found here: [Instructions On Linking to University Policies](#)

7. Who approves policies?

For some university policies, such as the Record Retention Policy and Code of Ethical Conduct, approval by the Board of Trustees is appropriate. Some university policies are required by law. For most others final approval of a new or substantially revised or updated university policy will be by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The approval process is provided for in the Policy on Policies

8. *If I have questions about policy development or approval, where do I go?*

You can refer to the university policy webpage which provides helpful guidance and direction, including the Policy on Policies, Policy Development Guidelines, and a list of university offices that serve as resources. You can also contact Audrey Evans, Administrative Specialist, in the Office of the General Counsel at a.evans@neu.edu or send an email to policies@neu.edu.