

1.11.00.00 Development and Approval of Policies and Procedures



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Policy/Guideline Area

Governance, Organization, and General Policies

Applicable Divisions

System Office

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide for uniformity in the drafting, review, revision, and approval of all Board policies and procedures.

Definitions

- Policy – A written statement that mandates, specifies, or prohibits behavior to express basic values of the TBR system, enhance the TBR mission, ensure coordinated compliance with applicable laws and regulations, promote operational efficiency, and/or reduce institutional risk.
- Guideline – The operational steps required to accomplish an action that necessitates specific instructions. Generally, a guideline or will pertain to implementation of a Policy. Guidelines may also provide guidance for behavior on issues that are not dictated by Policy. A Guideline may occasionally be referred to as a “Procedure.”
- College Policy – A College Policy is any College-specific written statement of general applicability that meets the definition of a Policy or a Guideline, or which otherwise sets forth standards or formalizes operations at a College, regardless of the label assigned to the document (e.g., policy, procedure, guideline, guidance, interpretive statement, handbook, etc.) and regardless of whether the document applies College-wide or to certain operational unit(s) of the College. “College Policy”

does not include course syllabi and similar sets of expectations set by instructors for their individual classes.

- Responsible Party – The System Office person, office, or group charged with oversight of a Policy or Guideline related to their area of responsibility.

Policy/Guideline

I. Applicability of System-Wide Policies and Guidelines

A. TBR system-wide Policies and Guidelines are in effect for all TBR Colleges, except under limited, defined circumstances and exceptions as set out in this Policy. Reasons for system-wide uniformity include increasing consistency of operations; ensuring compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and standards; minimizing litigation, financial, audit, and other risks; and reducing potential conflict between a system-wide Policy or Guideline and a College Policy.

1. Pursuant to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Principles of Accreditation and Council on Occupational Education (COE) standards, a College is permitted to rely on and/or to adopt TBR-approved policies and guidelines without further review by a College committee.

B. Implementation of System-Wide Policies and Guidelines

1. A College may link to or otherwise adopt system-wide Policies and Guidelines.
2. Alternately, a College may create a separate version of system-wide Policies and Guidelines, in which case College Policies:
 - a. Must be substantively identical to and consistent with system-wide Policies and Guidelines;
 - b. Must not contain any material additions, material omissions, or other material differences;

- c. May be customized with color schemes and logos;
 - d. May provide College-specific information to assist the reader, such as contact information for College offices or employees;
 - e. May be re-numbered or reorganized;
 - f. May omit Policies and Guidelines not applicable to the College (e.g., Policies related to system governance; Policies designed for TCATs, if a Community College; Guidelines applicable to the System Office; etc.); and
 - g. May make other non-substantive, non-material changes.
- C. Board-approved Policies, including revisions, are effective and applicable to all Colleges ten business days after Board approval, unless the Board sets a different effective date. TBR Guidelines, including revisions, approved by the Presidents Council are effective and applicable to all Colleges ten business days after approval by the Presidents Council, unless the Presidents Council sets a different effective date.
 - 1. If a College creates a separate version of system-wide Policies and Guidelines, a College must have in place a mechanism to implement new system-wide Policies and Guidelines, as well as revisions, on the effective date. To do so, Colleges are expected to monitor the Presidents Council and Board agendas to implement Policies and Guidelines, including revisions, as of the effective dates. If permitted by this Policy, a College may make additional revisions in accordance with College processes either as of the effective date or later.
- D. No College Policy shall be inconsistent with a system-wide Policy or Guideline unless authorized by this Policy, or unless the Chancellor or designee approves an exception. Any request for an exception that is not authorized by this Policy must first be directed to the Office of General Counsel for legal advice.

- E. College Policies may be implemented to increase operational efficiencies or otherwise to advance the mission of the College in certain circumstances. These situations include the need to operationalize or to apply a system-wide Policy or Guideline to the specifics of the College; to implement a College Policy where there is no applicable system-wide Policy or Guideline; or to provide a level of fiscal oversight by the College greater than required by a system-wide Policy or Guideline. Examples of areas in which Colleges retain flexibility to draft College Policies are as follows.
1. A College may implement financial controls more strict than required by a system-wide Policy or Guideline, after getting approval from the Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance;
 2. If a system-wide Policy or Guideline directs the creation of a College Policy, the College Policy shall not be inconsistent with any system-wide Policy or Guideline;
 3. Training documents that explain a system-wide Policy or Guideline. (Documents purporting to summarize Policies and Guidelines are highly discouraged.)
- F. In certain areas, Colleges retain little or no flexibility to create new College Policies or to make any substantive modifications to system-wide Policies and Guidelines, including those relating to:
1. Student matters (i.e., system-wide Policies beginning with “3” and system-wide Guidelines beginning with “S”);
 2. Discrimination, equal employment opportunity, and harassment (i.e., those implementing civil rights laws, including, but not limited to, TBR Guideline P-080 and system-wide Policies beginning with a “6”);
 3. Safety and security (i.e., system-wide policies beginning with a “7”);
 4. Constitutional rights;
 5. Statutory, regulatory, and other legal requirements; and

6. Employee benefits, leave, disciplinary standards, and most other aspects of personnel Policies and Guidelines.

II. Policy and Guideline Initiation and Revision

- A. New and revised system-wide Policies and Guidelines may be initiated either by an established Sub-council or System Office administration. Responsibility for policy areas is generally as follows:

1. Safety and Security Policies and Guidelines – Office of General Counsel; Campus Safety and Security.
2. Sexual Discrimination/Harassment/Misconduct Policies and Guidelines – Office of General Counsel.
3. Personnel Policies and Guidelines – Office of Business and Finance (Human Resources Department).
4. Business and Finance Policies and Guidelines – Office of Business and Finance; Internal Audit.
5. Student Policies and Guidelines – Office of Policy and Strategy.
6. Academic Policies and Guidelines– Office of Academic Affairs.
7. Governance, Organization, and General Policies and Guidelines – Office of General Counsel, Office of Information Technology.
8. Marketing and Communications Policies and Guidelines – Department of Marketing, Digital Strategy, and Public Relations.
9. The Chancellor or the Board of Regents may designate a responsible party for the initiation or revision of a Policy or Guideline.
10. All Policies and Guidelines should be reviewed and revised or deleted as needed, but not less than every five (5) years.
11. When proposing revisions to a Policy or Guideline, or when proposing a new Policy or Guideline, the responsible party shall obtain from the Office of General Counsel the current version of the Policy or Guideline or the

template for a new Policy or Guideline. Using an OGC-provided document will ensure that revisions are made to the correct version of the document, will bring consistency to formatting, and will enable the new or revised document to be loaded into the policy management software.

12. Policies must comply with the Style Guide identified in Exhibit 1.
13. The General Counsel is responsible for compilation, organization and maintenance of all system Policies and Guidelines and may make such changes to the organization of the Policies and Guidelines as necessary.
14. The General Counsel is responsible for disseminating new and revised policies and guidelines to the Colleges.

III. Policy and Guideline Initiation and Review

A. Proposed Policies and Guidelines.

1. The responsible party shall send an original draft to the Office of General Counsel prior to any action by any sub-council.
2. The General Counsel or designee will review the proposed Policy or Guideline for legal sufficiency and consistency with existing Policies and Guidelines.
3. In consultation with the Chancellor and appropriate Vice-Chancellors, the General Counsel will review the Policy or Guideline for necessity and consistency with the goals and mission of the TBR system and for proper classification as a Policy or Guideline, and will also designate which sub-councils will review the Policy or Guideline, and then return it to the responsible party for action by the designated sub-council(s). The Chancellor has the discretion to send a Policy or Guideline directly to the President's Council and/or Board for consideration, when necessary.
4. The responsible party or designee will present the Policy or Guideline to the designated sub-council(s) for review and action.

- a. A Guideline approved in sub-council without further revision is then transmitted by the responsible party to the Presidents Council for consideration on a transmittal form and in the manner directed by the Chancellor's Office.
 - b. A Guideline requiring further revision in sub-council should be reviewed by General Counsel or designee prior to being transmitted to the Presidents Council.
 - c. A Guideline approved by the Presidents Council will be effective on the date designated in the Guideline and will be posted to the TBR Policies and Guidelines website no later than the effective date.
 - d. A proposed Guideline that is not approved by the Presidents Council will be returned to the responsible party for further review, revision, and possible presentation at a subsequent Presidents Council meeting.
 - e. A Policy approved by the Presidents Council will be transmitted through the appropriate committee to the Board of Regents for consideration on a form provided by the Board Secretary and in the manner directed by the Board Secretary.
 - f. A Policy that does not receive approval by the Presidents Council will be returned to the responsible party. If the Chancellor approves, the responsible party may choose to transmit the Policy through the appropriate committee to the Board, noting the lack of approval by the Presidents Council.
5. A Policy approved by the Board of Regents will be effective as set forth above in this Policy and will be posted to the TBR Policies and Guidelines website no later than the effective date.

6. A Policy not approved by the Board will be returned to the responsible party for further review, revision, and possible presentation at subsequent President's Council and Board Meetings.

B. Revision or Rescission of Existing Policies and Guidelines.

1. Revisions or rescission of existing Policies and Guidelines will follow the same process as newly proposed Policies and Guidelines..

IV. Ministerial Changes to Policies and Guidelines

A. The General Counsel is authorized to make ministerial revisions to Policies and Guidelines:

1. To bring the Policy or Guideline into compliance with a statutory, regulatory, or other legal requirement;
2. To correct a clerical or other typographical error; or
3. To make an administrative change (e.g., the title of an administrator, office, or document) that will not change the substantive meaning of the Policy or Guideline.

B. Exhibits to Policies and Guidelines (forms, templates, sample contracts, etc.) do not require approval by the Presidents Council or Board. New or revised exhibits are reviewed and approved by the responsible party for the subject Policy or Guideline.

Exhibits

For Exhibits, click the Attachments button at the top right of the page.



Sources

Authority

T.C.A. § 49-8-203

History

NEW Policy approved by Board, June 23, 2017; ministerial revisions to exhibits and their references, June 26, 2018; Revision approved at Board Meeting June 20, 2019; Revisions approved at Board Meeting September 19, 2025, effective October 3, 2025.