Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Policy on Policies

Background Context

What is the Policy on Policies and what is the purpose?

Policy on Policies is an overarching policy that describes key elements of the University of Southern California ("USC") policy process and framework. This policy helps to ensure USC policies are compliant and consistent with legal and regulatory requirements and the University's culture and values.

The policy outlines USC's policy lifecycle and describes the key elements of University-wide policies including the development methodology, communication, maintenance, archiving, and retirement process. The policy details the policy governance process such as roles and responsibilities of policy governance committees and other stakeholders.

Why was the Policy on Policies developed?

A robust policy framework is important to the efficient and effective operation of the University and a sound institutional compliance program. The policy helps to achieve the following, but are not limited to;

- Consistent and standardized look and feel throughout the organization;
- Compliance with legal, regulatory, industry and other standards and requirements; and
- Assist the organization in achieving its mission and strategic goals;
- Promote operational efficiency and excellence; and
- Mitigate organizational risks.

What is the scope of the Policy and who does it apply to?

All faculty, staff, students, and contractors involved in the development, approval, implementation, or maintenance of University Policies and related resources are expected to comply with this policy.

Any policy that applies to one or multiple departments, schools, or units is required to adhere to this policy. Department, school, or unit policies must be reviewed against University Policies to ensure there are no provisions that conflict with a University Policy.

Policy Development and Revision Process

Where can I find the USC Policy Template and other policy resources?

USC Policy and Procedure templates can be found on the USC Policy and Related Document Templates webpage.

Required forms for policy submissions can be found on the USC Policy Resource webpage.

When creating or revision a policy, when should Policy Owners engage with Subject Matter Experts ("SMEs")?

Policy Owners must consult with the appropriate SMEs as early as possible in the policy development process. Policy Owners are encouraged to engage with SMEs before submitting the Policy Assessment & Notification form, this helps to ensure Policy Owners appropriately understand impacts across departments and the USC community.

SMEs should be identified by the Policy Drafter, Policy Owner, Responsible Office, and in consultation with the Office of Culture Ethics and Compliance ("OCEC") as needed.

Who else is required to be consulted and engaged in the policy development process?

In addition to consulting SMEs, the following offices must also be consulted before submitting a policy for approval:

- Academic Senate **(if policy impacts faculty)**
- Human Resources
- Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX
- Office of Culture, Ethics and Compliance
- Office of General Counsel
- Office of the Provost **(if the policy impacts faculty)**
- Student Affairs **(if the policy impacts students)**
- Keck Medicine of USC **(if the policy impacts the hospital system)**

Points of contact in the above listed offices should be identified by the Policy Drafter, Policy Owner and Responsible Office or by contacting usc.policy@usc.edu.

What are the specific roles and responsibilities of individuals throughout the policy process?

To help further define roles and responsibilities of individuals involved in the policy process, OCEC has a RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consult and Inform) matrix available for Policy Owners to reference.

Please contact the OCEC Policy Management team at usc.policy@usc.edu to request a copy of the policy RACI matrix.

*Note, the RACI matrix is not available on the USC policy webpage as it is subject to frequent changes dependent on University operations.

Why am I being asked to move my procedures into a separate document?

Linking procedures within the policy document, rather than including them in the policy itself, is considered a best practice as it results in shorter policy documents that are easier to digest.

Furthermore, separating procedures from policy reduces the administrative burden on the Responsible Office as amendments to procedures are made on an operational basis and do not generally require the same level of review and approval as University policies.

Other

Why am I being asked for target submit for approval dates for the policies that I own?

As USC migrates its policies to a standard revision schedule as per best practices, University policies should be reviewed on a biennial basis.

Target submit for approval dates allow the Policy Management Team and senior leadership to anticipate and plan for the policies coming due for review and approval during this biennial cycle.

Who do I contact if I have additional questions about the Policy on Policies?

You may contact the Office of Culture, Ethics and Compliance for any questions regarding this policy at usc.policy@usc.edu