HOP STYLE GUIDE

1. POLICY FORMAT

Each HOP Policy must utilize the following document standards to ensure policies have a cohesive appearance:

- Font must be Calibri 11 pt.
- Policy title must be ALL CAPS using **Boldface Type**.
- Page numbers must be inserted at bottom right of document.
- Margins must be set to normal.
- Paragraphs must be single-spaced, with one return space between each paragraph, and each new paragraph beginning at the left-hand margin, without a tab space.
- Sections must be organized and numbered in the following order (examples included of proper header formats for the paragraph levels):

A. Level 1 (header format is **<u>Lowercase Boldface, Underlined</u>**)
   1. Level 2 (if a header is used, format is *Italics,* neither boldfaced nor underlined)
      a. Level 3 (if a header is used, format is <u>Underlined</u>, neither boldfaced nor underlined)
         i. Level 4 (if a header is used, no additional formatting, e.g. Header)
            i.i Level 5
               1. Level 6
                  a. Level 7
                     i. Level 8
                        i.i Level 9

Policies must conform to these standards when submitted for review by the Chief Legal Officer, or they will not be recommended to the President for approval.

NOTE: It is strongly recommended that the Office of Legal Affairs be contacted for drafting assistance before a policy document is submitted for HOP Committee review.

2. POLICY HEADER

Each HOP Policy must include a header with the policy number, responsible executive, and origination date. If a change is necessary to the responsible executive, this would be a non-significant change.

3. POLICY TITLE

Each HOP Policy must include a policy title which identifies the purpose of the policy in as few words as possible. The first word of the title should be a key word, and the title should be clear so that it can be easily searchable by title.

4. POLICY SECTIONS

Each HOP policy must include the following sections in the order below:

A. Purpose

The **Purpose** section should include a brief statement (one to three sentences) answering the question on why the policy exists, such as the problem or conflict the policy seeks to address, the legal or regulatory requirement the policy aims to meet, or the overall benefits of the policy.

Purpose statements should not include history, procedures, definitions, or policy statements.

Example: The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the sale, service, possession, or consumption of alcoholic beverages on property owned or controlled by The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV), including all leased or licensed property and all annexes or other off-campus locations.

Example: The purpose of this policy is to encourage fair, efficient, and equitable solutions for problems arising out of the employment relationship.

B. Persons Affected

The **Persons Affected** section should identify all groups or individuals who are affected or covered by the policy and who need to read the policy (e.g. students, employees, faculty members, visitor, contractors, or other similar categories).

If a policy is meant to apply universally, the following language should be used: "This policy applies to all individuals associated with or on the premises of UTRGV, including without limitation employees, faculty, students, visitors, volunteers, contractors, or vendors."

Because this section refers to persons affected, it may not use property to describe scope. "This policy applies to all UTRGV property[]" would not be an appropriate statement for the **Persons Affected** *section.*

C. Policy

The **Policy** section is the most important section of the policy document. Well-drafted policy statements:

- Regulate, direct, or control actions or conduct of the persons affected
- Set the criteria that allow the persons affected to regulate their own conduct in an appropriate manner
- Clarify how UTRGV conducts business
- Ensure compliance with applicable law, regulations, rules or policies
- Promote accountability

This section contains the full text of the policy and should provide a clear statement of the rule(s) or requirement(s) the policy seeks to implement. Individuals should know from reading this section only, what the policy is and how it extends to the university community. It identifies the university's position and the standard of behavior it expects of its employees, faculty, students, and others. This section should provide direction to the persons affected and answer the following questions:

- In what situation(s) does the policy apply?
- What is expected of employees, faculty, students, or others?
- Are there exclusions or special situations?

When appropriate, this section also includes instructions for reporting and resolving noncompliance with the policy. Procedures should not be included in the **Policy** section.

Drafting tips:

1. *Use clear, simple, concise language, keeping the reader in mind. Think of the reader as the new employee who is not a subject-matter expert. Will this reader be able to understand what is expected?*
2. *Avoid jargon.*
3. *Use as few words as possible to say what needs to be said. For example, say "Faculty and staff" rather than "All faculty and staff" – "all" is redundant, since "faculty and staff" implies all unless there is an exception.*
4. *Use the active voice and present tense.*
5. *Select verbs carefully. Use "must," "will," or "are responsible for" when it is necessary to comply. Use of "should" or "may" implies a choice or discretion – so only use these terms when discretion is permitted.*

Example: UTRGV provides paid vacation leave to eligible employees for scheduled time away from work, in accordance with state law.

Example: Department or unit heads are responsible for protecting and preserving all records under their control, for timely disposing of records under their control according to this policy, and for ensuring employees adhere to this policy and applicable state records management laws.

Example: Supervisors will use reasonable efforts to provide work-schedule and work-pattern flexibility for the expression of milk for up to one year after the birth of a child.

Example: Each individual issued a key is responsible for using the issued key to gain access only to authorized area(s) to conduct UTRGV business, and for ensuring the door(s) to the area(s) are properly locked or otherwise secured at the conclusion of business or work.

Example: Primary individuals are required to use UTRGV's effort certification system to certify their own effort and the effort of supporting individuals that work on their sponsored projects, and are responsible for the accuracy of the certifications.

Example: Retaliation against individuals who oppose discriminatory practices, file a charge or complaint of discrimination, or testify for, assist in, or participate in an investigative proceeding relating to discrimination is also prohibited.

Example: All offices and individuals responsible for reviewing or analyzing requests for accommodations will maintain the confidentiality of all medical and disability-related information. Records pertaining to employees will be kept separate from personnel files and will be accessible only to authorized personnel.

D. Procedures

The **Procedures** section describes, in concrete terms, the steps, activities or mechanisms necessary to implement and enforce the policy statement(s). This section provides the university community with a sequential, step-by-step guide of key actions required to comply with the policy statements. It should detail:

- "What" actions should be taken
- "Who" performs the actions to be taken
- "When" actions should be taken
- "How" actions should be taken

Procedures should be written in a format that is easy to follow, using numbers or bullets to delineate the steps to be followed.

Responsibilities of individuals can be listed in a user-friendly fashion in this section, e.g., "Supervisors are responsible for facilitating and monitoring employee compliance with training requirements."

There may be situations in which procedures are, by the nature of the subject matter, detailed or subject to frequent change. In these cases, consideration (in coordination with the Office of Legal Affairs) should be given to developing a manual, appendix, or guidance document to which the policy document refers.

E. Definitions

The **Definitions** section defines key words/terms used within the policy that are unfamiliar, technical, or have specialized meaning, so that readers can understand the meaning of these key words or terms. Do not include definitions for key words or terms that are not used in the policy.

Definitions for defined terms should be consistent with those contained in other policies for the same terms. For example, if three policies use the same key term or definition and define that term the same way (e.g., "business day"), the definitions and use in all three policies must be the same.

Definitions should be underlined, italicized and in alphabetical order in the format below:

1. <u>*Word 1*</u> – Definition.

Do not include a policy statement (a rule or requirement) or a description of a procedure (how to implement the rule or requirement) in a definition.

<u>*Drafting tip*</u>*: If a term is defined somewhere else (e.g., in the policy or procedures sections) and used multiple times, that term and its definition should be moved to this section.*

F. **Related Statutes or Regulations, Rules, Policies, or Standards**

The **Related Statutes or Regulations, Rules, Policies, or Standards** section lists any UTRGV or UT System policies, or Board of Regents rules, as well as any local, state, or federal laws or administrative regulations, relating to the policy and provides a link to each.

Examples of acceptable references:

- Section 552.102, *Texas Government Code*
- Texas Charitable Raffle Enabling Act, Chapter 2002, *Texas Occupations Code*
- Personal Financial Disclosure, Standards of Conduct, and Conflict of Interest, Chapter 572, *Texas Government Code*
- 42 CFR Part 93, Public Health Service Polices on Research Misconduct
- University of Texas System Board of Regents' *Rules and Regulations* Rule 31102, Evaluation of Tenures Faculty
- AAUP Statement on Professional Ethics

G. **Dates Reviewed or Amended**

This **Dates Reviewed or Amended** section specifies dates in which the policy was reviewed or amended.

5. **GENERAL EDITORIAL STANDARDS FOR POLICIES**

A. **UT System References:** **https://www.utsystem.edu/sites/branding/writing-style-guide**
- Use "The University of Texas System" on first reference and "the UT System" on second reference.
- "The" is capitalized in "The University of Texas System," but is not capitalized when the

reference is to "the UT System."

B. **The Board of Regents:** http://www.utsystem.edu/sites/branding/writing-style-guide
- On first reference, use "The University of Texas System Board of Regents," and on second reference use "The UT System Board of Regents."
- Avoid using UT Board of Regents.
- Only "Rules and Regulations" are italicized in Regents' *Rules and Regulations.* Regents' *Rules is* acceptable on the second reference.

C. **Texas Education or Government Code:**
http://www.utsystem.edu/sites/branding/writing-style-guide
- Refer to bills as House Bill 1 or Senate Bill 1, or as H.B. 1 or S.B. 1 (periods but no space between the letters, then a space between the letters and the number).
- Use a comma when referring to a chapter of the code but not when referring to a section of the code.
- Use codifications after the legislative session, e.g., Section 41.44, *Texas Government Code* or *Texas Education Code*, Chapter 79.

D. **UTRGV Naming:**
http://www.utrgv.edu/umc/creative-services/graphic-identity-guidelines/editorial/
- On first reference, use "The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley."
- Second references may be to "UTRGV."
- Avoid using "the University" or "the institution."

E. **Capitalization:**
- Official names are capitalized; unofficial, informal, shortened or generic names are not. This rule applies to committees, offices, buildings, schools, departments, programs, centers, etc.
- Phrases such as the center, the institute, or the new museum are not capitalized.
- Examples:
  - The Office of Admissions and Registrar, the registrar's office, the registrar.
  - The College of Business, the business college, all colleges.
  - The UTRGV Library, the library.
  - The Conflict of Interest Committee, the Academic Affairs Committee, each committee.

F. **Titles:**
- Capitalize a position title when it is used specifically, e.g., Dean of the College of Business; Chief Human Resources Officer.
- Do not capitalize a title when it is used generically, e.g., each department chair, all managers and supervisors.

G. **Numbers:**
- In most cases, use numerals for numbers equal to or greater than 10, but spell out numbers one through nine and numbers the beginning of a sentence.
- Example:
  - He has finished six of his 14 tasks.

    o Exceptions: Use numerals with the words "million," "billion," (The city has 3 million people) and "percent" (there was a 3 percent reduction in the budget).

H. **Additional tips:**
- Check spelling and punctuation.
- Avoid using "he/she" or "his/her." Use "he or she" or rewrite to the plural.
- If you mean "and/or," just use "or."
- Separate each element of a series with commas: x, y, and z; x, y, or z.
- Check hyperlinks to make sure they are current and work.
- Include white space in lists to make reading easier.
- Subsections with no related information must be marked "Not applicable" after the colon.
- Use "must" for an obligation rather than "shall"; use "must not" for a prohibition; use "may" for a discretionary action; and use "should" for a recommendation.

I. **HOP Sections:**
ADM 01 series: General HOP related policies
ADM 02 series: Administration policies
ADM 03 series: Institutional Compliance policies
ADM 04 series: General Personnel policies
ADM 05 series: Faculty and Staff Senates
ADM 06 series: Faculty and Academic policies
ADM 07 series: Research and other Sponsored Projects policies
ADM 10 series: Business / Fiscal / Facilities policies
STU 01 series: Student Policies – General STU 02 series: Student Policies – Compliance
STU 03 series: Student Policies – Student Records / Federal / State Mandate
STU 05 series: Student Policies – Academic