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| **Draft**  *(Date)* | CORNELL UNIVERSITY POLICY LIBRARY | POLICY  Volume:  Chapter:  Responsible Executive:  Responsible Office:  Originally Issued: Revised: |
| Policy Title |

This template is designed to assist policy writers to organize the content of a policy according to the official policy template used at Cornell University. University policy generally applies to either all units of the university, including the Weill Cornell Medical College (WCMC), or only to the Ithaca-based campuses. Therefore, when drafting a policy, you must consider whether the policy applies to all or some of the university, and draft the policy accordingly. This template allows you to draft separate sections for the Ithaca-based and WCMC campuses (NYC and Qatar). Separate sections are available throughout the document for campus-specific information.

**Note:** You may delete instructions (on this page and in italics in the other sections) when you no longer need them.

**Policy Writing**

The University Policy Office will aid you in editing your text to conform to university policy standards. In general, we will apply appropriate formatting, grammar, etc. Below are some general guidelines for drafting policy language.

General Guidelines for Writing Policy:

1. You are writing for a general audience – the university-at-large. To maximize understanding for the **average** individual, use clear and precise language, brief sentences, and common words. Please avoid jargon. When it is not possible to avoid industry terminology, it might be necessary to define certain terms.
2. Avoid absolutes such as the word “ensure,” whereby the university might be in breach of its own policy unwittingly by failing to deliver such a guarantee. For example, instead of “the unit head must ensure compliance,” try “the unit head must implement procedures for compliance.”
3. Avoid “should” and opt for firm language such as “must,” especially as the actions required by a university policy typically are not optional.
4. Where possible, use the active voice rather than the passive. For example, instead of “it is the ultimate responsibility of the unit head to…,” try “the unit head is responsible for…” or “the unit head must…”
5. When describing tasks or a series of items, break up text using lists or headings. Avoid using bulleted or numbered lists simply to separate paragraphs.
6. When appropriate, use graphic illustrations such as tables, charts, and flow charts to display data or information.

***All units***

***If the policy applies to all units of the university, information on the first page of the policy must apply to all units.***

**I. Policy Statement**

*Generally, two to four sentences, the “Policy Statement” states the policy’s intent, who must follow the policy, when the policy applies, and any mandated actions or constraints. It doesn't describe procedures. While this is sometimes the same policy statement that appears on the impact statement approved by the Executive Policy Review Group (EPRG), it may change during the development of the final draft policy.*

**II. Reason for Policy**

*Generally, two to four sentences, the “Reason for Policy” cites the university’s commitment to a value or mission, why the policy must exist, the problem or conflict the policy seeks to address, and/or cites any legal, regulatory, stewardship or other requirement the policy aims to meet.*

**III. Entities Affected By This Policy**

*The university’s position is that policies must apply to all units of the university; therefore, policy makers must make an effort to include the Weill Cornell Medical College (WCMC) in discussions involving the development or revision of policies, where appropriate. Depending on the outcome of those discussions, use one of the following two statements in this section:*

* *All units of the university*
* *Ithaca-based campuses and Tompkins County and Geneva locations*

**IV. Who Should Read This Policy**

*List persons who must understand the policy in order to do their jobs.*

*Examples:*

* *All members of the university community*
* *All regular staff members*
* *Deans, directors, and department heads*
* *Unit human resource representatives*

**V. Web Address For This Policy**

*The University Policy Office will complete.*

**VI. Related Resources**

*List related university policy documents (and websites), other university and external documents (and websites), as well as forms and systems that provide helpful, relevant information or that might be necessary to enable compliance with this policy.*

***All units (resources that apply to all units)***

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| **University Policies and Documents** |
| *Place text here. All documents go into one cell.*  Document one  Document two |
| **External Documentation** |
| *Place text here. All documents go into one cell.*  Document one  Document two |
| **University Forms and Systems** |
| *Place text here. All documents go into one cell. Typically, “Systems” are online applications or other software that one can use to complete a task required by this policy.*  Form one  Form two |

***Ithaca-based campuses only (resources that apply only to Ithaca-based campus units)***

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| **University Policies and Documents** |
| *Place text here. All documents go into one cell.*  Document one  Document two |
| **External Documentation** |
| *Place text here. All documents go into one cell.*  Document one  Document two |
| **University Forms and Systems** |
| *Place text here. All documents go into one cell. Typically, “Systems” are online applications or other software that one can use to complete a task required by this policy.*  Form one  Form two |

***Weill Cornell Medical College campus only (resources that apply only to WCMC units)***

***(Specify NYC or Qatar where different)***

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| **University Policies** |
| *Place text here. All documents go into one cell.*  Document one  Document two |
| **Other Documents** |
| *Place text here. All documents go into one cell.*  Document one  Document two |
| **Forms and Tools** |
| *Place text here. All documents go into one cell. Typically, “Systems” are online applications or other software that one can use to complete a task required by this policy.*  Form one  Form two |

**VII. Contacts**

*The first item* ***must*** *be “Policy Clarification and Interpretation,” which directs the reader to the appropriate contact in the responsible office that administers the policy. List all items that relate to subject matter in the document about which the reader may have follow-up questions.*

***Note:*** *Please do not list e-mail addresses of* ***specific staff members****, as individuals often change positions. Instead, use department e-mail addresses.*

***All units, or Ithaca-based campuses only***

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject Matter *(****alphabetical order)* | **Office Name** *(not the name of an individual)* | **Telephone Number**  *(XXX) XXX-XXXX* | **E-mail/Web Address** |
| Policy Clarification and Interpretation |  |  |  |
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***Weill Cornell Medical College campus only***

***(Specify NYC or Qatar where different)***

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject Matter *(****alphabetical order)* | **Office Name** *(not the name of an individual)* | **Telephone Number** *(XXX) XXX-XXXX* | **E-mail/Web Address** |
| Policy Clarification and Interpretation |  |  |  |
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**VIII. Definitions**

*Define terms that have specialized or particular meanings in the policy, or for which a definition would be helpful in understanding or complying with the policy. Include industry-specific terms mentioned in the policy that might not be common knowledge for the average person. Please do not include terms that will not be used in the policy. Additionally, do not include information in a definition that does not pertain specifically to the definition of the term. Background information, additional descriptors, and other restrictions should be included in the body of the policy, and not the definitions.*

***All units***

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| **Term** *(alphabetical order)* | **Definition** |
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**IX. Responsibilities (required)**

*Summarize the responsibilities of all university parties and offices named in the policy. Mirrors the “Procedures” section by presenting these responsibilities according to job function, while Procedures presents these responsibilities according to tasks.*

***Tips:***

1. *Begin each responsibility with a present tense verb, e.g., “Prepare,” “Develop,” etc.*
2. *Except in instances when a specific position holds responsibility, such as the provost, president, etc., job functions do not refer to individuals, but rather to groups of individuals, such as deans, directors, unit heads, account reconcilers, unit human resource representatives, etc.*

***All units, or Ithaca-based campuses only***

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| **Responsible Party** *(alphabetical order)* | **List of Responsibilities** |
| **Job Function 1** | Responsibility 1  Responsibility 2  Responsibility 3 |
| **Job Function 2** | Responsibility 1  Responsibility 2  Responsibility 3 |
| **Job Function 3** | Responsibility 1  Responsibility 2  Responsibility 3 |

***Weill Cornell Medical College campus only***

***(Specify NYC or Qatar where different)***

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| --- | --- |
| **Responsible Party** *(alphabetical order)* | **List of Responsibilities** |
| **Job Function 1** | Responsibility 1  Responsibility 2  Responsibility 3 |
| **Job Function 2** | Responsibility 1  Responsibility 2  Responsibility 3 |
| **Job Function 3** | Responsibility 1  Responsibility 2  Responsibility 3 |

***All units***

***If the policy applies to all units of the university, information in the Principles section of the policy must apply to all units.***

**X. Principles**

*Similar to the “Policy Statement” and “Reason for Policy,” the “Principles” section of the policy outlines the philosophical basis for the policy, states what new requirement(s) or provision(s) this policy establishes, and may set forth general restrictions and expectations. This section allows for a fuller description of these issues than was possible in the “Policy Statement” and “Reason for Policy.”*

**XI. Procedures**

*A university policy at Cornell must contain some procedures for compliance that outline how the policy’s requirements will be met. This section will “mirror” the “Responsibilities” section, which outlines actions required according to job function, while here, in “Procedures,” such action is listed according to the tasks themselves.*

***Suggestions:***

* *Subheadings are used to categorize procedures. Because procedures represent tasks, these subheadings are best written in active voice, e.g., “Drafting Procedures.”*
* *When describing a procedure, please include reference to the actual party responsible for the task (e.g., the unit head) rather than using general terms such as “you” or “the unit.”*
* *Unlike the “Principles” section, which is mostly philosophical in nature and not likely to change, the “Procedures” section is informational and will change as frequently as systems and processes change. For that reason, and where possible, we suggest considering this fact when choosing which procedures to include in the policy and which to maintain online at the unit level.*

***All Units, or Ithaca-based campus only***

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***Weill Cornell Medical College campus only***

***(Specify NYC or Qatar where different)***

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**XIII. Appendix (optional)**

*Appendices are used for informational material that is helpful in understanding the policy, but not directly related to the implementation of the policy, i.e., not procedures. Content may include graphics or text.*

***All units, or Ithaca-based campuses only***

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***Weill Cornell Medical College campus only***

***(Specify NYC or Qatar where different)***

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