# Operating Policy

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| **Subject** | Governance and Organization |
| **Policy Number** |  |
| **Revised** | November 2009, April 2012 |
| **Web Link** | <https://www.montana.edu/policy/operating_policy/> |
| **Effective Date** | January 2002 |
| **Review Date** | August 2024 |
| **Responsible Party** | Legal Counsel |
| **Scope** | All MSU Campuses |



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## 100.00 Introduction and Purpose

This policy establishes the policy system for the development, identification, distribution, review and revision of University Policies.

### 110.00 Scope

This policy will apply, based on the policy definition below, to all MSU campuses. University-wide policy may be developed when consistent action is desired across the campuses. Each affiliate campus will have a central repository for policy maintenance; University Compliance will maintain the University-wide and Bozeman campus policies.

### 120.00 Definitions

#### University

For this policy's purpose, all MSU campuses will be referred to as the "University." When not specified, the policy refers to the University.

#### Single University Campuses

When only referring to one of the campuses, they shall be referred to as a “campus” or as follows:

1. Bozeman
2. Great Falls College
3. Northern
4. Billings

#### Responsible party

The responsible party is the person or position responsible for implementation, regular review and maintenance of the policy including reviews and administrative updates.

#### Policy

A document, adopted by the campus’s established forum, which outlines governing principles that guide action to an issue or circumstance which is campus-wide or University-wide and is likely to surface repeatedly.

## 200.00 Policy

Policies will be consistent with relevant federal and state laws, rules and regulations, and the Board of Regents policies and procedures.

Montana State University Policies shall be characterized by the following criteria:

1. It is a governing principle that mandates or constrains actions.
2. It has campus-wide or University-wide applications.
3. It helps ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations, enhances the university's mission, promotes operational efficiencies, and/or reduces institutional risk.
4. It changes infrequently and sets a course for the foreseeable future.
5. It will be broad enough to permit discretionary action in resolution of day-to-day situations yet be specific enough to provide clear guidance.
6. It has been reviewed, voted on and adopted by the campus’s established forum.

## 300.00 Procedure

### 310.00 Development of a Policy

Policy is developed by following the steps outlined below.

1. A university employee or work group of university employees will submit a policy concept proposal to their department head, supervisor or director, and University Compliance.
2. University Compliance will consult with the Department head, or supervisor of the unit, and other interested parties to determine if the policy concept proposal should be developed or alternatively:
   1. added to an existing policy;
   2. implemented by a policy already in place;
   3. it violates existing policy, regulations or law;
   4. or other reasoning for not moving forward with development, at the discretion of University Compliance.
3. If a policy concept proposal is approved to move forward by University Compliance, the individual or work group will work with the Department Head, supervisor of the unit, or University Compliance to draft the proposed Policy, including designation of a responsible party.
4. University Compliance will address the proposed Policy with the responsible Executive Officer and legal counsel.
5. The University Compliance will either remand the proposal to the work group/responsible party for approval or progress the proposal through the approval process outlined in section 330.00.

Havre, Great Falls and Billings are encouraged to send policy proposals to University Compliance in Bozeman for review to help determine if a policy at the MSU or BOR may already be in place, or to identify a revision to an existing policy instead.

### 320.00 Review and Revision of a Policy

To maintain an effective set of policies, all Policies must have a regular schedule of review and revision. Policies shall be reviewed every three years or less. A Policy can be revised at any time outside of its normal review process. Anyone at Bozeman may propose a revision to a Policy by routing the suggestion through the responsible party of the Policy and University Compliance.

A proposal for revision should include the proposed changes, the reasoning for the changes, and justification for immediate action, rather than waiting for the next review period.

University Compliance may contact a Policy’s Responsible Party to initiate a Policy review.

When a Policy is revised, it is reissued with a new date; however, portions of a Policy may be revised without changing the entire Policy.

#### 321.00 Informational Items

Minor or routine changes to policy or changes mandated by state or federal law or the Board of Regents may be made after consultation with and approval by the individual who is responsible for the review of the policy as indicated in the caption of the policy. Minor or routine changes may include items such as updating a title, department name, correction of hyperlinks, or correcting typographical errors. These may appear and be explained during University Council as Informational Items. A minor or routine change to a policy which does include substantive changes does not have to be voted on and approved by the campus’ forum.

### 330.00 Approval of New Policy Proposal or Revision of a Policy

Each campus shall establish a forum to notify the policy's constituent groups of the proposed policy and facilitate the collection of comments from these groups. The comments shall be disseminated to both the policy's sponsors and the appropriate Executive Officer(s).

After the comments have been addressed, the policy can be voted on by the forum. If approved by the forum, the policy must be implemented at the suitable organizational level(s) and published to the suitable University or campus online policy repository.

Other campuses must coordinate with their policy administrator to ensure the new or revised policy is published to their online policy repository.

#### 331.00 Procedure for Bozeman’s forum, University Council

Once a policy is ready for presentation to the forum, University Compliance will submit the proposed or revised policy as an agenda item for the next University Council meeting. The draft policy must be posted on the university website, marked as being a proposed draft, and have contact information for submitting comments.

The draft policy will then be presented to University Council for its first reading. Questions and comments from University Council and university personnel will be considered, and changes to the draft policy may be made. If changes are made, the proposed policy must be updated on the website to reflect these changes.

At the next University Council, the policy will be presented for its second reading to discuss any changes made to the proposed policy to reflect the comments. If the changes are approved, University Council will vote on the policy. The proposed policy may be approved, deferred for further review, or dismissed from further consideration.

If approved by University Council, University Compliance is responsible for publishing the policy to the University’s online repository for Bozeman Policies and University Policies and the responsible party can begin implementation.

### 340.00 Interim Policies

The President or Chancellors may adopt an interim policy without dissemination and review if necessary. The policy will remain an interim policy until reviewed and approved. Any interim policy will be disseminated for comment as soon as practicable and will automatically expire six months after adoption if not reviewed and approved as outlined in this policy.

The reviewing entity and the date (year, month) of the review shall be specified upon incorporation of the policy.

### 350.00 Policy Format

Underlying the Policy system is the philosophy that all policies are approved by the campus’s established forum and will be available via the web. An appropriate format shall be adopted and used consistently. Proper formatting of the document/printed version of the Policy allows for more consistency, authority and ease of transfer to the web version of the Policy.

For Bozeman, the following major sections should be considered in the order listed for each Policy:

1. Document header contains horizontal MSU logo on the left and “Mountains and Minds” sub-logo on the right. These appear on every page of the Policy.
2. Document title, in large serif font set as a Heading 1.
3. Table of important information about the policy, including:
   1. Subject
   2. Policy Number
   3. Revision Dates
   4. Web Link
   5. Effective Date
   6. Review Date
   7. Responsible Party
   8. Scope
4. Table of Contents for the major sections including section numbers, set up as links to the heading anchors within the document.
5. Main sections of the Policy, including:
   1. Introduction and Purpose
   2. Policy
   3. Definitions
   4. [More main sections as needed to define and explain the Policy]
   5. Appeal or Grievances
   6. Noncompliance
   7. [Other sections as needed]

Some Policies may not require all these sections.

As a best practice, procedures can be kept out of the policy itself and instead stored on an MSU webpage containing the procedures and referenced in the policy. However, procedures can be put into policy if necessary for legal, regulatory or other reasons.

### 360.00 Policy Retention, Access and Copies

Each campus will have an online central repository for policies approved by the Forum. The online repository shall be publicly available to all students, faculty, staff, and others.

Annually, a broad university announcement of the availability of Policies will be made. The announcement will include a brief explanation of policy, the online repository and which office to contact to request paper copies.