

## **Responsible Division**

President

## **Related Sources**

[WACG 2.1 Guidelines](#)

## **Purpose**

This policy provides uniformity in the drafting, review, revision, and archiving of Northeast State Community College's policies and procedures.

## **Definitions**

For this policy only, the following definitions will apply:

**Cabinet:** A standing committee that reviews and endorsing policies and recommending the final draft to the President for signature.

**Initiator:** An individual within the Responsible Division who has the responsibility of identifying the need for a new policy, revision, or archival. The Initiator evaluates risk and key personnel or departments affected by the policy, creates necessary forms, and outlines possible budget implications.

**Institutional Policy:** An official, defined principle or directive that mandates requirements of or provisions for members of the Northeast State community, implements or assures compliance with laws and governing entities, advances a key aspect of Northeast State's mission or its relationship with the community, mitigates institutional risk, and/or promotes operational efficiency.

**Key Personnel/Department:** Individual function or organization whose institutional role or expertise relates to the subject of the policy, and who, therefore, is consulted for comment on its draft.

**Policy Advisory Group (PAG):** A standing group of up to five (5) employees charged with assisting in the formulation of new policies and the revision of existing policies and recommending review and endorsement of Cabinet.

**President:** The executive head of Northeast State, provides leadership for the college in general and serves as a symbol of the college both to external and internal constituents. The President exercises ultimate authority and implementation of Institutional Policies.

**Procedure:** The specific operational steps required to accomplish an action that needs specific instructions. Procedures include information on the offices and positions responsible for policy implementation, as well as instructions for Northeast State employees regarding how to implement the policy. A properly developed and approved procedure ensures a policy is implemented efficiently and applied consistently. Unlike policy, procedures may change frequently to accommodate updated standards or methods.

**Responsible Division:** The person or group charged with oversight, development, and implementation of policies related to their area of responsibility.

**Substantive Change:** A Substantive Change is a significant modification to the policy or procedure's nature or scope. Substantive Changes require Cabinet approval.

**Technical Correction:** Changes to an Institutional Policy that does not require Cabinet approval. Positions or titles, general nomenclature, hyperlinks, grammatical errors, policy renumbering, updates based on SACSCOC (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges) or TBR (Tennessee Board of Regents) policy or guideline updates, or changes in state law are all technical corrections.

## Scope

- A. All Northeast State policies are binding for all students, faculty, staff, and visitors unless a policy explicitly states otherwise.
- B. This policy does not apply to governance documents, such as the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) policies.

## Policy

### I. Compliance

- A. Northeast State's policies and procedures shall comply with federal and state laws, the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR), and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).
  - 1. Where there is a conflict in policies or procedures cited in the Northeast State's Policy and Procedure Manual with those of federal or state of Tennessee laws, TBR policies or guidelines, or SACSCOC policies or guidelines, the following shall be the order of compliance: federal laws, state of Tennessee laws, SACSCOC, TBR, and last, Northeast State.

### II. Roles and Responsibilities

#### A. Cabinet

- 1. Review and comment on proposed new or substantively changed Institutional Policies.
- 2. Vote for proposed new or substantively changed Institutional Policies at a quarterly Cabinet meeting.

#### B. Initiator

- 1. Begins the policy workflow (creation, revision, or archiving).
- 2. Consider Key Personnel/Department comments on drafts of Institutional Policies.

3. Approve final drafts of Institutional Policies before presented to Cabinet.
4. Endorse the archiving of an existing Institutional Policy.
5. Adhere to the requirements of this policy when sponsoring Institutional Policies.

#### C. Key Personnel/Department

1. When invited by the Initiator or Responsible Division, comment on a draft policy in relation to its likely impact on members of the Northeast State community.

#### D. Policy Advisory Group (PAG)

1. Design, implement, and maintain applicable templates, forms, and operating procedures for developing, reviewing, issuing, storing, revising, and archiving policies and supporting documents.
2. Guide Initiator and Responsible Division through the policy development and revision process.
3. Individual or Division Designee who starts the proposal for the revision, archiving, or drafting of Institutional Policies.
4. Provides the structure, formatting, communication, and other editorial aspects of policies and supporting documents to ensure their accessibility, clarity, and coherence.
5. Announce, as appropriate, the issuance, significant revision, or archive of an Institutional Policy to Cabinet.
6. Initiate the Administrative Review Process for Institutional Policies with Responsible Divisions every three (3) years.

#### E. President

1. Final approver of proposed new, substantively changed, or archived Institutional Policies.
2. Maintaining college adherence to all Institutional Policies.

## F. Responsible Division

1. Develop, revise, and administer policies and supporting documents as directed by an Initiator or Division Designee.
2. Provide content for new or substantively changed Institutional Policy drafts with editorial assistance from the PAG.
3. Monitor actions by SACSCOC, TBR, and state/federal legislature that could affect their department-owned policies.
4. Comprehensively review existing policies under its jurisdiction every three (3) years during the Administrative Review Process.
5. Consult with the PAG throughout the development of policies and supporting documents to ensure compliance with this policy.
6. Provide communication and training as necessary to assist in implementation of and/or compliance with policies and supporting documents.

## III. Exceptions

- A. During times of transition, such as an administrative reorganization of the college or in emergency situations, Cabinet may enact temporary exceptions to Institutional Policy requirements and/or enact new policies to facilitate business continuity until current Institutional Policies are updated in accordance with the new organizational structure/change or until the emergency has resolved.
  1. In the event that Cabinet is not readily available to convene, the President may enact temporary exceptions until such time that the Cabinet is available to review and approve the exception. At all times, the Institution must not act inconsistently with TBR policy unless expressly exempted by TBR to do so.
- B. Exceptions to Northeast State policy may be granted for a period of up to six (6) months. If circumstances warrant, Cabinet may extend Northeast State policy exceptions for up to an additional six (6) months.

## IV. Standards

### A. Formatting

1. All Policies must include the following sections:
  - a) Policy Title and Number
  - b) Responsible Division
  - c) Related Sources
  - d) Purpose
  - e) Definitions
  - f) Scope
  - g) Policy
  - h) Policy History
2. The proposed policy must be in Word format on the appropriate template using the following letter and numbering format:
  - a) I.A.1.a.(1)(a)(i)
  - b) Do not use preset numbering lists for sections and subsections. Use "Increase Indent" or "Decrease Indent" in the Paragraph Format Section, as needed.
  - c) All sections and subsections, or sentences, must be numbered or lettered. No "stand-alone" sections, sub-sections, or sentences, except for asterisk notes.
3. One space only after a period or parenthesis, or any other sentence ending symbol.
4. All policies will follow Northeast State's style guide by using 12-point Century Gothic font.
5. When adding definitions in the designated section of the template, leave a line space between them: no numbering, bullet points, or other indicators.

- a) If definitions are going to be defined in the policy's body, state that in the definition section.

## B. Grammar and Style

1. Institutional Policies will be written in third person.
2. Use simple and specific terminology that everyone can easily understand.
3. Capitalize all terms defined in the policy each time they are used.
4. Capitalize titles of individuals when the title is referring to a specific person (e.g., "Vice President for Academic Affairs"). Leave titles that refer to a group of people in lowercase (e.g., "vice presidents").
5. Do not capitalize "college" unless used as part of an official title.
6. Do not abbreviate months, even when using a specific date.
7. Use the words "must" or "will" rather than "should" in the policy's body. The latter infers that the action is optional, which makes the need for the policy questionable.
8. Always use an office, department, unit, or job title instead of an individual person's name.
9. Contact emails must be general department addresses or web pages that give further contact information. Individual email addresses, office locations, and phone numbers may not be used; this prevents the policy from needing updates when personnel changes occur.
10. Use generic names where possible (i.e., permanent marker instead of Sharpie). This prevents the policy from needing updates when brand changes occur.
11. Do not underline subheadings or words that need to be stressed in a sentence. Rather, use the heading styles in Word if it is a subheading or put it in italics if the word needs to be stressed (e.g., "Do not underline words.>"). Underlined words can be mistaken for hyperlinks when the policy is posted online.

## C. Titles

1. The document title must be clear, concise, and accurately reflect its content.
2. Avoid the use of acronyms and the words “Northeast State”, “Community College”, and “Policy”.
3. Use a title that is sufficiently different from other policies on the website.

#### D. Hyperlinks

1. An Institutional Policy is not a repository for policy-related documents. Instead, these items must be available on an appropriate departmental website to which the policy can link to.
2. Hyperlinks must be listed in the Related Sources section when necessary and comply with the WCAG 2.1 Guidelines.

#### E. Revisions

1. Initiators must begin a revision by using a Word copy of the current policy.
2. Revisions will be shown by using bold strike-through (~~abc~~) for deletions and bold underline (**abc**) for additions. Do not use track changes.
3. Formatting will stay in place. Deletions or additions of sections and subsections as needed.

### **Policy History**

July 2018; edited November 2021; revised August 2023