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OF HEALTH SCIENCES

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Policies Overview

General - Types of Policies

Institutional Policy:

- An institutional policy is a rule that has been vetted and approved per the Policy Approval Process and officially ratified by the President's Council.
- An institutional policy mandates or constrains action and meets at least three of the following criteria:
    a. Applies to multiple constituent groups (employees, students, community members)
    b. The subject matter is specific to one area or department of the institution and has a high financial or operational impact on the work of other offices
    c. Implementation has broad institutional, cross-departmental, or sub-unit impact
    d. Establishes the institutional position on a specific subject
    e. Ensures compliance with federal or state law
    f. Manages institutional risk
- Institutional policies are posted on MySonoran for access by any community member.

Sub-Unit, or Departmental Policies:

- Departments and sub-units (colleges, schools, clinics, institutes) may develop policies, procedures, and guidelines which do not meet the criteria of an institutional policy, and are applicable to their respective authority, as long as these are not in conflict with institutional policies, which take precedence.
- Individual departments or sub-units may create, communicate, maintain, and enforce these directives under their own documented process for development and approval. These policies are not governed by the institutional Policy Approval Process.

Board of Trustees Policies:

- The Board of Trustees holds governance and fiduciary responsibility for the University. Policies owned by the Board of Trustees include overarching financial or governance policies, University Bylaws, Policy Governance Manual, and Board operational policies. These policies are reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees.

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Institutional Policies

Definitions

- Applies to: refers to who the policy is for, who uses the policy
- Executive Council: Leadership team consisting of the President, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Student Affairs, and Chief Financial Officer
- Impact: this term is used to reference departments or stakeholders who are impacted by the policy in terms of operations or implementation
- Faculty Senate: Refers to the entire body of Faculty who are members of the Faculty Senate.
- Policy Owner: The person or team responsible for drafting, vetting, and receiving feedback, updating, and shepherding a policy through the policy approval process as well as regular policy review and update.
- Policy Oversight Committee (POC): Administrative committee that supports the policy owner and ensures all steps of the Policy Approval Process are followed.
- President's Council: Leadership team consisting of Directors, Deans, and Executive Council representing all areas of the campus.
- Staff Council: Refers to the leadership team of staff members who serve on the council.
- Student Government Association (SGA): Refers to the elected leadership team that represents all Sonoran students.

Policy Oversight Committee

- Administrative committee tasked with ensuring Institutional policies follow the Policy Approval Process and supporting policy owners as they navigate development, vetting, community review, and approval steps as well as periodic review of policies.

Policy Approval

- Institutional policies must follow the Policy Approval Process which outlines policy development and approval requirements.
    a. Draft policies must be vetted during development by impacted constituents and a community review and comment period must occur before the policy is ratified by President's Council.

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Approval Process

New Policies

1. The Policy Owner submits the Policy Creation Intention Form to the Policy Oversight Committee (POC).
2. POC reviews the form and provides a checklist of actions the policy owner must take before the policy is shared with the community.
3. The Policy Owner creates the first draft of the policy and gathers a small group of individuals the policy applies to and/or impacts to review the draft using the Equitable Decision-Making (EDM) Tool to identify any needed updates, documenting a summary of the results of the EDM exercise. A member of the POC can be scheduled to participate in your EDM meeting for process support.
4. The policy owner provides the draft policy to the POC documenting checklist completion as well as the outcome of the EDM discussion.
5. POC verifies the vetting requirements are complete and the policy is ready for community review.
6. POC posts the policy to MySonoran for community review and sends a communication to the Internal e-mail group (staff and faculty) with a five-week comment period. For policies that apply to students, the policy will also be sent to the Student Government Association (SGA). Feedback is provided directly to the policy owner or through a representative body such as Faculty Senate, Staff Council, or SGA. POC requests a policy overview agenda item at PC to discuss during the community review period with the policy owner present.
    a. All members of the community are expected to participate in the review process as appropriate.
7. Comments and feedback are sent to the Policy Owner who will document the feedback received and the outcome (either addressed/incorporated into the draft or an explanation if the feedback was not incorporated). The policy owner will inform the individuals or groups providing feedback of the outcome.
8. After the five-week comment period concludes, the Policy Owner will prepare the final draft of the policy with all feedback incorporated in track changes or the decision not to incorporate explained and submit all to the POC.
9. The POC will provide the final draft to the leadership of Faculty Senate, Staff Council, and SGA (when applicable to students) for verification that the final policy addressed feedback.
    a. If any of these groups request material edits that the policy owner confirms should be made, the policy will be updated with track changes for the new edits and repeat step 8.
    b. Minor edits requested that do not substantively change the policy may be made without returning to step 8.
10. Once the final review is complete, the final draft of the policy is sent to President's Council for ratification.
    a. President's Council is not a review body. All members of President's Council are required to participate in the review process during the comment period and the ratification step confirms that the policy has been fully vetted and reviewed by the community.
    b. In the case that President's Council determines there is a major issue to be resolved, the policy will be returned to the Policy Owner to address and the policy will return to step 8.
11. After President's Council ratification, the Policy Oversight Committee finalizes the policy and posts it to MySonoran. The approved policy and documentation will be stored in the Policies Team and a review schedule will be added to the policy tracking spreadsheet.

Policy Updates

1. Policies have a regular review cycle as indicated in the policy under “Next Review Date”.
2. Policy owners are prompted to complete their regular review of policies by the Policy Oversight Committee and must complete the review within 4 weeks.
    a. If a policy pre-dates the Equitable Decision Making (EDM) Tool, the policy owner must complete the EDM process with a group of people the policy applies to or impacts and must provide documentation of the outcome of that discussion.
3. Policy owners will submit edits to the Policy Oversight Committee and the committee will determine if the edits are minor or material.
    a. Minor edits to correct wording, titles or department names, update links, etc. may be made and posted without community review or approval. These updates will be noted in an e-mail announcement from the POC.
    b. Material edits change the intent or applicability of a policy and must follow the new policy approval process beginning with step 6 for community review.

Interim Policies

When a change to law or regulation requires an immediate change to institutional policy or the creation of a new policy, an interim policy may be implemented with the approval of Executive Council. Any interim policy must also concurrently begin following the applicable policy approval process to be finalized, approved, and updated from interim status. Policies may remain at interim status for up to three months.

Communication

The POC will send an e-mail announcement in the first month of each academic quarter to the community with updates regarding approved policies, policies under review, policy updates, and interim policies.

Additional communication from the POC will occur when policies are posted for community review and comment as well as President’s Council ratification.

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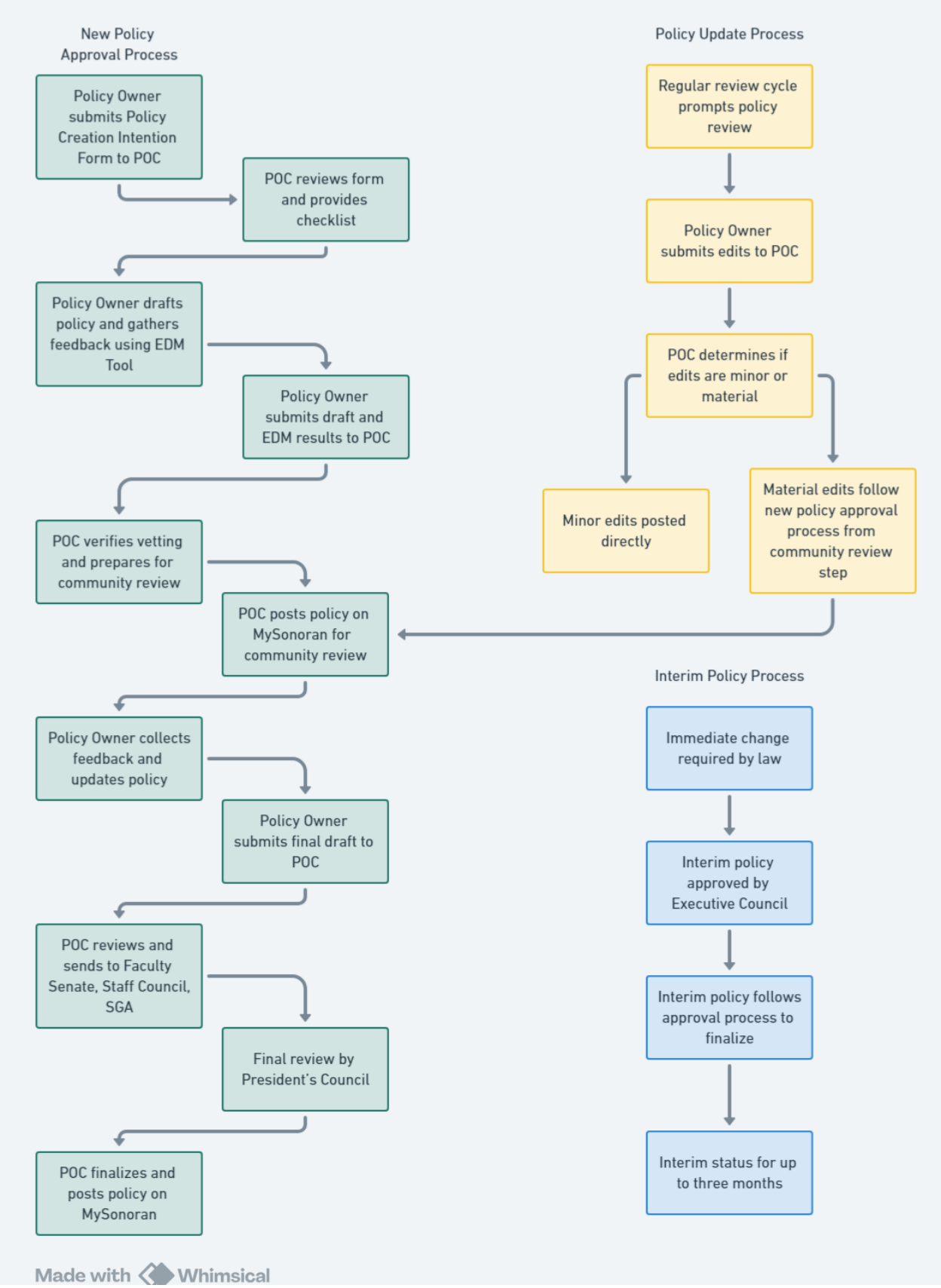

This process was approved by President's Council on 10-21-2026. Provide feedback to policyoversight@sonoran.edu.