

Operating Policies for Montana State University Campuses

January 2002; Revised November 2009; Revised April 2012.

Introduction and Purpose

Montana State University shall have an Operating Policy system for the development, identification, distribution, review and revision of operating policies. The policy will offer governing principles that guide action in response to an issue or circumstance likely to surface repeatedly. It will be consistent with relevant federal and state laws, rules and regulations, and the Board of Regents policies and procedures. This policy will apply, based on the policy definition below, to each campus and agency individually and to Montana State University entity-wide. For the purpose of this policy, each individual agency of Montana State University will be referred to as "campus" and all campuses collectively will be referred to as the "University." University policy may be developed when consistent action is desired across the campuses. Each campus will have a central repository for policy maintenance; MSU Legal Counsel will maintain MSU's entity-wide policies.

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100.00 Policy

Montana State University's operating policy 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 application.
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.

110.00 [MSU Policy Template](#)

200.00 Procedure

210.00 Development of an Operating Policy (OP)

210.10 Anyone at Montana State University may propose a new or revised OP by routing the suggestion through the administrative channel to the accountable Executive Officer.

210.20 The steps for developing an OP are:

210.21 The individual submits the proposal to his/her department head.

210.22 The department head reviews and recommends an action to the next higher level within the division's administrative channel until the proposal reaches the Executive Officer (Vice President, Provost, Chancellor or Division Administrator) to whom he/she is accountable. Before the policy reaches the Executive Officer, the drafted policy should:

1. Have a sponsor
2. Define the proposed policy and any related procedures
3. Be reviewed by the sponsor for internal control implications
4. Be reviewed by the sponsor for financial implications
5. Be reviewed by Legal Counsel for legal implications

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

210.24 After an adequate period of time to allow comments from constituent groups, the policy's sponsor(s) and Executive Officer should consider comments and adjust the policy as warranted.

210.25 At least annually, the Executive Officers shall consider pending policy matters. The CEO of the campus if an institutional policy or the President if a University policy shall refer the policy for review by the appropriate committees and institutional officials. The policy/policy review sponsor and constituent parties will be allowed and/or may be asked to forward comments to the decision makers.

210.26 The Executive Officer(s) will approve the policy, refer it for further investigation or dismiss it from further consideration.

210.27 Upon approval, the Executive Officer(s) shall stipulate who is responsible for implementation. That person shall implement the policy at the suitable organizational level(s) in a manner consistent with this policy.

210.28 The President or CEOs 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.

220.00 Review and Revision of an OP

220.10 To maintain an effective set of operating policies, all OPs must have a regular schedule of review and revision (at least every three years) as established by the person responsible for implementation of the policy. The reviewing entity and the date (year, month and day) of the review shall be specified upon incorporation of the policy. *(Revised November 2009)*.

220.20 Each person responsible for the review of an OP will send recommended revisions, if any, through the administrative channel of the Executive Officer(s) to whom she/he is accountable.

220.30 An OP can be revised at any time, not just during its normal review process. Anyone wishing to recommend revisions should forward the information through proper channels to the appropriate Executive Officer.

220.40 Anyone may suggest updating, revising, or canceling an OP by sending a written suggestion through the administrative channel to the Executive Officer who represents his/her division. If an OP should be revised or canceled before the regular review cycle, the memorandum for the suggestion should indicate clearly why the author suggests the review should be undertaken immediately.

220.50 When revision is necessary, the responsible Executive Officer will follow the process set forth in section 1, "Development of an Operating Policy/Procedure (OP)."

220.60 When an OP is revised, it is reissued with a new date; however, portions of an OP may be revised without changing the entire OP. *(Revised November 2009)*.

220.70 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 review of the policy as indicated in the Review section of the policy. The procedures outlined in Section 1, "Development of an Operating Policy (OP)," need not be followed. Minor or routine changes include items such as updating of a title or department name listed in a policy or correction of typographical errors.

230.00 Format

230.10 Underlying the OP system is the philosophy that all policies are approved by the accountable Executive Officers and will be available via the Web. An appropriate format shall be adopted and used consistently. The following major sections should be considered in the order listed for each OP:

1. Introduction and Purpose (background and rationale for the OP).
2. Policy (the guide to decision making).
3. Procedure (sequential steps necessary to carry out the policy).
4. Internal control considerations, if applicable (how to ensure adequate safeguarding of assets, e.g., segregation of duties, safeguards against misuse or fraud, etc.)
5. Effective date and Review [identify who is responsible for review of the OP and the date (month/year) the review shall occur].

Some OP may not require all of these sections. Judgment is called for in the type and degree of headings used. Each OP number should appear in the lower right corner with the approval date placed immediately below it.

240.00 Policy Retention, Access and Copies

240.10 Each campus will have a central repository for policies approved by the Executive Officers. *(Revised November 2009)*.

240.20 OP shall be available to all students, faculty, staff and others through a Web page.

240.30 Periodically, a broad university announcement of the availability of OP will be made. The announcement will include a brief explanation of policy and where it is published.