

Companion Tool for Drafting Policy

This tool is designed to supplement the information provided in the [policy template](#) and offer additional support in drafting policies. We recommend reading through the policy template first.

Good policy should strive for:

- simplicity;
- consistency; and
- clarity.

1. Purpose and Scope

Summarize the problem or need this policy will address in 10 words or less.

List the policy goals. What are the expected outcomes?

Specify who the policy applies to, such as staff, faculty, students, visitors, etc.

Combine the information from the previous steps to craft the policy purpose and scope. The policy purpose should be actionable and aligned with USU's mission and values.

Example statement: The University is committed to [mission aligned objective or values]. To promote [mission aligned objective or values] this policy is established to [what] and outlines the responsibilities and expectations for [who]. This policy establishes the framework to ensure [mission aligned objective or values]. The purpose of this policy is [expected outcome]. This policy applies to [appropriate audience].

The policy purpose and scope should only contain three to five sentences.

TIP: Need help generating ideas for your policy purpose and scope? Ask [Microsoft's Copilot AI tool](#) for suggestions.

2. Policy Statement

This statement provides details about:

- The core rules of the policy
- Expected behaviors, prohibitions, and requirements.
- Any exceptions to policy.
- Monitoring and enforcement of policy.
- May include reference to federal or state statute, regulation or USHE rule

Example statement: *All [intended audience, students, staff, faculty, etc.] are expected to [expected behavior] to support [policy goal]. Violations of this policy may result in [consequences] OR Any behavior that negatively impacts [reason for policy] may result in [consequence]. OR This policy establishes a standard for [expected behavior] related to [policy goal]. The [name of department] will monitor compliance with this policy OR It is [name of department]'s responsibility to ensure [expected behavior] is maintained. This policy establishes [policy requirements] required by [title of law, regulation, rule].*

The policy statement includes the rule or guidance that outlines the behavior expected from stakeholders.

TIP: [Review sample policy statements](#)

Body of Policy

- Conduct research or benchmarking to determine best practices. Review peer institutions' policies or professional organizations.

TIP: [Ask Microsoft's Copilot AI to find similar policies at peer institutions](#)

- Write an outline with the main ideas for the body of this policy. Consider how you will organize the content. It may be helpful to list key terms.

Example ideas:

- *Authority – who is delegated authority according to this policy*
 - *Membership – if the policy involves a committee or council or group, list the members*
 - *Actions/Roles – what specific actions will be taken as a result of this policy*
 - *Training and Education – what requirements for training will be implemented*
 - *Defining prohibited behaviors – List specific behavior that will not be tolerated.*
 - *Define expectations for the covered individuals subject to this policy*
- Expand your outline of main ideas.
 - Lean on policies from other institutions for similar language.
 - Use tools such as [QuillBot](#) or [Grammarly](#) to offer suggestions to rephrase the content.

1. Write in active voice.
 2. Average reading level
 3. Clear, concise, and simple
- The [USU Style Guide](#) provides more tips on content revision

Use headers to organize the body of your policy starting with the most important information.

TIP: Review examples of [active voice](#)

3. Responsibilities

Identify who is responsible for what. Define roles and responsibilities by department and job title.

4. References

Include a bullet list of references to applicable Federal, State, and municipal regulations or USHE/Board of Higher Education policies.

See the [Citations section](#) for information on how to reference these sources.

5. Related USU Policies

List any relevant USU Policies. You can search the Policy Library by topic to find policies with similar content. See the [Citations section](#) for information on how to reference these sources.

6. Definitions

List specific terms utilized in the policy and their standard meaning.

- List in alphabetical order.
- Definitions do not include requirements for individuals.
- Capitalize the term anytime it is referenced in the policy.
- Definitions only apply to the specific policy they are defined in.
- Do not include definitions for terms not used in the policy

Resources

List procedures, standards, or guidelines to support this policy. The [Policy Office website](#) includes definitions for these documents.

Additional Support

Purpose and Scope

This section briefly answers the question “why” such as “why do we need this particular policy?”. It also answers the questions “who” and “when” as in “who does it apply to?” and “when (in what situations/circumstances) does it apply?” Finally, it answers “how” by listing the policy goals or expected outcomes as in “how does this policy impact USU?”

The paragraph should only include three to five sentences.

- Why?
- Who? When?
- How?

Examples of key phrases to consider:

- “The University is committed to _____.”
[What institutional value does this policy preserve?]
- “The purpose of this policy is to _____.”
[list the goals or outcomes of the policy]
- “This policy applies to _____.”
[list who it applies to and under what circumstances]
- “By establishing _____,
[list the purpose of the policy, e.g. a framework, clear expectations, uniform standards, etc.],
this policy promotes _____.”
[list the goals or outcomes of the policy]

Examples of purpose and scope statements:

Respectful Workplace Policy

“The purpose of this policy is to foster a respectful, inclusive, and professional environment for all members of the university community, including faculty, staff, students, and visitors. It applies to all university-related activities, whether on campus, at off-site locations, or in virtual settings, and encompasses interactions among employees, students, contractors, and third parties. By establishing clear expectations for conduct and outlining procedures for addressing concerns, this policy aims to promote a culture of dignity, equity, and mutual respect that supports the academic and professional success of all individuals.”

Motorized Vehicles on Campus

“Utah State University is committed to promoting a safe, accessible, and respectful campus environment by regulating the use of motorized scooters on sidewalks and pedestrian pathways. This policy establishes guidelines to protect the safety of pedestrians, minimize disruptions to campus accessibility, and preserve the integrity of university property. It applies to all individuals operating motorized scooters on campus grounds, including students, faculty, staff, visitors, and third-party vendors.”

Individuals with Disabilities

“The university is committed to upholding the principles of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by ensuring equal access, opportunity, and inclusion for individuals with disabilities across all aspects of campus life. This policy outlines the institution’s responsibilities under federal law to provide reasonable

accommodations, remove barriers to accessibility, and prevent discrimination based on disability. It is intended to guide faculty, staff, students, and visitors in fostering an environment that respects and supports the rights and dignity of individuals with disabilities.”

Policy Statements

Each example includes a clear and concise rule or guideline that outlines the behavior expected from stakeholders, such as students, staff, or faculty. It may also include any exceptions to policy, as well as who enforces or monitors compliance with the policy.

Academic Integrity

"All students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of dishonesty are strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action, which may include failing the assignment, course, or expulsion from the university."

Anti-Discrimination

"The university is committed to providing a learning and working environment free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. Discriminatory behavior based on race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, or other protected characteristics will not be tolerated. Violations will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination or expulsion."

Student Code of Conduct

"All students are required to behave in a manner that reflects the university's core values of respect, integrity, and responsibility. Actions that disrupt the academic environment, endanger others, or violate university policies, including drug use and theft, will result in sanctions, including possible suspension or expulsion."

Data Privacy and Security

"The university is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of personal and academic information. All employees, students, and affiliates must adhere to the data protection policies to ensure compliance with applicable laws, including GDPR and FERPA. Unauthorized access or sharing of personal data will result in disciplinary actions."

Social Media Use

"University students, staff, and faculty must use social media responsibly and respectfully, both in professional and personal contexts. The use of university logos, trademarks, and names on social media accounts must align with the university's branding guidelines. Any behavior that negatively impacts the reputation of the university may result in disciplinary action."

Workplace Safety

"The university is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all employees, students, and visitors. Employees must follow all safety procedures, report hazards, and participate in required safety training. Failure to adhere to these safety standards may result in disciplinary action or removal from university premises."

Attendance

"Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes, participate actively, and arrive on time. Excessive absences, without valid reasons, may result in a reduction of grades or failure to pass the course. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of any planned absences and to make up any missed work."

Environmental Sustainability

"The university is committed to reducing its environmental impact and promoting sustainability across all areas of campus life. All members of the university community must adhere to sustainability guidelines, including waste reduction, energy conservation, and responsible consumption. Non-compliance with sustainability practices may result in corrective actions or penalties."

Research Ethics

"All faculty, staff, and students engaged in research must adhere to ethical standards, ensuring the integrity, accuracy, and honesty of research findings. Plagiarism, data falsification, or other unethical research practices are prohibited and will result in disciplinary action, including possible retraction of published work or termination of research projects."

Grievance

"The university is committed to resolving grievances promptly and fairly. Students, faculty, and staff who believe they have been subject to unfair treatment or discrimination should file a grievance through the designated office. All grievances will be handled confidentially and investigated in a timely manner. Retaliation against individuals who file grievances is strictly prohibited."

Additional Tips

Here are some examples of **active voice** versus **passive voice** in sentences:

Active Voice:

"The professor graded the assignments."

Passive Voice:

"The assignments were graded by the professor."

- Active voice emphasizes the subject performing the action (the professor).
- Passive voice shifts the focus to the object (the assignments), and the subject (professor) is less prominent.

Active Voice:

"The university implemented a new policy last week."

Passive Voice:

"A new policy was implemented by the university last week."

- In active voice, the subject (the university) takes direct action.
- In passive voice, the subject is receiving the action (a new policy).

Active Voice:

"The student submitted the research paper."

Passive Voice:

"The research paper was submitted by the student."

- In the **active voice**, the emphasis is on the student submitting the paper.

- In **passive voice**, the action is placed on the paper.

Active Voice:

"The committee reviewed the applications."

Passive Voice:

"The applications were reviewed by the committee."

- **Active voice** makes the committee the subject of the sentence, showing they are actively performing the review.
- **Passive voice** places the emphasis on the applications, with the committee as the doer of the action.

Active Voice:

"The administrator notified the students of the deadline."

Passive Voice:

"The students were notified of the deadline by the administrator."

- **Active voice** gives the action to the administrator (who is performing the task).
- **Passive voice** shifts focus to the students (who are receiving the notification).

Active Voice:

"The faculty conducted the seminar."

Passive Voice:

"The seminar was conducted by the faculty."

- The **active voice** gives prominence to the faculty conducting the seminar.
- The **passive voice** emphasizes the seminar as the subject receiving the action.

Active Voice:

"They will announce the results tomorrow."

Passive Voice:

"The results will be announced tomorrow."

- In **active voice**, "they" (unspecified) are performing the action.
- In **passive voice**, the focus shifts to the results, and the doer is not mentioned (or is implied).

Key Differences:

- **Active Voice:** The subject performs the action. This structure tends to make sentences clearer, more direct, and easier to understand.
 - Example: "The university conducted the survey."
 - The subject (the university) is the focus and is actively doing the action (conducting the survey).
- **Passive Voice:** The subject receives the action. This structure can sometimes make sentences longer, vaguer, and less direct. It is often used when the doer is unknown, unimportant, or implied.
 - Example: "The survey was conducted by the university."

- The focus shifts to the survey itself, with less emphasis on who conducted it.

Reading Level:

Utilize online tools such as [Grammarly](#) or [Hemingway App](#) to identify the reading level or education level required to fully understand your policy. The average reading level for an adult in the U.S. is between 7th and 9th grade. The goal of policy writing is to create simple, clear, and concise documents.

AI Assistance:

[Microsoft Co-Pilot](#) is a great tool to utilize for help in brainstorming policy statements. Try the prompt: “Act as if you are a university leader writing a policy on _____. Draft a paragraph about the main purpose of the policy.”