Policy Approval Process

Background

East Tennessee State University (ETSU) is governed by a Board of Trustees that sets policies and guidelines for the operation of the University. The authority, purpose, duties, and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees are delineated in TCA § 49-8-101. Distinctions between the duties of the Board and the responsibilities of the administration and faculty are clearly delineated in legislation. The Board of Trustees is responsible for setting policy with regard to academic, business and finance, governance and organization, personnel, and student matters as well as for providing guidelines on implementation of those policies. The ETSU President serves as executive head for the administration and faculty of ETSU and does not serve on the Board of Trustees. The administration and faculty are responsible for carrying out ETSU's mission within the parameters of policies and guidelines and in accordance with the coordinating responsibilities of THEC.

Board of Trustees' authority is outlined in Tennessee Code Annotated § 49-8-203. The Board has delegated to the President the authority to establish policies and procedures for the University. The Board of Trustees retains approval authority for policies that directly involve the Board including the Board of Trustees Code of Ethics Policy; policies related to the promotion and tenure of faculty; and any policies, rules, or authority as statute, governmental directives, or custom requiring action by the Board. As defined by the FOCUS Act, the University continues to abide by all Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) policies and guidelines until the Board of Trustees approves a replacement policy or notes a policy is no longer needed.

Definition of University Level Policy and Procedures

The following is a description of the process for development and approval of policies and procedures that apply to the University or faculty, staff, or student body. These are defined as university level policies and procedures.

Policies and procedures that govern only a specific sub-unit of the University are not considered here. Those policies and procedures may be developed by specific units and must be approved by the appropriate senior administrative official responsible for the unit. That responsible official will vary depending on unit (director, chair, dean, or vice president). These unit policies cannot supersede or conflict with university level policies. The Office of University Counsel or the Secretary of the Board of Trustees can advise as whether a proposal is considered university level.

Final Approval of University Level Policies and Procedures

All new university level policies and associated procedures are approved by the Board of Trustees. For existing policies, subsequent changes or edits must be approved by the Board. Changes only to procedures are an administrative function with final approval by the President instead of the board.

Development and Approval Process for University Level Policies and Procedures

All university level policies and procedures should be drafted using the policy and procedure template. The drafting process should include broad input from constituents and uphold shared governance principles. The approval process is manged using an online system.

New policy proposals, revisions of existing policy, or substantive changes to existing procedures must be posted for a minimum of 10 days on the Request for Comment website to provide an opportunity for broad feedback beyond the input received in the initial drafting process.

After any revisions based on submitted comments are made, the Office of University Counsel will review the draft to provide advice related to legal and other policy matters. The Secretary of the Board or his/her designee will then review the draft to ensure adherence to development guidelines.

Minor revisions to procedures of existing policy (*e.g.,* change in federally determined reimbursement rate, name of an office) do not need public comment prior to approval. Any minor changes to procedure approved by the President are sent to the appropriate council for information purposes. Additionally, as existing university level policies are converted to the new template which separates policy from procedure, if no changes are made to the existing policy or procedure, a public comment period is not required.

All proposals that are specifically academic in nature, including but not limited to policies related to faculty, promotion and tenure, academic freedom, catalogs, curriculum, and research, must be approved by the Academic Council. All other policy proposals and substantive changes to procedure must be approved by the University Council. When a policy proposal is submitted to either council for approval, it is in a final draft format as it is not the intent of either council to edit a draft during its meeting.

After a policy or a policy revision is approved by either Academic Council or University Council, it is submitted for approval by the President and the Board. If a substantive revised procedure is approved by either Academic Council or University Council without change to the policy statement, it is submitted to the President for approval.

Approved policies and procedures are maintained on the University's web site.

Proposed Steps to Incorporate into an Online System for Policy/Procedure Approval

1. Authors draft policy and/or procedures (new or revision of existing)
2. Submit via online system
   a. Policy template used
   b. Includes brief summary of the drafting process, input received
3. Public comment period
   a. Not required for minor changes to existing procedures (*e.g.,* change in federally determined reimbursement rate, name of an office)
   b. Minimum of 10 days, could be longer
4. Feedback from public comment period is used by the authors to edit the draft
   a. Includes summary of changes made after the public comment feedback
   b. Brief overview of why certain suggestions were not included
5. Office of University Counsel reviews, approves to move forward once any required changes are made
6. Secretary of the Board reviews to ensure proper formatting, clarity, and adherence to development guidelines
7. Forward for initial approval
   a. Academic Council
   b. University Council
   c. President (for minor revisions to procedures of existing policy)
8. Forward for final approval
   a. For policies, schedule for approval by Board of Trustees
   b. For procedure changes only, approval by President
9. Notification of approval to the appropriate council and authors

Policy/Procedure Template

Put Title Here	
Responsible Official:	Responsible Office:

Policy Purpose

Policy Statement

Authority: (Statute, regulation, THEC policy, Executive order, or other authority governing the policy)

Definitions

Policy History

Effective Date:
Revision Date:

Procedure (s)

Text, with outline integrated if needed

I. (if more than 1)
    A.
        1.
           a.

Procedure History

Effective Date:
Revision Date:

Related Form(s)

Policy/Procedure Template

Check those that apply to this policy and identify proposed sub-category.

	Governance	
	Academic	
	Students	
	Employment	
	Information Technology	
	Health and Safety	
	Business and Finance	
	Facilities and Operations	
	Advancement	

Policy/Procedure Template

Policy and Procedure Differences

Policy	Procedure
Provides a guiding principle or rule for best practice; sets standard for functions of the university	Provides a consistent approach, sequential tasks or steps, for implementation of policy
Provides the rationale or why	Describes how, when, who, and what one needs to do
May be stated in general, broad terms	May be stated in specific, detailed terms
Frequent revision is unnecessary	Prone to change; continuous improvement
Final approval by Board of Trustees	Final approval by University staff

Policy Purpose: why there is a policy and desired effect or outcome; generally 1-2 sentences.

Policy Statement: indicates specific regulations, requirements, or behavior; may express university culture, goals, or philosophy

Procedure: to define, describe, identify, provide, outline, establish

Definition of terms: to assist in understanding or interpreting policy; listed in alphabetical order.

Scope: who the policy affects