

Policies of the University of North Texas	Chapter 2
02.001 Policy on Policies	Rule and Policy Development

Policy Statement. UNT policies shall reflect the university’s academic mission and vision and comply with federal and state laws, Regents Rules and System Regulations. Procedures developed to implement these policies shall be clear and efficient. Policies and procedures may be revised or deleted at any time, at the sole discretion of the university.

Application of Policy. All UNT employees.

Definitions.

1. **Non-substantive Change.** “Non-substantive change” means a revision that does not directly affect the substance of the policy, or in any way modify its meaning or intent. Non-substantive changes include, but are not limited to, edits related to document formatting, grammar, punctuation and style. Non-substantive changes do not require routing and are made as needed by the University Policy Office (UPO).
2. **Policy.** “Policy” means any governing principle that mandates or sets limits within which members of the UNT community are expected to operate; has broad application; derives from the authority of Regents Rules or ensures compliance with applicable laws and regulations; supports UNT’s mission and goals; promotes consistency, efficiency, and effectiveness; and/or reduces institutional risk.
3. **Policy Action.** “Policy action” means the development, deletion, review, or substantive revision of a policy.
4. **Policy Owner.** “Policy owner” means the UNT administrator (president or vice president-level) primarily responsible for the subject matter of the policy.
5. **Policy Contact.** “Policy contact” means the individual designated by the policy owner as the primary subject matter expert and/or administrative point of contact concerning a policy.
6. **Policy Manual.** “Policy manual” means the official repository of all UNT policies adopted by the President. The policies published on the dedicated policy website, <https://policy.unt.edu>, are the official policies of UNT and take precedence over any version appearing elsewhere.
7. **Procedures.** “Procedures” means the operational process that outlines how the institution will implement policy objectives. Procedure documents may include but are not limited to: guidelines, handbooks, bylaws, charters, and constitutions.

8. Regents Rule. “Regents Rule” means a rule adopted by the UNT System Board of Regents.
9. Substantive Change. “Substantive change” means a revision to a policy that materially alters its meaning or intent. Substantive changes include, but are not limited to, addition or deletion of a definition, change in a responsible party, change in application of the policy, or revisions made to reflect current operational practices or changes in the law, Regents Rule or System Regulation.
10. System Regulation. “System regulation” means a policy adopted by the Chancellor of the UNT System that applies to the System Administration and component institutions.
11. Unit Administrator. “Unit Administrator” means an individual with unit supervisory responsibilities. Unit administrators include, but are not limited to, directors, chairs, associate deans, and deans.

Procedures and Responsibilities.

- I. General Policy and Procedure Guidelines. The policies adopted by the UNT President apply only to UNT and shall be published in the Policy Manual and maintained electronically on a dedicated policy website.
 - A. Contract Disclaimer. No provision in any University policy shall create a contract, expressed or implied, with any individual or organization (Regents Rule 02.204).
 - B. Legal Review. All UNT policies considered for adoption must be reviewed and approved for legal sufficiency by the UNT System Office of General Counsel (OGC) prior to adoption (Regents Rule 02.206).
 - C. Conflicts. If a UNT policy conflicts with a Regents Rule or System Regulation, the Rule or Regulation takes precedence. If a provision of a policy conflicts with a Regents Rule, System Regulation or federal or state law, the invalid provision shall be construed in a manner that gives force and effect to all other provisions in the policy, to the extent possible. If any invalid provision cannot be construed to render it valid, that provision shall be construed as narrowly as possible and severed from the policy if necessary to give force and effect to the policy (Regents Rule 02.207).
 - D. Charters and Bylaws. Charters and bylaws for the internal governance of departments, colleges and university organizations, except for those adopted and published by the Faculty Senate, are not university policies. In accordance with Regents Rule 06.104 (Operational Bylaws), bylaws adopted and published by the Faculty Senate shall take effect when approved by the President.
 - E. Policy Adoption/Approval. Policies are approved when signed by the President.

- F. Policy Effective Date. A policy takes effect the date it is approved by the President unless a different date is stated in the policy.
- G. Policy Exception. Exception to a UNT policy may only be granted at the recommendation of the Policy Owner and approval of the President.
- H. Policy Review. Policy owners must review policies that fall under their jurisdiction a minimum of once every six years unless otherwise required by state or federal law, Regents Rule or System Regulation. A non-substantive change made to a policy does not constitute a policy review.
- I. Procedures Required to be in Policies. Only those procedures that are necessary to provide a right protected by law or that is mandated by Regents Rule or System Regulation are required to be included in a policy.
- J. Other Procedures. Units may develop administrative procedures to manage the specific operations of the unit. Unit administrators must ensure procedures are consistent with the official policies of UNT, System Regulations, Regents Rules, state or federal laws; procedures are null and void to the extent of any conflict. Unit administrators may request the UPO publish a procedure on the policy website with its associated policy. Procedures that are not include in a policy do not have to be reviewed by OGC for legal sufficiency or approved by the President, and are not subject to the policy approval process.

Responsible Party: President, unit administrators, Faculty Senate, policy contacts, policy owners, Policy Advisory Group (PAG), UPO, OGC

II. Policy Development, Revision, Deletion, and Review.

- A. Policy Owners. Policy owners must develop, revise, and review policies as required by Regents Rule, System Regulation, Federal or State law, or as necessitated by institutional initiatives or operational changes. For these actions, policy owners must ensure the policy:
 - i. is consistent with and not duplicative of other campus policies;
 - ii. is consistent with the Regents Rules and System Regulations;
 - iii. satisfies accrediting bodies and external industry/professional association requirements, as applicable;
 - iv. is sufficiently clear so that substantive questions concerning execution of or compliance with the policy can be answered;

- v. provides the guidance necessary to achieve the policy objective(s); and
- vi. clearly explains any decision-making processes required by the policy.

Policy owners may also propose a policy deletion. When considering a policy for deletion, policy owners must ensure the policy is not required by Regents Rule, System Regulation, Federal or State law or the content is adequately addressed in a current policy or related procedure.

Policy owners initiating an action within Academic Affairs must ensure the Faculty Senate has an opportunity to review the proposed policy action prior to submission to the UPO for official routing.

Responsible Party: Policy owners

- B. Policy Advisory Group (PAG). PAG is comprised of university officials appointed by the President. PAG is responsible for reviewing and discussing policies to ensure they are consistent with the university's mission and strategic plans before the policies are submitted to the President for approval. Unless otherwise exempt by the President, PAG must review submissions for new policies, substantive revisions, deletions, and policies up for a 6-year review. PAG may review all policy actions. A policy action must be approved by a majority of the PAG members before it moves to the next step in the policy process.

Responsible Party: PAG

- C. The Office of General Counsel (OGC). The OGC is responsible for reviewing all new policies and substantive changes to policies to determine consistency with applicable law, identify and address legal risks, and improve legal defensibility. This legal sufficiency review consists of:
 - i. analyzing the policy (and any procedures contained therein) to determine compliance with federal and state constitutional and statutory laws, regulations, attorney general opinions, executive orders, Regents Rules, and System Regulations;
 - ii. identifying potential legal risks that might arise from the use of a particular word, term, or phrase, from the way the policy is structured, or from any procedures contained in or missing from the policy; and
 - iii. recommending changes that address noted legal deficiencies.

OGC will inform the UPO if a policy or a provision of a policy is determined to be legally insufficient and recommend language that brings the policy into compliance with laws, Regents Rules or System Regulations.

Only policies approved by OGC are eligible for adoption by the President.

Responsible Party: OGC

- III. The Policy Administration and Management Program. The UPO is responsible for the administration and management of the university's policy program and is the official repository for all university policies. The UPO shall route proposed policy actions for approval in accordance with this policy and the process outlined in the Policy Development and Submission Guide. In addition, the UPO is responsible for:
- i. coordinating the development, revision, deletion, review, and approval of all university policy actions;
 - ii. serving as a policy resource for PAG, including providing historical information related to policies under consideration by PAG;
 - iii. publishing approved policies in the policy manual at <https://policy.unt.edu>;
 - iv. maintaining the official copy of all adopted policies; and
 - v. archiving appropriate documents in accordance with records and retention requirements.

Responsible Party: UPO

- IV. Guidelines for Interpreting Policies and Procedures. The following guidelines shall be used when interpreting UNT policies and procedures. These guidelines are not binding on OGC when providing official legal opinions.
- A. Headings. The heading of a title, subtitle, chapter, subchapter, or section does not limit or expand the meaning of a policy.
 - B. Meanings of Words. Words shall be given their ordinary meaning. Words and phrases shall be read in context and construed according to the rules of grammar and common usage. Words in the present tense include the future tense.
 - C. Grammar and Punctuation. A grammatical error does not vitiate a policy. If the sentence or clause is meaningless because of the grammatical error, words and clauses may be transposed to give the policy meaning.
 - D. May, Must, Shall, etc. The following meanings apply unless the context in which the word or phrase appears necessarily requires a different interpretation/meaning or unless a different meaning is expressly provided:

- I. "May" creates discretionary authority or grants permission or a power.
 - II. "Shall" imposes a duty.
 - III. "Must" creates or recognizes a condition precedent.
 - IV. "Is entitled to" creates or recognizes a right.
 - V. "May not" imposes a prohibition and is synonymous with "shall not."
 - VI. "Is not entitled to" negates a right.
 - VII. "Is not required to" negates a duty or condition precedent.
 - VIII. "Includes" and "including" are terms of enlargement and not of limitation or exclusive enumeration, and use of the terms does not create a presumption that components not expressed are excluded.
- E. Severability. Unless expressly provided otherwise, if any provision of a policy, or its application to any person or circumstance is interpreted by the OGC as invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of the policy that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provision of the policy is severable.
- F. Computation of Time. In computing a period of days, the first day is excluded and the last day is included. If the last day of any period is a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the period is extended to include the next day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday. Unless otherwise specified in the policy, "day" means business day.

Responsible Party: Policy contacts, Policy owners, UPO, PAG

References and Cross-references.

[Regents Rule 02.200, System, System Administration, and Institution Policy Development](#)
[Regents Rule 06.100, Shared Governance](#)

Forms and Tools.

UNT System [OGC Legal Sufficiency Review Guide](#)
[UNT System Policy Style Manual](#)
[Policy Development and Submission Guide](#)
[Policy Template](#)

Approved: 4/1/1983

Effective: [5/25/2018](#)

Revised: 8/2002; 6/2014; [5/2018](#)