**University of Florida (UF) Policy Drafting Guide**  
This guide helps UF policy authors draft clear, professional, and consistently formatted policies that align with UF’s official [Policy Template](https://policy.ufl.edu/policy-development/policy-template/) and editorial standards. In an institution as dynamic and expansive as UF, a well-written policy eliminates ambiguity, ensures consistent tone and structure, explicitly supports enforceability, and enhances accessibility across the UF enterprise.

**Policy vs. Procedure**  
When writing policies, be sure to separate policy from procedure. Operational steps should be placed in supporting documents such as instructions, guidelines, or SOPs, not embedded in the policy itself. The chart below outlines the key differences to help guide that distinction.

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|  | **Policy** | **Procedure** |
| **Purpose** | Establish rules and principles | Details step-by-step actions |
| **Scope** | Broad, institution-wide | Unit-specific or operational |
| **Change Process** | Requires formal approval | Can be updated informally |
| **Example** | Employees must complete annual training. | Visit myTraining, search for “Compliance 101,” and click “Enroll.” |

✅ Put procedures in separate documents like instructions, guidelines, or SOPs  
❌ Don’t include step-by-step instructions in the policy text

**Capitalization**  
UF policy capitalization generally follows the AP Stylebook. Here are the most common issues you’ll encounter:

1. **University Name**  
   Use the full name “University of Florida” on first reference. Abbreviate using “UF” after that. Only capitalize “University” if part of a formal title.  
   ✅ The University of Florida (UF) will evaluate the application. If approved, UF will issue a decision, which will be communicated by the Office of the University Registrar.  
   ❌ The University of Florida (UF) will evaluate the application. If approved, the University will issue a decision...
2. **Defined Terms**  
   The official UF [Policy Template](https://policy.ufl.edu/policy-development/policy-template/) requires a Definitions section. Always capitalize and use defined terms exactly as defined throughout the document. If commonly used words are defined in your policy, like “Student,” avoid using lowercase “student” in other contexts in the same policy. Don’t switch between similar words for the same concept (e.g., Faculty, professors). Consistent terminology ensures readers do not get confused.
3. **Colleges, Departments, and Units**  
   Policies should use and capitalize formal names of colleges, departments, and units on first reference. Lowercase informal references are discouraged.  
   ✅ The Department of Political Science and the College of Education will review the submission.  
   ❌ The political science department and the education college will review the submission.  
   Spell out the full formal name of the college, department, or unit on first use and, if appropriate, place the abbreviation or acronym in parentheses following the term (e.g., “Division of Enrollment Management (DEM)”). Thereafter, use the abbreviation or acronym alone.
4. **Policy Title**  
   State the full policy title on first use, then refer to it as “Policy” thereafter.  
   ✅ The Political Activity Policy (“Policy”) provides guidance to University of Florida (UF) employees engaged in political activities. This Policy applies to…

**Formatting Conventions and Policy Template**  
All UF policies, i.e., policies that are hosted on the UF Policy Hub and apply across the UF enterprise, not just to a specific unit, must follow the formatting conventions outlined in this guide to ensure consistency and clarity. These standards apply to all UF units, DSOs, and affiliated entities developing policies intended to apply broadly across the institution. Internal unit-specific policies limited to local operations are not required to use this format.

• **Headings & Numbering:** Use the required sections in the UF [Policy Template](https://policy.ufl.edu/policy-development/policy-template/), in this order: 1. Purpose, 2. Applicability, 3. Definitions, 4. Policy Statement, 5. References and Related Information, 6. History (revision log)  
• **Subsections:** Use hierarchical numbering (e.g., 4.1, 4.1.1). Avoid deep nesting (i.e., 4.1.2.1.1).  
• **Lists:** Use bullets for unordered content and numbers for ordered or step-by-step content.  
• **Text Alignment:** Use left-aligned text. Add a blank line before new headings. Avoid orphaned headings.  
• **Margins & Fonts:** Stick to the UF Policy Template for consistency.  
• **Acronyms and Abbreviations**  
✅ Spell out first, then use the abbreviation:  
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) requires…  
CLAS will monitor compliance quarterly.  
❌ Don’t assume readers know your acronyms  
❌ Don’t introduce acronyms you only use once

**Applicability Section**  
Every UF policy must include a high-level applicability statement to define its scope. To reduce ambiguity, we recommend using one of the following three standard formats:

1. **UF**  
   This policy applies to the University of Florida (UF), including its Direct Support Organizations (DSOs) and affiliated entities. It does not apply to UF Health, its DSOs, or affiliated entities.
2. **Enterprise-wide**  
   This policy applies enterprise-wide to the University of Florida (UF), including its DSOs and affiliated entities, as well as to UF Health, its DSOs, and affiliated entities.
3. **Hybrid / Scoped**  
   This policy applies to select components of the University of Florida (UF), its DSOs, and affiliated entities, and may apply to certain UF Health entities as specified herein. It does not necessarily apply to all units within UF or UF Health. See Section [X] for detailed applicability and exclusions.

After selecting one of these standard statements, policy authors may include a second sentence to further clarify the scope of the policy, if needed. For example: “Each individual and every group or organization with access to Restricted Data is required to abide by this Policy.” While the high-level applicability statement alone is sufficient, additional scope language may be added at the author’s discretion to provide more specific context.

**Tone and Language**  
✅ Use active voice, plain and concise language, a formal and objective third-person tone, and refer to titles or roles instead of individual names.  
❌ Avoid passive voice (e.g., “The request was approved…”), personal pronouns like “I,” “we,” or “you,” gender-specific terms such as “Chairman” or “he/she” unless part of a formal title or otherwise contextually appropriate, and legalese such as “herein,” “whereas,” or “aforementioned.”  
📌 Quick Tips: Use “must” for requirements, “must not” for prohibitions, “may” for permissions, and “should” for recommendations. Avoid using “shall.”

**Definitions**  
Use the Definitions section to clearly define any potentially unclear or technical term. Use this format:  
**Defined Term** means [insert definition].  
Then, capitalize the defined term consistently throughout the document. Don’t switch between synonyms like “student,” “pupil,” or “learner” once you’ve defined “Student.” The use of lowercase alternatives, such as “student,” is discouraged in the same policy where “Student” is defined.  
✅ Student means any person enrolled in UF courses.  
Then use: All Students must comply with this requirement.  
❌ Don’t use: All students/pupils/learners must comply…

**Enterprise Terminology**  
The following broader terms can help clarify policy scope across UF’s evolving structure. While not required, policy authors may find them useful in many instances:

• **UF Enterprise**: All entities owned, controlled, or operated by the UF Board of Trustees, including UF, its direct support organizations (DSOs), and affiliated legal entities.  
• **UF Geography**: The physical footprint of the UF Enterprise, including all owned, leased, or occupied land, buildings, and spaces.  
• **Gainesville Main Campus**: UF’s primary campus in Gainesville, including academic buildings, student housing, research facilities, and any space governed or regulated by UF.

🔎 Consider including these terms in your Definitions section when writing policies that span organizational units or campuses.

**Final Style & Editing Tips**  
✔ Use the UF [Policy Template](https://policy.ufl.edu/policy-development/policy-template/)  
✔ Refer to the AP Stylebook for additional grammar/styling guidance  
✔ Use the official names of any referenced units, offices, documents or programs  
  
✔ Include a table of contents for long policies  
✔ Proofread before submitting for review