

I. Purpose

This policy establishes the process and guidelines for developing, reviewing, approving, revising, tracking, and retiring University of Houston Clear Lake (UHCL) policies, known as UHCL Academic Affairs Policies (UAAPs) and should be applied to all academic policies. All staff, faculty and students are governed by the scope of this policy. This Policy on Academic Policy Development is designed to promote expeditious policy development, approval, and management while allowing for robust debate and discussion of draft policies. This Policy also helps ensure that UHCL Academic Affairs Policies are easily accessible and understandable, widely disseminated, consistent and standardized to the extent reasonable, and approved in an appropriate way.

II. Policy

UHCL Academic Affairs Policies (UAAPs) establish a framework and process for the effective and consistent development, approval, publication, and management of UHCL Academic Affairs Policies, and to provide guidance on the elements of an effective policy. These guidelines also provide a mechanism, along with the MAPP (01.A.01) to implement Board of Regents policies, System Administrative Memoranda (SAMs), and UHCL Shared Governance Policy, as well as meet all legal requirements. This policy is intended to enhance

best practices, shared governance, effective decision-making, and transparency with respect to the manner in which UAAPs are developed and maintained.

III. Definitions

- A. Policy: for the purposes of this document UHCL defines a policy as a statement of institutional philosophy and a general statement of a rule, established to provide direction and assistance to the university community in the conduct of UHCL Academic Affairs Policies.
1. Characteristics: Policies should be governing principles that have broad application or effect across UHCL, and:
 - a. Express the institutional culture, goals, and enhance the university's mission;
 - b. Promote consistency and operational efficiency and mitigates institutional risk;
 - c. Provide guidance for decision making and limiting or setting parameters where applicable;
 - d. Seeks to ensure compliance with applicable Board policy, UH SAM, law or regulation.Policies may exist at the College or Department Level, but they may not supersede or conflict with any UAAP.
- B. Procedures: A statement that prescribes specific actions to be taken to conform to established policies, allowing for the orderly implementation of those policies. Procedures should articulate the process for accomplishing the parameters of the policy and might document a defined order, process, or course of action, thereby ensuring consistent and repetitive approaches to policy compliance. Procedures may be incorporated into the body of policy (such as Promotion and Tenure) or may be established independent of a policy.
- C. Responsible Party: The "Responsible Party" is the University office or unit with primary responsibility for administering a particular policy, and thus, is responsible for:
1. Proposing new policies (i.e. within the appropriate subject matter area);
 2. Reviewing an existing policy;
 3. Answering inquiries about a specified policy;
 4. Collaborate in collecting input and feedback from campus constituents on all aspects of proposed or existing policies;
 5. Monitoring the effectiveness and ensuring compliance with a policy.
- The Responsible Party for UAAPs is frequently one of the following: Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, or Faculty Senate President.
- D. Full Review Process: The process set forth in this policy for the review and processing of new UAAPs and Substantive Changes to current UAAPs. A 'Full Review' includes movement through the Shared Governance Process at UHCL.
- E. Housekeeping: A revision to a UAAP that is clerical in nature and does not directly change meaning or intent of the policy. Housekeeping Changes include references to supporting law or other policies, corrected formatting or typos, corrected titles, change of authority for the policy, updated contact or URL information, or very minor text changes for clarity. Housekeeping changes do require notification of representatives of all formal stages of Shared Governance.
- F. Subject Matter Expert (SME): The individual(s) who are most knowledgeable about the subject matter of the proposed policy and/or would be most affected by the proposed policy. SMEs can be identified by the Responsible Party(ies), FS President, or Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost. The SME may serve as the curator of the UAAP and is the *first point of contact to answer policy questions*.
- G. Substantive Change: A revision to a UAAP that materially alters its meaning or intent.
- H. Shared Governance Policy Process: The process through which policies proceed to document approving recommendations to the President of UHCL which is delineated in the UHCL University Shared Governance Policy (MAPP 01.A.06). Given the majority of academic policies originate in Faculty Senate, this process also aligns with the UHCL Faculty Senate constitution.

- I. Business Day: any traditional working day, Monday through Friday, while Fall or Spring semesters are in session.
- J. Archiving: When a UAAP is revised or retired, the Policy Management Office will maintain the prior or retired version(s) in its electronic archives.

IV. **Policy development, review, revision, approval, tracking, retirement, and archiving:**

A. New Policies:

1. Should a Responsible Party determine a need to propose a new UAAP related to academic affairs, the responsible party or their delegate, shall initiate the process and articulate on the policy UAAP form a justification/rational for the policy.
2. The responsible party will collaborate in collecting input and feedback from applicable campus constituents on all aspects of proposed policies;
3. Vice Presidents, the Policy Management Office, or Subject matter experts, where applicable, should be consulted to ensure an existing or related policy does not exist.
4. A draft UAAP or potential UAAP language is given to the Faculty Senate President, who discusses the new policy with FSEC and forwards the policy development to the appropriate Faculty Senate Committee.
5. The UAAP then proceeds through the Shared Governance Process (MAPP 01.A.06).
6. The Policy Management Office will assign a policy number to a policy document after it has been officially approved and signed by the University President.
7. Should be posted on the UHCL website or another appropriate website and be available, as appropriate, to the University community. The Responsible Party (ies) for all UAAPs will coordinate the announcement, distribution, and publication of all new and revised UAAPs to the UHCL community.

B. Revision of Policies:

1. Existing UAAPs may be revised at the regular review period as specified in the policy, or may be revised upon a determination by the Responsible Party of the need to update the information in the UAAP.
2. The Responsible Party or their delegate shall assume the responsibility of preparing draft revisions as a redlined version of the existing UAAP.
3. The Responsible Party or their delegate shall collaborate in collecting input and feedback from policy campus constituents when policy impact multiple divisions of the university;
4. Recommended revisions shall proceed through the Shared Governance process.

C. Legal Review:

1. The Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost or their designee will consult with the UHS Office of General Council (OGC) regarding legal sufficiency for all new UAAPs and updates to existing UAAPs before approval at Academic Council.
2. UAAPs will be forwarded to University Council once OGC has endorsed the policy.
3. If substantive changes are required as a result of OGC review, the policy will be reviewed through the shared governance process in its newly edited form.
4. This policy does not apply to existing UAAPs undergoing Housekeeping Changes.

- D. **Policy Approval and Adoption:** In keeping with the Shared Governance Process (MAP 01.A.06). All academic affairs policies will be presented for review, approval, and/or endorsement by Faculty Senate committees, Faculty Senate, Academic Council, and University Council.
1. If votes of endorsement receive majority support at each shared governance phase, following endorsement at University Council, the policy will be presented to the UHCL President for final approval;
 2. Consistent with UHCL Shared Governance Policy (MAPP 01.A.06), the President has the final decision on all policies.
 1. The President will notify the Responsible Party and the Policy Management office within 10 business days of the University Council Vote on the recommended policy of the decision to support, signified by signature on the policy, or oppose the decision of the Shared Governance Bodies.
 2. If opposed, a justification will be communicated in writing to the Responsible Party within 10 business days of the University Council Vote and announced at the next regularly scheduled University Council meeting.
 3. Once a UAAP is approved and signed by the president, it is considered official UHCL policy.
- E. **Policy Tracking:** It is the responsibility of the Policy Management Office in collaboration with the Responsible Party to monitor the progress of policies through the shared governance process.
- F. **Retirement of a Policy:** A UAAP is to be retired when it is no longer needed or is more effectively combined with or superseded by a SAM or another UAAP.
1. A UAAP is considered retired upon documented approval by the Responsible Party, the UHCL General Counsel, The Faculty Senate President, The Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost, and the President.
 2. Upon retirement, the Policy Management Office will remove the UAAP from the UHCL website and archive it.

V. **Expedited review:**

- A. **Legal Changes:** Certain information within an official UAAP may become obsolete or require revision due to changes in legislation or other higher authority. Additionally, legal authority may require that the UHC System or UHCL President implement or approve certain policies to comply with federal or state law.
1. When such information must be changed due to federal or state law, or UH system policy, the document will not be subject to the Full Shared Governance Review Process. Instead, the Policy Management Office, and the policy's Responsible Party shall be notified, and the document will be revised in consultation with the UH System Office of General Counsel and submitted directly to the Responsible Party(ies), the Faculty Senate President, the appropriate Vice President, and the President for approval.
 2. An update will be announced to all members of University Council in the next regularly scheduled meeting or via e-mail.
 3. The revised policy shall then be made available to the UHCL Community.

- B. **Minor Changes:** If a subject matter expert or policy owner desires to modify an existing UAAP in order to reflect a minor improvement or update to a process or procedure, or to better align the UAAP with other MAPPs, SAMs, or Board rules, such changes will be processed by the Policy Management Office on an expedited basis, but only to the extent such proposed changes are reviewed by the Responsible Party, and Subject Matter Expert and are determined that they do not affect the purpose and meaning of the UAAP, and that no amount of feedback will negate the need for the change.
 - 1. Revisions processed by the Policy Management Office on this basis shall be submitted to the Responsible Party(ies), The Faculty Senate President, The Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost and the President for approval.
 - 2. An update will be announced to all members of University Council in the next regularly scheduled meeting or via e-mail.
 - 3. The revised policy shall then be made available to the UHCL Community.

- C. **Housekeeping Changes:** The Director of Policy Management, in consultation with the UAAP's Subject Matter Expert and Responsible Party, has the authority to make non-substantive, housekeeping changes to a UAAP without the necessity of going through the Full Shared Governance Review Process.
 - 1. The Policy Management Office and the Responsible Party for the policy shall be notified any housekeeping revisions, and the document will be submitted directly to the Responsible Party(ies), the UHCL General Counsel (when applicable), The Faculty Senate President, The Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost the appropriate Vice-President, and the President for approval.
 - 2. An update will be announced to all members of University Council in the next regularly scheduled meeting or via e-mail.
 - 3. The revised policy shall then be made available to the UHCL Community.

- D. **Interim Issuances:** When a new UAAP or revisions to an existing UAAP are needed in a timeframe that does not allow for the Full Shared Governance Review Process due to a regulatory, accreditation, or other extenuating circumstance, it can be proposed as an interim policy, which shall be implemented on an interim basis with notice to the Policy Management Office, appropriate stakeholders, and the University Council representatives.
 - 1. Revisions on this basis shall be submitted to the Responsible Party(ies), the UHCL General Counsel, The Faculty Senate President, The Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, and the President for approval.
 - 2. An update will be announced to all members of University Council in the next regularly scheduled meeting or via e-mail.
 - 3. The revised policy shall then be made available to the UHCL Community.
 - 4. The Interim policy must undergo a full Shared Governance Review within six months' time, or the interim status will need to be reviewed by all shared governance committees and formally extended.

VI. **Responsibilities:**

- A. **Periodic Review:** The Responsible Party, by and through the Shared Governance Process, is responsible for maintaining and updating UAAPs in his or her area to ensure that they reflect current policy and practices and that they conform to applicable laws and regulations.
 - 1. To ensure policies remain current, all UAAPs should undergo a periodic review at least once every five years, or more often if required by law or circumstances.

2. If such a periodic review does not result in changes, the Policy owner and Responsible Party will confirm to the Policy Office that the UAAP has undergone review and is current, and the UAAP documentation will be updated to reflect the most recent review date, as well as the next required review date.
- B. **Communication and Policy Dissemination:** The Policy Management Office in collaboration with the Policy's Responsible Party will coordinate the distribution of new policies and policy revisions by communicating with the UHCL community including the Faculty Senate President, The Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs & Provost, and all applicable stakeholders. All new and revised UAAPs shall be published electronically on the UHCL website, communicated to the University Council, and distributed as otherwise required by law. In addition, the Responsible Party, or their designees, will determine if other effective methods for policy dissemination should be undertaken and if training should be conducted.
 - C. **Enforcement and Monitoring:** The Faculty Senate President and the Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs & Provost are responsible for promoting and enforcing the compliance of all UAAPs within Academic Affairs.
 - D. **Responsibility for the Maintenance of the Policy on Policies.** The UHCL Office of Policy Management in collaboration with the Provost is responsible for the maintenance of this policy.
 - ↳ The Policy Management Office will be responsible for maintenance of official policy documents. These will be maintained both digitally and in hard copy in the UHCL Library. The digital and hard copy files will contain an index, cross-referencing all policies by
 1. Number
 2. Alpha by title
 3. Alpha by subject
 4. Date approved
 5. Sunset review date
 - E. **Compliance:** Faculty, staff and students are responsible for knowing, understanding and complying with UAAPs that relate to their position, employment or enrollment at UHCL.
 1. Responsible Parties are responsible for following the policy development and implementation process established by this policy, communicating their policies effectively, reviewing and updating their policies regularly, and monitoring their policies for compliance and effectiveness.

VII. **Formatting:**

The following describes a standardized presentation of policies:

- A. Each policy will have an Academic Affairs Approvals page that documents the Shared Governance Approval process with dates and signatures of administrative authority for each representing body (ie: Faculty Senate, Academic Council)
- B. Each policy is to be formatted on the UAAP template approved by academic affairs in collaboration with the Policy Management Office.
- C. Each Policy will include a Policy Tracking Form that will note substantive edits and will be approved by academic affairs in collaboration with the Policy Management Office.

- D. Each Policy will also include a redline copy of the original as an attachment to the UAAP Policy Packet.
- E. Access to all required forms should be centrally available on the UHCL Provost Office and Faculty Senate website.

VIII. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITY

Responsible Parties: Academic Affairs and Faculty Senate
Review: Every 5 years