

## **Documenting Business Procedures**

**Policies** regulate and control organizational actions, whereas **procedures** are the customary methods of handling business. By documenting procedures separately from a policy we allow for increased flexibility and responsiveness.

The **procedures** in this system are routine business processes on campus that involve two or more departments working together to complete organizational goals. Internal standard operating procedures and emergency continuity of operations plans are not incorporated into this system.

### **Procedures: Isolating “How-to Documents”**

The standard operating procedure (SOP) is a formal statement of how a user implements requirements and achieves necessary results. Procedures are the practical application of broad policy rules while not developing the level of detail involved in a training course. Properly documented procedures ensure uniformity and compliance across campus.

### **Template/Format**

The online library is a tool for users across campus to receive services from a range of departments, ensuring compliance and efficiency. The web format includes the following sections:

|                      |                                                                             |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Title</b>         | States short description.                                                   |
| <b>Purpose</b>       | Infinitive verb, to elaborate on the title and detail task to be completed. |
| <b>Applicability</b> | Defines audience and subject matter for which the procedure is directed.    |
| <b>Procedure</b>     | Imperative mood, steps clearly defined to complete task.                    |

When developing your drafts also consider related instructions, related policies, forms, and descriptive word tags that can be imbedded into the webpage. [See Procedure on Procedure?]

The library directs users on campus on routine processes and will not include a department’s internal process.

### **Initial Development Steps**

|             |                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Plan     | Identify subject matter experts, any related policies, and department leadership responsible for this process.                                                      |
| 2. Analyze  | Project scope and plan: audience, usage, goals, urgency, conditions, sensitivity, organizational impact, availability of resources, potential obstacles and delays. |
| 3. Research | Interview experts, solicit input, review manuals and forms, and capture existing information on routine business process.                                           |
| 4. Prewrite | Organize and outline, considering logical order and audience. Draft questions for the experts to review and identify missing information.                           |
| 5. Draft    | Using template sections for web format to organize clearly defined steps and purpose. Review Tips for Writing Procedures (See below).                               |

|                         |                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6. Format               | Apply template and determine related procedures, policies, forms, training, and descriptive word tags.                                                        |
| 7. Review and Edit      | Submit draft to department leadership and experts. Determine appropriate revisions if necessary.                                                              |
| 8. Approval and Publish | After area director or appropriate leadership has approved procedure contact appropriate technical staff to publish material to the online procedure library. |

### What is your Role?

| Drafter                                                                                                                      | Reader/Campus User                                                                                                       | Administrator                                                                                            | Approver                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Those who create, edit, or review prior to release. Identifying a lead drafter associated with the primary owner is helpful. | Typically employees that use the system or the applicable audience. However this also includes auditors and contractors. | Those responsible for setting up the system and applying user roles. This can include technical support. | Department leadership must approve changes to procedures. |

### Procedure Writing Workflow

This will vary throughout UMB but should include consideration of these different campus roles. If you would like assistance starting an SOP or a general consultation, please contact the Office of University Policy and Procedure.

### Tips for Writing Procedures

- o Focus on audience and applicability.
- o Organize process into simple short sentences in chronological order.
- o Use active voice and command verbs. Imperative mood.
- o Allow for review by owners of process. Plan to test and revise.
- o Make your statements specific using consistent language.
- o Choose your words carefully, avoiding jargon and technical terms if you can.
- o Don't omit steps or take shortcuts.
- o Put the most important item in each sentence at the beginning.
- o Limit each step to one specific item.
- o Allow for the use of illustrations and diagrams for only appropriate items.
- o Give an example or an analogy, if you think a statement may puzzle a reader.
- o Check your completed draft for logical presentation.

### Quick Tip Examples

| Include:                                                                                                                                                                         | Do not include:                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Actions and conditions for actions</li> <li>- Applicability</li> <li>- Alternatives</li> <li>- Standard operating procedures</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Software Instructions</li> <li>- Explanation of the rule or policy.</li> <li>- Enforcement</li> <li>- Internal guidance or steps</li> </ul> |

|                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Links to guides or help sections</li><li>- Links to forms</li><li>- Warnings and cautions</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Continuity of operations plans</li></ul> |
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### Background For the Purposes of the Procedure Library

A **policy** is a principle or protocol to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. A policy is a statement of intent, and is implemented as a procedure or protocol.

- *UMB and USM Policies are available in the Policy Library. Department Policies are not.*

A **Procedure** is a written document detailing the implementation of a policy. A procedure establishes accountability describing the Who, What, Where, When, and How. The procedures in the Procedure Library are routine business processes on campus that involve two or more departments working together to complete organizational goals.

**Primary owner** is the lead office or department who takes responsibility and ownership for the maintenance of the procedure and whose leadership makes final approval of the procedure.

**Secondary owner** is an office or department with an active role in the steps to complete the business process, however while consulted they do not provide final approval.

**Approval** for procedures is generally at the director or AVP level, however particularly complicated procedures may require a higher level of review and approval.

**Instructions** are a set of actions that have to be executed to achieve an outcome, the "how" to the "what" of the procedure.

For the central library, **internal procedures** are generally not included. They involve procedures or actions that members of a Service Center or Department execute within their unit but may still serve broader University constituents. If the internal actions dictate timing or are helpful general knowledge they may be considered important to include.

**External procedures** are the steps that users (frequently University Employees) must take to engage with the UMB Services Centers or Departments to receive services. These processes typically involve 2 or more departments.

The writing style for the procedure library is plain language using the active voice and imperative mood.

**Imperative mood** is a grammatical mood that directs commands or requests, including proscribed prohibitions or permissions.

### Branding and Communications Style Guides

Editorial Style Guide

<http://www.umaryland.edu/branding/styleguides/editorial.html>

General Web Style Guide

<http://www.umaryland.edu/branding/styleguides/>

UMB Procedures Style Guide

Editorial Style Guide for Web

<http://www.umaryland.edu/cpa/toolbox/web-style-guide/editorial/>

Branding Standards 2/15/12

<http://www.umaryland.edu/branding/styleguides/files/um-brand-standards.pdf>