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<b>Policy Sponsor:</b>	<b>President and Chief Executive Officer</b>
<b>Policy Administrator:</b>	<b>Vice-President People and Planning</b>

## Policy Framework

### Purpose

The purpose of the Policy Framework is to document the parameters for policy development, approval, communication, implementation, and maintenance.

### Scope / Limits

This policy applies to all college-wide policies under the authority of the board and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) of Lethbridge College.

Board policies under this framework are included within the college-wide policy website for purposes of visibility, and accessibility only.

Departments, centres, and divisions are recognized as having the authority to develop procedures relevant to their individual units. These procedures will not be called policies.

### Definitions

**College-wide policy** is a set of broad policy statements about an overarching topic that has college-wide implications that enables decision-making, establishes authority, and defines scope and limitations. These will form a parent policy to the referenced policy supports.

**Policy supports** are supporting documents referenced in the policy that outline how the policy expectations are met. Document types will vary from policy to policy but could include documents such as college-wide procedures, codes of conducts, regulations, guidelines, schedules, etc.

**College-wide procedures** are college-wide standardized procedures outlining a required process and/or set of instructions to be followed for achieving the outcomes identified in the parent policy.

**Unit level procedures** are procedures developed by a unit and do not have college-wide implication. Unit level procedures could be division, centre, or department based and pertain to the operations of that unit, and do not encroach upon the authorities of the governing and managing bodies of the college.

**Policy sponsor** is a member of Senior Leadership who is accountable for policy in a specific area. For example, the Vice President Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer is the policy

sponsor for finance-based policy.

**Policy administrator** is a person, usually a member of senior administration, who takes the lead in the development and implementation of a specific policy or group of policies on behalf of the policy sponsor.

**College-wide policy approval body** refers to the governing or managing body accountable for establishing (approving) college-wide policy.

## Policy Statements

1. College-wide policy development and review will be based on priority need for the organization.
2. Policy will reflect the mission, values and strategic goals of Lethbridge College and will be congruent with all college-wide policies and agreements.
3. Policy supports referenced in the policy form part of the parent policy.
4. Policy approval will be consistent with the powers and duties of the board, Academic Council, and ELT.
5. Appropriate levels of input will be considered in the development of policy. Such input may include the internal or external community, Academic Council, and/or expert or professional advice pertaining directly to the subject matter of a given policy.
6. College-wide policy will be available exclusively through the college website; hard copy manuals will not be produced or distributed. Notification of newly approved or amended policy will be communicated through the college electronic messaging system for employees.
7. The named policy sponsor, who will be a member of executive leadership, is accountable for the implementation and direct communication of approved policy.
8. Unit level procedures will be developed and approved at the unit level and must be congruent with and supportive of college-wide policy. Should a conflict exist between a college-wide policy and a unit-level procedure, the college-wide policy will take priority.
9. Policy approval bodies for college-wide policies are as follows:
  - a) board of governors Policy - The board of governors establishes policy in four areas:
    - i. Board Governance Policies - are policies that describe how the board will govern itself while governing the organization.
    - ii. Board-President Relationship - are policies that describe the board's relationship with the president and the authority given to the president to govern the organization.
    - iii. Board ENDS - are policies that define and provide direction on the institution's purpose.
    - iv. Executive Limitations - are policies that define the limitations of the

president.

b) Academic Council - The powers and duties of Academic Council with regard to academic and student related policy will be consistent with those outlined in the Post-secondary Learning Act as governed by the Province of Alberta.

c) Senior Leadership establishes policy in the following areas:

- i. management and operational policies - policies that ensure consistent practice across the organization.
- ii. legislative requirement policies – policies covering all decision-making areas identified in legislation under the authority of the board and delegated to the President.

## **A: Policy Supports**

[Policy Procedure Manual \(Appendix A\)](#)

## **B: Legislative References**

Post-secondary Learning Act

## **C: Other References**

## **D: Related Policies**



<b>Parent Policy:</b>	<b>Policy Framework</b>
<b>Effective Date:</b>	<b>May 1, 2012</b>
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<b>Policy Sponsor</b>	<b>President and Chief Executive Officer</b>
<b>Administrative Responsibility:</b>	<b>Vice-President People and Planning</b>
<b>Appendix A</b>	

## Developing College-Wide Policy and Policy Supports Procedure Manual

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The purpose of this procedure manual is to provide guidance, information and support to developers of college-wide policy. It includes information about the policy framework, the support available to policy developers, and procedures for policy development, maintenance, and rescission.

The framework will help create broad policy statements on topics of overarching concern to the institution. These will form a parent policy to policy supports, such as procedures, guidelines, and forms, etc., which outline how we will achieve the desired results as stated in the parent policy.

As a user of this manual, you are invited to submit suggestions for improvement to [policy@lethbridgecollege.ca](mailto:policy@lethbridgecollege.ca)

## **SECTION 1: General**

### **Policy Categories**

To facilitate ease of access, policies are organized into functional categories as follows:

- Global Planning & Accountability
- Academic Programming & Instructional
- Student Services & Support
- Community & Corporate Relations
- Facilities
- Finance
- Health & Safety
- Human Resources
- Research & Copyright
- Technology & Information Management

### **Policy vs. Procedure (College-wide)**

This section defines the difference between college-wide policy and procedure.

A college-wide **policy** regulates organizational action. It outlines a philosophy, a mission, or general objective and is expressed in broad terms. A policy provides direction, and controls actions or conduct, clarifies how the college conducts business, ensures the college is in compliance with applicable legislation, and promotes accountability.

College-wide **procedures** are the operational processes required to implement the policy. Procedures are action-oriented and support policy. They outline a set of actions for the official or accepted way of doing something; that is, the “how to” or directions and instructions. A procedure ensures compliance with a policy, and tells users how to implement the requirements of the policy.

### **Unit-Level Procedure**

There is a difference between college-wide procedures that support policy and those developed at a unit level to support activities pertaining to that unit.

Unit-level procedures are division-, centre-, or department-based and pertain to the operations of that unit. They must be congruent with and supportive of college-wide policy. The unit head can approve procedures that pertain to the unit and that are in support of unit activity. Should a conflict exist between a college-wide policy and a unit based procedure, the college-wide policy will take priority.

Unit-level procedures are NOT within the scope of this manual.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

This section defines the roles and responsibilities of those involved in policy development.

### **Policy Sponsor**

The Policy Sponsor is a member of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and is accountable for policy in a specific area. Responsibilities include:

- appointing a Policy Administrator and supporting the process

### **Policy Administrator**

The Policy Administrator is usually a member of the College Leadership Council (CLC) who takes the lead in the development and implementation of a specific policy or group of policies on behalf of the Policy Sponsor. Responsibilities include:

- coordinating completion of a policy needs assessment and project plan
- coordinating research and drafting of policy with appropriate stakeholder consultation
- submitting final draft of the policy to Institutional Planning, Analysis and Risk Services (IPARS) for formatting and inclusion on CLC agenda
- presenting policies to CLC
- communicating the policy to those directly affected
- implementing the policy

### **Policy Developer**

The Policy Administrator may choose to delegate the development of a policy to a policy developer; a subject-matter expert or individual responsible for a functional area. Responsibilities include:

- coordinating the development work on behalf of the Policy Administrator

### **Office of Institutional Planning, Analysis and Risk Services (IPARS)**

IPARS has been given the role of supporting the policy development process. Responsibilities include:

- helping determine the need for a college-wide policy
- providing consultative services, support and guidance, tools and resources throughout the development or revision cycle, such as assistance with wording, formatting (using LC brand standard) and research

- providing institutional document-control services, including a repository of common institutional definitions
- ensuring changes to policies are reflected in linked policies
- managing the ongoing policy review schedule
- working with the Policy Sponsor/Administrator/Developer to ensure compliance with the review schedule and to make use of stakeholder feedback
- communicating to the college community on a broad level about new and revised policies
- maintaining the central repository of policies and related procedures
- coordinating the agenda for policies going through to CLC for approval
- posting to website
- providing overview of process to the college community

## SECTION 2: Policy Development Process

The process for policy development or change includes four distinct steps:

**Step 1 - Policy Needs Assessment**

**Step 2 - [Policy Project Plan](#)**

**Step 3 - Policy Development and Approval**

**Step 4 - Policy Communication and Implementation**

These steps are described in detail below:

### Step 1: Policy Needs Assessment

Within the *needs assessment* step it is determined whether a new policy needs to be developed and/or whether an existing policy needs to be revised and/or rescinded.

To start the policy needs assessment process, **Part 1 of the [Policy Project Plan](#)** is completed by the Policy Administrator and submitted to IPARS.

The first step in completing the needs assessment form is to define the problem or issue which requires solving. To clearly define the problem, its symptoms or effects have to be distinguished from the actual problem, as illustrated by this example: *An employee survey shows that employees are not entirely clear on procedures to follow in relation to a particular task.* This is a symptom; the problem could be any of the following: inadequate communication from management on procedures, conflicting procedures, difficulty in understanding procedures, etc. Depending on which one of these is identified as the problem, the solution would be quite different.

The policy needs assessment will be reviewed; if it is determined a need exists, the process proceeds to Step 2, developing a project plan for completing the policy project.

If the request does not align with the criteria for a college-wide policy, a recommendation may be given to develop procedures or guidelines at the unit level to solve the problem.

### Step 2: Policy Project Plan

Policy development is a project. It has defined deliverables and a starting and end point. As with any successful project, planning is a critical element of success. **Part II of the Policy Project Plan** is a guide to supporting the development process and successful implementation of the new policy or change to an existing policy. Planning includes considering the following:

### **What is the Conceptual Framework for the Policy Development?**

Before putting pen to paper, it is best to scope out the parameters around which the policy will be developed. What is included or excluded? If a policy statement is added, how is it implemented? Having a clear understanding of what the policy is expected to achieve will guide the development process. Are there existing policies that are consolidated or incorporated?

### **Who should participate on the Policy Development Team?**

Policy development should not be the responsibility of one person. Identify and engage the team early.

### **Who needs to be involved to provide input/support in the development or rescission of policy?**

This involves consultation with appropriate stakeholders. Policy issues are most often cross-cutting or have horizontal implications. Thus, one of the critical strategies to successful policy development is to identify who needs to be involved in the process. Policies are most effective if those affected, and those with subject matter expertise, are consulted and have the opportunity to provide input by way of advice, reactions, or clarification, etc.

### **What are the targeted timelines for completion?**

Having a timeline in place is important to ensure the development moves along as expected. Some policies might have to go through various committees and review with time constraints attached. It is always best to work backwards to ensure your development cycle has the required time.

### **Throughout the process, who do you need to communicate to?**

It is useful in any successful project to identify who, what, when, and how you need to communicate throughout its life cycle.

### **How will this policy be implemented once it is approved?**

Developing your policy doesn't end with approval; it must be successfully implemented. Implementation may include training, creating new forms or processes, establishing system changes, establishing new procedures, etc. Implementation may also include identifying impacts on existing resources (people, timing, etc).

Now that you have answered these questions, you have a plan to move forward with the development stage.

## **Step 3: Policy Development and Approval**

This step includes the actual policy work, i.e. drafting the policy. Using your policy project plan as a guide (Step 2), the policy is built through research, gaining appropriate feedback, and redrafting to meet the established standards for policy development. It is important in this step to pay specific attention to the policy supports required to identify how the policy will be implemented and managed.

Keep in mind that the policy development process is not linear, with each step completed before the next one begins. The process is iterative and dynamic, with the various steps feeding into each other. For example, you may want to create procedures simultaneously as you create the policy.

Policy is intended to be short, to the point, and understandable by the intended audience. All college-wide policy must use the **Policy Format Template**. The template includes the categories listed below:

**Items 1-3 (purpose, scope/limits, and policy statements) are intended to be limited to one page and are mandatory to all college-wide policy:**

**1. Purpose:**

*should state why the policy is being developed. It is best to start with "The purpose of this policy is to. . .*

**2. Scope / Limits:**

*define to whom the policy applies and does not apply, as well as any exclusions.*

**3. Policy Statements:**

*are governing principles that guide college practice. They are key, clear statements that outline the parameters of the policy in a clear and understandable way for the reader.*

**Items 4-8 are policy dependent**

**4. Definitions:**

*aid understanding of the policy by defining clearly for the reader what is meant by specific language that may not be commonly understood. This section is not intended to define phrases or terminology that would normally be expected to be understood by the general college community.*

**5. Policy Supports:**

*are supportive documentation that aids in the implementation of the policy and provides specific steps to meet the policy requirements. Policy supports include procedures, guidelines, codes of conduct, forms, schedules, etc. Policy supports form part of the parent policy.*

**6. Legislated References:**

*are specific references to legislative requirement or collective agreement clauses that enable the policy.*

**7. Other References:**

*are documents or websites cross-referenced in this policy, and/or directly related to it and are listed in the final section of the policy.*

**8. Related Policies:**

*are policies cross-referenced in this policy, and/or directly related to it, are listed in the final section of the policy.*

**Some policies will have all categories; some will only have Tips for Writing Clear and Understandable Policy Statements**

- avoid long preambles which may undermine the content or confuse the reader. Indicate the purpose in a concise purpose statement
- define the terms being used
- be specific and concise
- use the active voice and present tense
- use familiar, strong, short words

- use short, simple sentences in short paragraphs
- avoid conveying a point of view
- use “will” or “shall” to convey a necessity to comply
- use “should” when discretion to adopt a different approach is permitted
- “may” confers authority to exercise full discretion
- avoid redundancies and jargon
- make positive, rather than negative, statements.

## **Developing Procedures and Other Policy Supports**

Define what types of policy supports, such as procedures, guidelines, etc., are required to support the policy implementation. The developer can determine the format of the supporting documents as long as a common header is attached (refer to [policy template](#)) linking the document to the parent policy.

In developing procedures, give consideration to who will be responsible for developing and managing these procedures, when this will be done, and what will be the process for consultation, approval and implementation. Be mindful that the implementation and maintenance of a policy should allow flexibility to accommodate varying situations and available resources.

### **Tips for Writing User-friendly Procedures**

- use tangible, precise, specific, and factual language
- be succinct
- start each step with a verb
- limit each step to one action
- assign the action
- employ special formats such as play scripts, flowcharts, and lists.

## **Policy Rescission**

Parallel to the process of developing policies is the review and rescission of outdated policies.

This could be a simultaneous process to policy development to ensure there is no duplication/contradiction of approved policy. It is especially important, as we transition to the new framework and consolidate overarching topics, that policy duplication is detected and rescission becomes part of the new process.

In other cases, a review will identify that there is no longer a need for a policy at the college-wide level and that the topic can be accommodated in some other form such as unit level procedures.

The process of rescission requires the same due diligence as policy development. Impact on stakeholder groups must be considered and communicated. Subsequent procedures or additions within other policies must be developed prior to rescission. Recommendations to rescind must go through the same approval process as new or revised policies.

## **Policy Approval**

In the *approval* stage, the policy is taken to the appropriate bodies for approval. All new or

revised policies must have appropriate input from stakeholders before coming forward for approval. Throughout the process, IPARS should be involved to assist and provide support where needed and ensure the policy development is consistent with the approved policy framework.

## **Approval Process for Academic and Student Related Policies**

Includes policies under the following headers:

- Academic Programming and Instructional
- Student Services and Support
- Research and Copyright

The following steps apply to approval of all **academic and student related** policies.

Note: although the policy supports are approved at a different level, these documents should be submitted to committees with the policy for information and to provide context for policy approval.

1. After receiving appropriate stakeholder, IPARS and/or legal input, the Policy Administrator brings forward the draft policy to Academic Council for introduction and feedback, and to IPARS for submission to CLC for introduction and feedback.
2. The Policy Administrator redrafts the policy based on feedback from Academic Council and/or CLC and brings forward to Academic Council for recommendation for approval.
3. Academic Council recommends approval to the Board of Governors (or designate).
4. The Policy Administrator brings forward the policy through IPARS to CLC for information.
5. The Board of Governors or designate approves the policy.

## **Approval Process for Administrative Policies**

Includes policies under the following headers

- Global Planning & Accountability
- Community and Corporate Relations
- Facilities
- Finance
- Health and Safety
- Human Resources
- Technology & Information Management

Note: although the policy supports are approved at a different level, these documents should be submitted to committees with the policy for information and to provide context for policy approval.

\*For policies with student impact, students should be consulted as part of the development process.\*

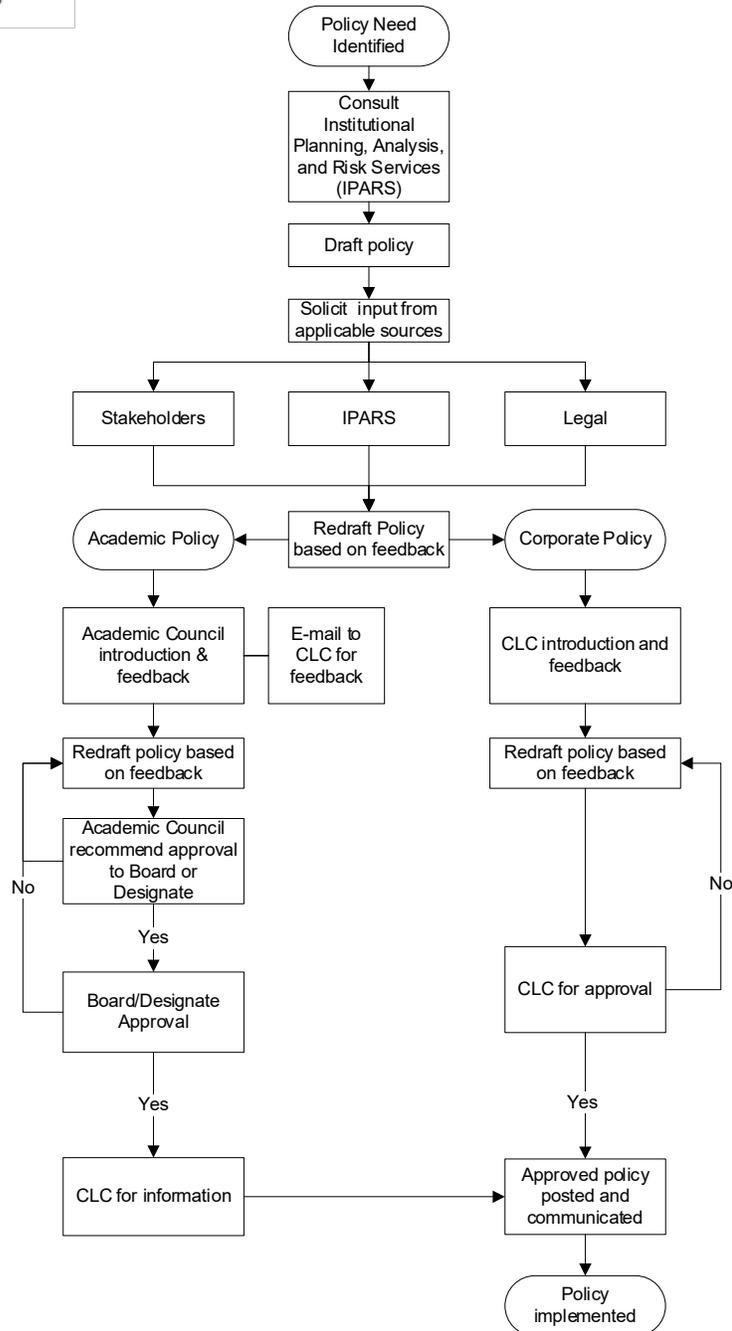
1. After receiving appropriate stakeholder, IPARS and/or legal input, the Policy Administrator brings forward the draft policy through IPARS to CLC for introduction and feedback.
2. The Policy Administrator redrafts the policy based on feedback from CLC and submits through IPARS to CLC for approval.
3. CLC approves the policy.

## **Policy Support Approval**

Policy supports consist of procedures, codes of conduct, directives, guidelines, schedules, etc. They inform users on how a policy will be implemented and maintained. They form part of the parent policy to which they are attached, therefore require a heightened level of scrutiny and approval, although not at the same level as the overall policy approval. All policy supports and changes to posted policy supports must be approved prior to posting on the website. Prior to approval key stakeholders must be consulted. As approval requirements may differ between policies and types of support documents, it will be up to the Policy Sponsor to assign the approval level but at a minimum it must be a member of the College Leadership Council (CLC).



## Policy Development and Approval Process



Revision approved by SAT May 1, 2012

## **Step 4: Policy Communication and Implementation**

The approved policy needs to be communicated and implemented. Responsibilities in this regard are as follows.

### **Communication**

As identified in the project plan, communication is a critical element throughout the process. Following a comprehensive communication plan will significantly increase the success of the policy implementation.

IPARS will publish, through the college's electronic messaging system, a general communiqué to all employees regarding recently approved or rescinded policy. IPARS will also send a policy briefing document to members of Management Forum regarding changes in policy.

Specific communication to direct stakeholders regarding policy implementation is the responsibility of the Policy Administrator.

### **Implementation**

It is the responsibility of the Policy Sponsor/Administrator to implement the policy, particularly with those directly impacted by the policy. Implementation may include training, creating new forms or processes, establishing system changes, establishing new procedures, etc.

## **SECTION 3: Policy Review and Maintenance Schedule**

Policy review and maintenance may be scheduled or unscheduled.

### **Scheduled Policy Review**

All policies will be put into a review cycle managed by IPARS. All policies must be reviewed at least every three years or more often, depending on the nature and age of the policy. Newer policies should initially be reviewed more often to ensure the objectives are being met and the supports are adequate.

IPARS will provide a list of policies requiring review to the Policy Sponsor and Administrator three months prior to the anticipated renewal date.

The Administrator will review the policy and any supports for relevancy. Input from key stakeholders is encouraged, especially as it relates to policy supports (procedures, forms, guidelines, etc.)

If no changes are required, the Policy Administrator should inform IPARS the policy has been reviewed and that it is acceptable in its present state.

If changes are required, a scaled-down version of policy development should take place, including research, appropriate levels of input, approval of changes to policy supports and

final approval by the appropriate approval body as per the approval process identified above in Step 3.

IPARS will document the approvals and post and communicate any altered policies and supports.

## **Unscheduled Policy Review**

### **Parent Policy Changes**

Ad hoc changes to parent policies will follow the Policy Development and Approval Process identified above. Consistent with the nature of the change, the process may be significantly scaled down, but should follow all the steps: needs assessment, development and approval, and communication and implementation.

### **Policy Support Changes**

Policy supports such as procedures, forms, etc., are expected to evolve and improvements will be identified as we work through the process. Substantive changes to policy supports require approval. Approval includes a sign-off by way of an e-mail initiated by IPARS.

### **Friendly edits**

From time to time, unsubstantive (policy and/or policy support) changes are requested. These “friendly edits” cannot change a document in a material way. Friendly edits include:

- name changes (i.e. portfolio, administrative unit, ancillary, centre, department, etc.)
- legislation, regulation or manual titles cited in the policy content
- policy template revisions
- grammar, spelling/typo corrections.

Friendly edits should be brought to the attention of IPARS with approval from the Policy Administrator. Emails to [policy@lethbridgecollege.ca](mailto:policy@lethbridgecollege.ca) are an accepted format for requesting friendly edits. Approvals will be initiated via e-mail by IPARS to the Policy Administrator.

The effective date on policies and procedures will not be revised for friendly edits, however IPARS will make and post changes and keep a record of edits in the master file.