GUIDELINES FOR DRAFTING POLICIES, REGULATIONS AND RULES (PRRs)

Additional References:
Procedure for Formatting, Adopting, and Publishing Policies, Regulations, and Rules
PRR Approval Process (flowchart)
PRR Template
PRR Review Box

Contact for Info: Office of the University Attorney (252-328-6940)

1. INTRODUCTION

In [insert month] 20XX, East Carolina University created a single website (the PRR website) for the publication of all University policies, regulations and rules. The website resulted from a codification project that had the goals of establishing (1) a single site to facilitate the location of PRRs and (2) a uniform format and reference system to make PRRs easier to read for users. The Office of the University Attorney maintains the website and assigns a number and subject heading to all PRRs once they have been approved by the University. The website has several powerful search engines to enable any user to easily locate any University PRR. Further, a PRR template has been created so that there is a standardized format for PRRs. These guidelines describe the elements of the template and provide guidance on how to draft clear and user friendly PRRs.

2. PRR TEMPLATE

2.1 Uniform Template. A uniform PRR template has been established that will provide guidance to drafters of PRRs and uniformity to the PRR website. The template provides for an informational section to precede the actual text of a PRR. The title is written at the top of the template along with a number and general subject category assigned by the Office of the University Attorney. Garamond 12 point font is used in the informational section of the template.

2.2 Informational Section Preceding the PRR. The drafter of the PRR should insert the following information in the informational section of the PRR template:

2.2.1 Title of the PRR: this should be written so that the major subject matter or class affected appears first as most individuals search an index or table of contents alphabetically; e. g., Sexual Orientation Policy Statement rather than Policy Statement on Sexual Orientation.
2.2.2 Authority and Effective Date: The Board of Trustees is the authority for all Policies. The Chancellor or an Executive Officer who has delegated authority for issuing Regulations in specified subject areas is the authority for all Regulations. See the delegations of Authority in REG (INSERT NUMBER) Procedure for Formatting, Adopting, and Publishing Policies, Regulations, and Rules. The issuing authority for a Rule is the applicable issuing unit.

2.2.3 History: Dates the PRR was first enacted and last revised.

2.2.4 Related Policies: Related policies that may help the reader to better understand the PRR.

2.2.5 Additional Information: Task force reports, memoranda, forms, state or federal laws or regulations that may be pertinent.

2.2.6 Contact Person: official title and phone number and/or email address of the person most knowledgeable about PRR who can respond to questions or provide information about the PRR.

3. PRR CONTENT

3.1 Subject Matter. PRRs create administrative structures, set priorities, assign responsibility, delegate authority, establish accountability, and define reporting requirements. Thus they directly or substantially affect procedural or substantive rights and duties of individuals or entities that fall within their regulatory scope. PRRs normally address the following questions, as applicable:

3.1.1 Who - who is covered by the PRR, who is accountable

3.1.2 What - the subject matter/policy being addressed[1]

3.1.3 When - time periods or deadlines[2]

3.1.4 Where - any applicable offices, business units, colleges, departments[3]

3.1.5 How - applicable procedures to be followed[4]

3.1.6. Why - the purpose of the PRR

3.2 Consistency with Governing Authority. PRRs must be consistent with all applicable governing authority. If a regulation is to implement a federal or state law, a policy of the Board of Governors or the Board of Trustees, or a directive from General Administration, the introduction to the regulation should note this and the remainder of the PRR should be consistent with the higher governing authority.
3.3 Essential Subject Matter. PRRs should be concise, understandable and contain only material essential to the PRR. Omit needless words. Readers are interested in getting to the point.

3.3.1 Historical Information. Historical information may be useful but it should not be in the PRR. Such information may be in a task force report that can be hyperlinked in the informational section of the template to provide the reader with additional information.

3.3.2 BOG or BOT Policies. Do not repeat language from Board of Governor’s or Board of Trustees’ Policies unless it is necessary. Instead, reference the policy and include it in the informational section with a hyperlink.

3.3.3 Webpage, Forms, Handbooks and other References: Unit webpage or other information relating to the regulations, such as guidelines, forms, charts, and handbooks, should not be incorporated into the body of the PRR but should be listed and hyperlinked in the additional information section preceding the text of the PRR. ECU PRRs and forms and PRRs in the UNC Policy Manual may be hyperlinked within the body of the PRR. References and hyperlinks to PRRs within the body of the PRR should be to the title of the PRR (not the http address). References to forms should be to the title to the form and the office or title of the person from whom they can be obtained since all forms may not be available electronically. No other hyperlinks may be made within the body of the PRR except those permitted in this sub-section. Other hyperlinks may be inserted in the informational section. References to persons to contact within the body of the regulation should be by official title only.

4. PRR FORMAT

4.1 Outline Format

New PRRs should be drafted in numerical outline format, using Garamond 12 point font and left justified margins, following the PRR template. Section titles and subtitles should be used in the body of the text where appropriate.

4.2 Headings and Sub-headings

Use headings and sub-headings that let the reader know the content of each section. PRRs can be either simple or complex depending upon the substantive matters that are addressed. Section 4 lists common headings that many PRRs use. Not all headings may be applicable depending upon the subject matter and scope of the PRR.
4.2.1 Introduction: Describes the background relevant to why the PRR exists or reasons for the policy and a brief statement about what the PRR will address. Some examples of the purpose or reason for a PRR are the following:

a) State or federal law or UNC policy requires ECU to have a policy or procedure on the subject;[5]

b) To ensure accountability, address expected behavior;[6]

c) To recognize the legitimate interests/expectations of various individuals, administrative/academic units, or the university;[7]

d) Overall benefits.[8]

4.2.2 Scope: Addresses who or what is covered by the PRR. For example, who must observe the policy and follow its procedure; who must understand the policy to do their job. Most PRRs have a primary audience and a secondary audience. For example, policies on graduate student admission address the criteria for admission and the procedures for admission. The primary audience is the graduate student who may be applying, and the secondary audience is the administrators who are involved in making the decisions. The PRR should focus directly on the primary audience in writing the PRR. If there are two primary audiences, the PRR should be clear in each section which audience is being addressed.

4.2.3 Definitions: Defines any technical language or words used in a special sense.

4.2.4 Policy Statement(s): the substantive provisions that create rights or duties, for example, criteria for admission of graduate students. Depending upon the complexity of the subject matter, this may be a simple paragraph or may contain various numbered sections with subtitles.

4.2.5 Exclusions or Exceptions: lists any locations, persons, or organizations that are excluded from the PRR or any funding sources or job classifications that are excluded from the policy. May also include information about special circumstances that affect only a few people or circumstances that occur infrequently.

4.2.6 Procedures: the steps that must be followed to comply with the policy. In Board of Trustee policies it is generally preferable to authorize the chancellor to establish procedures to implement the policy. This then allows the Chancellor or Chancellor’s delegate to establish the procedures by regulation, a faster and more efficient process.
4.3 Active Voice: PRRs should be written in active voice.[9] In general, every sentence should have meaning and relate to the heading or sub-heading under which it is found.


[2] E.g., grievances must be filed within 30 calendar days of the action being grieved. As a general rule, dates should be appropriate timeframes, rather than specific dates, unless a specific date is necessary for operation of the process.

[3] E.g., the office where applications must be filed.

[4] E.g., steps to be followed in resolving a complaint of sexual harassment; note that details such as how to fill out a form would not be contained in a PRR as these types of details usually are reserved for administrative guide lines, if necessary.

[5] E.g., UNC Code and implementing BOG policies require that East Carolina University have a faculty grievance procedure.

[6] E.g., policy for coordination of fundraising by affiliated foundations, Student Conduct Codes.

[7] E.g., identifying the circumstances under which the university may access material on an employee's computer or the procedures to be followed by employees or students who have grievances.


[9] Active voice is more direct, definite and clear. Passive voice is often indefinite and less clear. For example, Passive Voice “All requests for additional compensation must be approved in writing before the activity begins.” This phrasing does not tell the reader who approves the requests. Active Voice “The Department Head must approve all requests for additional compensation before the activity begins.” This phrasing is clear and definite and informs the reader.