

Academic Affairs Policy #000
Academic Affairs Policies Process

Date of Current Version: September, 2023

Responsible Officer: Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

1. PURPOSE

This policy establishes a standardized process for developing, adopting, revising, publishing, and archiving policies for the Division of Academic Affairs.

2. AUTHORITY

The Board of Visitors is given the authority to establish policies for the university. This power is delegated to the President in areas in which the Board has not established policy. See Code of Virginia section 23.1-1602; 23.1-1301. The establishment of policies and procedures concerning the Division of Academic Affairs has been delegated by the President to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs (Provost).

3. DEFINITIONS

Academic Affairs Policy

Academic Affairs policy sets the framework for decision-making in the Division of Academic Affairs. Academic Affairs policy is distinct from 1) university policy, which sets the framework for decision-making at the university-level and is generally applicable across multiple divisions; 2) the [Faculty Handbook](#), which sets the framework for decision-making related to “the duties, rights, and responsibilities of faculty members;” and 3) procedures and guidelines, which determine how policy is implemented.

Academic Affairs Policy Committee (AAPC)

The AAPC is the body that reviews and considers Academic Affairs policies on behalf of the Provost, as per the provisions and procedures outlined here. The composition of the committee is outlined in 6.6.

Business Day

Days the university is open for business, typically Monday through Friday, 12 months of the year, excluding university holidays and closures. A day with an unscheduled partial closure, such as delayed opening or early closure, is not a business day.

Non-substantive Revision

Non-substantive revisions refer to cosmetic adjustments; administrative title changes; updating hyperlinks; adding or modifying definitions; rearranging or re-wording sentences without changing the meaning of the policy; or addressing slight changes in related laws, regulations, or compliance standards.

Substantive Revision

Substantive revisions are policy changes that significantly alter the policy or related procedures.

4. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all faculty, staff, and students seeking to establish and maintain Academic Affairs policies and procedures.

5. POLICY

The Division of Academic Affairs is committed to ensuring that Academic Affairs policies are developed and managed with transparency, aligned with the university's mission, reflective of the division's core values, and in compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. Academic Affairs policies shall reflect a commitment to shared governance and be developed, adopted, revised, approved, published, and archived in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.

6. PROCEDURES

6.1. Record Keeping

The Office of Faculty Affairs and Curriculum (FAC) will maintain the list of Academic Affairs policies. An approved hard copy of each policy will be kept on file. The policies will be maintained on the Academic Affairs website and users may view and print copies directly from the website. The Provost must approve and sign all new policies and policy revisions.

6.2. Periodic Review

All Academic Affairs policies shall be reviewed by the Academic Affairs Policy Committee (AAPC) for possible revision or archiving at least once every five years.

6.3. Developing and Revising Academic Affairs Policies

a. Proposal

1. Any JMU employee in the Division of Academic Affairs may propose a new Academic Affairs policy or a revision to a current Academic Affairs policy in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy and pursuant to instructions provided by FAC.
2. The employee who originates the proposed policy/revision, hereafter referred to as "submitter," will submit the proposed policy to FAC, including a narrative statement that summarizes what is proposed; provide the rationale behind the proposal; and identify all stakeholders who will be affected by the policy.
3. The submitter should follow the Academic Affairs policy template provided by FAC.

b. Referral

The Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Curriculum (VPFAC), or their designee, will review and refer the proposed policy/revision and justification statement to the AAPC for review. The referral can be made with or without comment from the VPFAC at the VPFAC's discretion.

c. AAPC Consideration

The AAPC will review the proposed policy/revision and justification statement.

1. During review, the AAPC may consult with stakeholders including, but not limited to, the Provost, members of Academic Council, associate deans, academic unit heads, university legal counsel, the Speaker of the Faculty Senate, and the Faculty Senate Policy Committee.
2. The AAPC may mark up the text of the proposed policy/revision, changing the language as it deems appropriate.
3. Having considered the policy proposal, the AAPC shall take one of the following steps:

- i. Recommend the policy proposal/revision receive further consideration, in which case FAC shall post it for public comment.
- ii. Recommend against further consideration, in which case the VPFAC shall review the proposed policy/revision.
 - a) If the VPFAC agrees with the recommendation of the AAPC, they shall inform the submitter, with a written justification, that the policy/revision is not endorsed, ending the process. The proposed policy/revision may be resubmitted for new consideration.
 - b) If the VPFAC disagrees with the recommendation of the AAPC, the FAC shall post the policy/revision for public comment.

d. Public Comment and Revision

- 1. Proposed policies/revisions posted online by FAC will be available to university community members for comment for at least fifteen (15) business days during the academic year's fall and/or spring semesters. FAC shall announce when new proposed policies/revisions are posted.
- 2. Following the comment period, the AAPC will consider suggestions for revision and incorporate them into the draft as they deem appropriate.

e. Provost's Determination

Once the proposed policy/revision is modified, if necessary, based on relevant suggestions from the university community, the chair of the AAPC will forward the resulting draft to the VPFAC. The VPFAC will submit the draft and the VPFAC's recommendation to the Provost for final determination. The Provost is responsible for approving all policies in Academic Affairs.

- 1. If approved by the Provost, FAC will ensure that the new policy/revision is published to the Academic Affairs policy website and a notice will be sent to the university community.
- 2. If the Provost does not approve the new policy/revision, then the VPFAC shall inform the submitter that the proposed policy/revision is not endorsed and provide a written justification of the Provost's decision. The submitter may ask the Speaker of the Senate to formally request a reconsideration by the Provost.

6.4. Substantive and Non-substantive Revisions

a. Substantive Revisions

When the chair of the AAPC considers policy changes to be substantive, the revision shall be considered according to section 6.3.

b. Non-substantive Revisions

When the policy changes are considered by the chair of the AAPC and the AAPC to be non-substantive, the proposed changes will go directly to the Provost for a final determination.

- 1. If the Provost agrees that the revision is non-substantive, the Provost will approve the policy and the revised policy shall be published to the Academic Affairs policy website. A notice will be sent to the university community.
- 2. If the Provost determines the proposed revision is substantive, the revision shall be considered according to section 6.3.

6.5. Archiving Policies

Circumstances may dictate that a policy be archived (i.e., eliminated from the current Academic Affairs policies). For example, the university would archive a policy given a statutory change rendering the policy moot. Any member of the university community may submit a request for a policy to be archived, pursuant to instructions provided by the FAC.

a. Committee Review

The AAPC will review proposals to archive a current policy.

1. If the AAPC declines the request to archive the policy, this decision is communicated to the submitter by the chair of the AAPC, who informs the VPFAC of the decision.
 2. If the AAPC endorses the request to archive the policy, the committee's recommendation will be relayed to the VPFAC by the chair of the AAPC.
- b. If the VPFAC endorses the archival of the policy, the recommendation to archive the policy with the rationale will be posted to the Academic Affairs policy website for fifteen (15) business days to gather input from the university community.
- c. After fifteen (15) business days, the recommendation and any comments from the university community shall be forwarded to the Provost for a final determination.
1. If the Provost determines that the policy should be archived, the policy will be inoperative at a date specified by the Provost and removed from the Academic Affairs policy website.
 2. If the Provost determines that the policy should not be archived, the AAPC will consider revising the policy, pursuant to procedures outlined in section 6.3 of this policy or leave the policy in its current form.
- d. FAC will maintain the records of all archived policies including rationale. The designated policy number and names of such policies are retired and shall not be used with future policies.
- e. A notice will be sent to the JMU community announcing the archival of the policy.

6.6. AAPC Composition

The Speaker of the Senate shall appoint one committee member for a renewable one-year term. The chair of the Faculty Senate Policy Committee shall also serve on the AAPC. The remainder of the committee, in size and composition, shall be determined by the Provost. However, committee membership shall include representation from the following areas, which provide subject matter expertise: Office of Research, Economic Development and Innovation, Office of Student Academic Success and Enrollment Management, University Studies, Libraries, the Graduate School, and the Office of University Counsel (ex-officio). Any additional committee members appointed by the Provost will typically serve staggered, renewable three-year terms. The chair of the AAPC shall be appointed by the Provost and serve at the Provost's discretion.

6.7. Emergency Policy Implementation

It may be necessary to rapidly establish or revise a policy due to natural disaster, fiscal exigency, substantial legal changes, or government mandates, among other reasons. Under such circumstances, the above-listed procedures will be modified to include only those steps necessary to implement such a policy (or revision) in a timely manner. In such instances, the Speaker of the Senate and the AAPC will be informed of the procedural modification(s) as soon as possible.

7. SANCTIONS

Failure to comply with this policy and referenced procedures may result in sanctions commensurate with the severity and frequency of the offense.

8. EXCLUSIONS

This policy does not apply to the process of developing, adopting, revising, publishing, and archiving non-Academic Affairs policies.

9. INTERPRETATION

The authority to interpret this policy rests with the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Approved by the Provost: September 2023