

### **What is a Policy?**

A Policy can be defined as “a definite course of action adopted for the sake of expediency, facility, etc.”<sup>1</sup> A policy therefore regulates, directs and controls actions and conduct. Policies do not include details which may be subject to frequent modifications.

A Policy may require further clarification to ensure consistent application of its terms. This clarification should be set out in a Regulatory document. A Regulation is defined as “a rule or directive made and maintained by an authority.”<sup>2</sup> In relation to policies, a regulation tells users how to, and who will, implement terms set out within a policy. Regulations are specific, factual, succinct and to the point, and do not include detailed descriptions of routine processes, timelines, forms and templates which may be subject to frequent modification in regulations. (Example: Student Assessment Policy, Student Assessment Practices and Regulations)

All policies related to the Undergraduate Medical Education Program must be approved by MD-PEC. Regulations related to policies must be submitted to MD-PEC for the Committee’s information, however it is the responsibility of the Primary Committee to approval policy regulations.

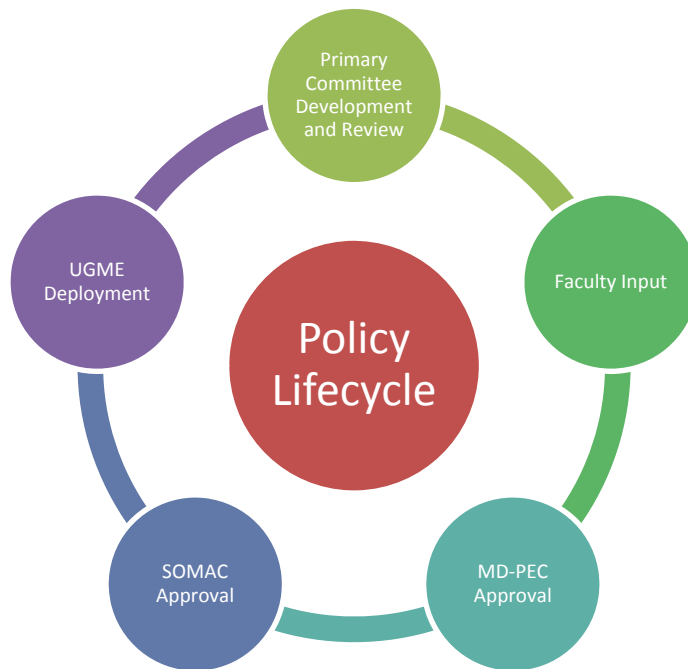
Detailed steps for carrying out tasks within a policy and/or its regulations, or define a rule that is specific to the administrative requirements can be created separately to clarify functions. These detailed steps, called Standard Operating Procedures, which may include timelines or forms, can be modified as needed within the limitations stipulated by the Policy and Regulatory

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<sup>1</sup> <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/policy>

<sup>2</sup> <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/regulation>

documents. These detailed steps do not need approval of the Primary Committee or MDPEC for implementation or revision and are created primarily by the UME staff implementing the policy.



### The Lifecycle of a Policy

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## **When is a Policy or Regulation necessary?**

The need for a new policy, or a review of an existing policy, can be driven by a variety of factors such as:

- Frequently occurring matters which require decision making or guidance to determine the most suitable action (standards of conduct, student performance, leaves),
- Identified issues or outcomes which require consistent standards and rules, and
- Issues or circumstances in which outcomes or actions are regulated (accreditation standards, legislation, University regulations).

## **How often should policies and regulations be reviewed?**

All policies and/or regulations should be reviewed a minimum every three years from the last date of approval. However, the policy can have a shorter review date if MD-PEC believes a more regular review is required. It is the responsibility of the Primary Committee to ensure policies and regulations are regularly reviewed. However, a listing of all policies including their review dates will be maintained with the UGME office. A notice will be sent to the Chair of the Primary Committee 6 months prior to the review date.

Internal or external factors may drive the need for a policy review prior to the scheduled time. This review may be requested by MD-PEC or identified directly by the Primary Committee. Notification of this early review should be reported to MD-PEC prior to faculty consultation.

## **How do people find out about a new or amended policy or regulation?**

Prior to a new or amended policy or regulation being submitted for MD-PEC approval, it must be published for review and comment by faculty and/or students within the School of Medicine. The Policy Sponsor must contact the Manager, UGME Operations after the Primary Committee approves the draft policy/regulations (new or revised) to ensure the policy/regulations are posted appropriately. Feedback related to the posted document(s) will be directed to the Policy Sponsor. It is the responsibility of the Policy Sponsor to communicate feedback to the Primary Committee for discussion and/or incorporation into the draft policy/regulation prior to MD-PEC approval. Major changes in the draft resulting from feedback will require reposting for additional review and comment. In the event the Primary Committee considers the changes made to the draft minor, reposting for comment will not be necessary. However, the Policy Sponsor must report to MD-PEC details of the changes resulting from the feedback. MD-PEC may determine that reposting for comment is necessary prior to final approval.

## How do I change a policy?

Anyone may request a review of a policy/regulation prior to the review date. In this situation, the interested person must contact the Policy Sponsor to explain the need and nature of the change. It is the Policy Sponsor's responsibility to report this request for consideration to the Primary Committee for consideration.

## Who should be consulted with when developing or reviewing a policy or regulation?

It is important that policy stakeholders (faculty, students, staff) are consulted during policy development and review. This includes, but is not limited to, the posting of drafts for feedback. It is the responsibility of the Policy Sponsor to report details of this consultation process to MD-PEC when requesting final approval.

It is important that those who will be affected by the policy or regulation are identified and what areas of the university (including other committees and staff) may be affected by the issues covered by the policy/regulation. A posting requesting comments or feedback on a potential new or revised policy or regulation may be made prior to the completion of a draft. The Policy Sponsor may contact the Manager, UGME Operations to assist with the request.

## What is a Primary Committee?

A Primary Committee is the Committee with overarching responsibility for a policy and regulation. They are responsible for ensuring that:

- appropriate consultation occurs during development or review of a policy;
- new or reviewed policy and regulations are implemented, compliance is monitored and issues are recorded or resolved;
- the policy and regulations are regularly reviewed.

Examples of Primary Committees are Admissions, Progress and Promotion and Student Assessment Committee.

## What is a Policy Sponsor?

A Policy Sponsor is the person who will present the new or reviewed policy to the MD-PEC. The Policy Sponsor is generally the Chair of the Primary Committee.

## Who approves policies?

Minor amendments to a policy or regulation can be approved by the Primary Committee and reported to MD-PEC.

New policies and regulations, or major amendments to policies and regulations, must be approved by MD-PEC and reported to SOMAC for approval or the Committee's information.

### **What if a policy or regulations are no longer required?**

Policies and regulations that are obsolete must be removed from the Policies & Regulations Directory. Approval must be received from MD-PEC for deletion of policies and regulations. Notification of the deletion of obsolete items will be communicated to all faculty and students.

### **How are versions recorded?**

The version control and history of all policies and regulations will be maintained within the UGME office. Only after approval by MD-PEC will policies/regulations be added to the policy records and assigned a Policy code and version number. Each Policy/regulation must include an effective date. If an effective date is not specifically stipulated in the document, the effective date will be the date of approval by MD-PEC.

The policy/regulation must indicate in its header section the policy number and version code any prior policy/regulation for which the new document supersedes.