LIBI LONG ISLAND BUSINESS INSTITUTE
The College for Career Education

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GUIDANCE ON WRITING POLICIES

There are two types of policies governing our activities:

(1) internal policies affecting employees, and

(2) administrative rules affecting students and the general public.

Policies communicate requirements and expectations for behavior, actions and activities expected of members of the LIBI community in order to fulfill compliance requirements, to facilitate operations, or to meet institutional goals. Policies also serve the important purpose of communicating our **institutional values and expectations** and provide the community with guidance as to how they should be fulfilled.

Below is *guidance* that should be used by departments during a policy drafting process. This checklist can be used during the drafting process to check work on the draft policy, during the final review of the policy, or during a review process to determine areas that may need minor enhancement or require additional provisions to ensure that the policy is sufficiently comprehensive.

All policies should be reviewed prior to submission. Please note that not every bullet below will apply to every policy, so this list contains suggestions for review rather than a required checklist that must be worked through with each policy.

- Policies are written to require or prohibit certain actions, support compliance with applicable laws and regulations and/or to mitigate risk.

- Discuss major changes to the policy being considered/drafted/updated with other stakeholders prior to proposing major changes.

- Policies should be written succinctly.

  The aim of all policies is to instruct members of this community to behave or do things a certain way. Convoluted language is to be avoided. Keep it as simple and short as possible without compromising any important elements you are trying to convey.

> **Using clear and simple language increases the probability that the policy will be understood and followed.**

> **Use direct language like**
> ***MUST, WILL, PROHIBITED and REQUIRED***
> **rather than** *should, should not, shall and may***.**
> **Avoid words that may imply an action is not mandatory.**

- Does the policy contain a statement at the beginning that lets the reader know what the policy is about?
- Does the policy as written accurately state the current practices?
- Are terms in the policy effectively and accurately defined?

> **Spell out acronyms the first time they are used.**
> *Example:*
> when writing about FERPA, say **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**
> the first time you mention it and use the acronym thereafter.

- If a related policy exists, is the terminology you are using consistent across the two policies?
- If two policies are interrelated, is it clear under what circumstances each policy will apply?
- State the primary audience—who needs to know and/or follow the policy?

  Ensure the policy clearly states who it applies to (i.e. new students, all students, transfer students, faculty, staff, all employees, etc.).
- Communicate the mandatory actions/operational processes/steps required to comply with the policy, support compliance with applicable laws and regulations and mitigate risk.
- Verify (and then double check again) that the new policy is not in conflict with another institutional policy.

> **Double-check that new policy language does not conflict with already existing policies or procedures and all information is factual and up to date.**

- If the reason why this policy is being drafted is a change in the law, seek the help of the provost or the president to make sure that legal counsel does not need to be consulted.

- Internal administrative procedures should generally not be part of the policy document that is distributed to the entire college community. Unless it complicates the process, consider pulling out the procedures and placing them in separate document that can be linked to from the policy.

- Before finalizing the policy be sure to check your spelling and grammar, any contact information if being used, job titles, emails, and web links to ensure they are current.

> **As much as possible, do not include specific names of personnel, specific labels** (e.g., software product names) **or other information that may quickly become outdated. Instead, use position titles and generic terms.**
>
> *For example: instead of saying Canvas, say learning management system.*

> **DO NOT use shortened forms of words (contractions), personal pronouns, or figurative language.**
>
> *Example:* **That's** - say **That is**   **Aren't** - say **Are not**.
>
> *Example:* Instead of **"If you're feeling under the weather, don't come to work."**
>
> Say **"If you are feeling sick, do not come to work."**

Capitalize job titles immediately preceding the name when used as part of the name, otherwise do not capitalize a formal academic or administrative title.
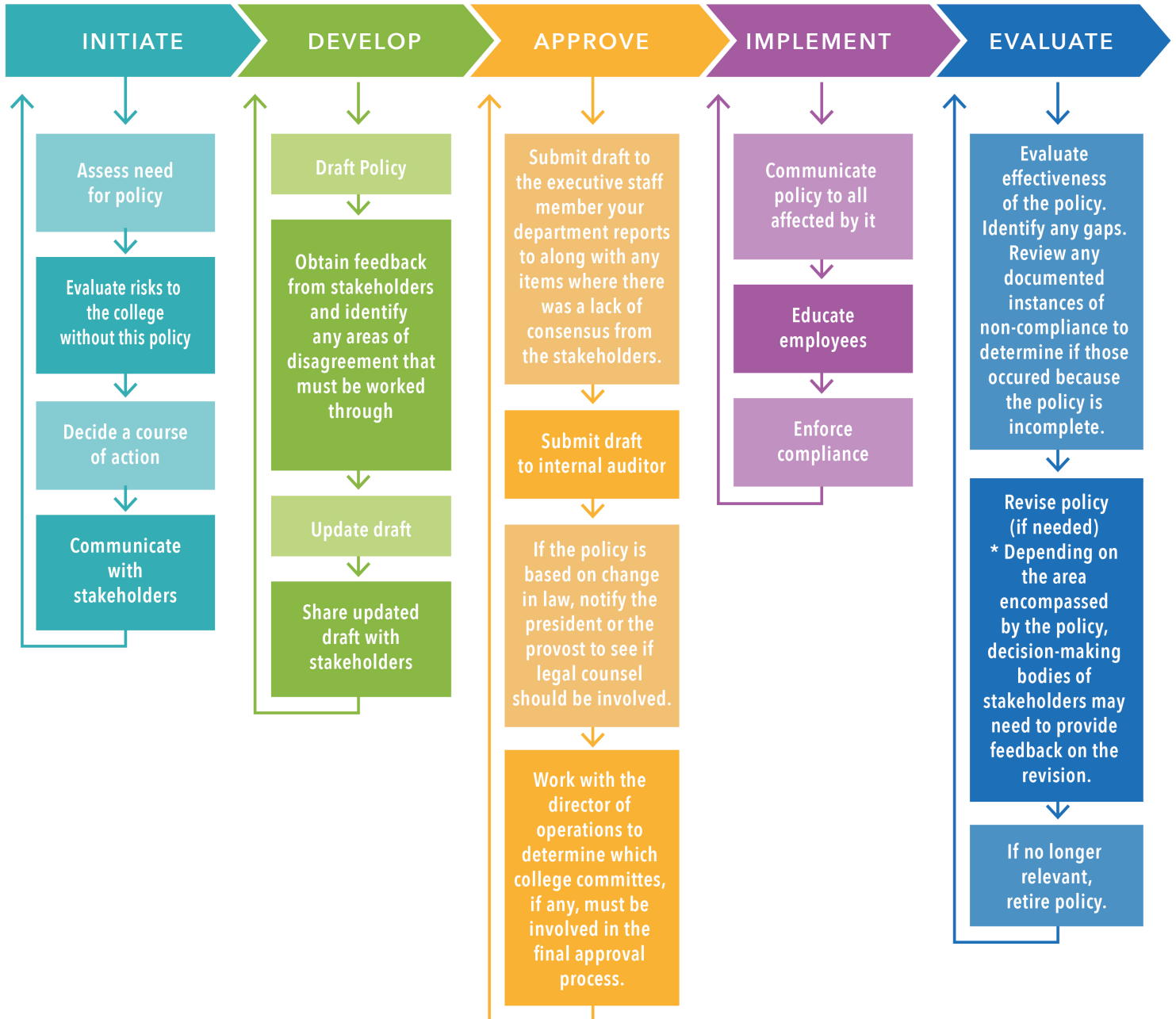
When writing college policies, avoid using titles and personal names.
If you do use an individual's name and their title, then Capitalize their title.

Example: "Contact President Foote" if you are using the last name;
if you are not using the last name, the title is not capitalized "Contact the president."

When you refer to LIBI as *the college, DO NOT capitalize "the college".*

- Submit the finished policy to the internal auditor and the executive staff member your department reports to.

- Contact the director of operations so that any college committees that must approve the policy can be convened.

- Record policy revisions and the date on which the revisions were approved.

- If a policy is no longer relevant, suggest elimination of the policy, stating reasons why the policy is no longer relevant.

- It is generally a good idea to include an FAQ sheet when introducing a new policy. Include clearly written answers that are likely to come up.

POLICY CYCLE

INITIATE	DEVELOP	APPROVE	IMPLEMENT	EVALUATE

INITIATE
- Assess need for policy
- Evaluate risks to the college without this policy
- Decide a course of action
- Communicate with stakeholders

DEVELOP
- Draft Policy
- Obtain feedback from stakeholders and identify any areas of disagreement that must be worked through
- Update draft
- Share updated draft with stakeholders

APPROVE
- Submit draft to the executive staff member your department reports to along with any items where there was a lack of consensus from the stakeholders.
- Submit draft to internal auditor
- If the policy is based on change in law, notify the president or the provost to see if legal counsel should be involved.
- Work with the director of operations to determine which college committes, if any, must be involved in the final approval process.

IMPLEMENT
- Communicate policy to all affected by it
- Educate employees
- Enforce compliance

EVALUATE
- Evaluate effectiveness of the policy. Identify any gaps. Review any documented instances of non-compliance to determine if those occured because the policy is incomplete.
- Revise policy (if needed) * Depending on the area encompassed by the policy, decision-making bodies of stakeholders may need to provide feedback on the revision.
- If no longer relevant, retire policy.

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