



State of Oklahoma
Human Capital Management Division
Office of Management and Enterprise Services
Policies and Procedures
Policy Development

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Reference: Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM)

Policy

The Office of Management and Enterprise Services (OMES) leadership is often confronted and faced with deciding the best approach in handling not only employee relations issues in the workplace but also specific operational processes and practices. The OMES policy development provides guidance on how to consistently develop policies that help management maintain order within the agency and ensure that employees are treated fairly and equally. All new or existing OMES policies and procedures shall be reviewed by OMES internal policy committee and approved by OMES Director or designee prior to implementation.

Procedure

Step 1: Identify the Need for a Policy

Policies should give good guidelines and establish expectations to ensure fair and consistent practices and legal compliance. While most policies are not “all-encompassing,” they will provide direction regarding procedures, as well as what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

OMES policies also help our employees understand what is expected of them. OMES divisions may develop policies that further define expectations pertaining to that division:

- If employees’ behavior indicate confusion about the appropriate conduct or how to handle certain situations;
- If legal protection of the agency is necessary;

- If there is a need for government laws and regulations compliance;
- If there is a need to create consistent standards and rules;
- If there is a need to create specific operational procedure;
- If there is a need to create consistency and fair treatment of employees.

Step 2: Policy Content

Policies are written guidelines that explain generally what OMES' requirements are and how employees will be treated. As divisions create new policies, they must be careful to avoid language that conveys rigid rules that must be followed exactly as written in all circumstances. Divisions will want to build flexibility into wording and eliminate any promises that could be interpreted as a contract. For example, do not:

1. State that the OMES will "only" or "always" do something, or "will" or "must" act in a particular way;
2. Use all-inclusive lists, such as in disciplinary procedures or work rules.

All policies need to be written in clear language. Use terms such as "generally," "typically," "usually" and "may" so that you have flexibility in interpreting and applying the policies based on the circumstances involved and/or the severity of any OMES policy violation(s).

Most policies have similar components. The typical components are:

1. Purpose statement, which outlines why the OMES is issuing the policy and what the desired effect or outcome will be;
2. A specifications section includes details about specific regulations, requirements and/or organizational behavior standards that the policy is creating;
3. The implementation section indicates which parties are responsible for carrying out policy statements and how those parties will ensure adherence to the policy;
4. An effective date will indicate when the policy is considered in force;
5. A listing of definitions for terms found in the policy if applicable.

Step 3: Obtaining Policy Review and Approval Prior to Implementation

Divisions are free to create policies according to business needs, the policies must be written in compliance with pertinent laws and this policy. Therefore, it is important to have all policies reviewed by OMES internal policy review committee prior to communicating the policy to employees. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. The OMES internal policy review committee is comprised of employees (designees) from across all divisions of OMES. The designees serve as point of contact.

The committee will meet at least once a month or on a needed basis, and will be responsible for soliciting policy recommendations from OMES divisions and review such recommendations for statutory and regulatory compliance and organizational continuity.

The committee will work with the recommending divisions to finalize language.

Representatives from Human Capital Management (HCM) will chair the committee and provide administrative support.

Upon approval by the committee any recommendations will be forwarded to OMES Director or designee for final approval.

Step 4: Communicating With Employees

It is important to give the employees background information (when possible) as to why the policy is being implemented. HCM will give employees enough details to make the agency's position clear while keeping the communications process short and simple.

HCM and Divisions when applicable will determine the best approach to introduce the policy to employees based on the nature, sensitivity, ease in which the policy will be understood as well as best distribution of the policy (e.g., e-mail, memo, or individual/small groups/all employee agency meetings).

HCM and Divisions when applicable will also incorporate a method that will give employees an opportunity to ask questions about the policy, and sign an employee's receipt and understanding of the new policy along with the effective date of the policy.

The policies and all revisions will be added to agency's electronic employee guide and OMES internet page as well as included in the new hire orientation programs as appropriate.

Step 5: Updates and Revisions

Clear, well-written policies that are regularly reviewed can be effective employee relations tools and communications devices. They illustrate our commitment to a positive work environment.

Although written policies in general are not required to be reviewed regularly, they can be used to demonstrate nondiscriminatory employment practices and serve as a good defense in employee lawsuits.

Policies should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they continue to comply with federal and state laws and the needs of OMES. New laws, regulations and court cases can affect both policy language and how OMES implements the policies. OMES internal policy review committee will review OMES policies at least every (2) two years.