

**UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
REPORT FOR INFORMATION**

PRESENTED BY: Dr. Terry Wotherspoon, Chair, Governance Committee

DATE OF MEETING: October 21, 2021

SUBJECT: Policy Oversight Committee Annual Report 2020-21

SUMMARY:

On an annual basis, the Governance Office presents a summary of the prior year's policy work to the Board of Governors, Council, and Senate. Per the attached, in 2020-21 the following policy changes at USask were approved:

New Policies

- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)
- Living Our Values

Amended Policies

- Academic Courses
- Centres
- Emergency Management (formerly Emergency Measures)
- Postdoctoral Fellows
- Responsible Conduct of Research

Deleted Policies

- Gender Neutral Language (replaced by the EDI Policy)
- Employment Equity (replaced by the EDI Policy)


A list of policies development and under review is also provided at the end of the report.

NEXT STEPS AND TIMELINE:

Work will be ongoing for new policies and policy amendments in 2021-22. Requests for input and decision to governing bodies will come forward as they are ready.

ATTACHMENTS:

Policy Oversight Committee Annual Report 2020-21



University of Saskatchewan Policy Oversight Committee
Annual Report 2020-21
September 24, 2021

The university's [Policy on the Development, Approval and Administration of University Policies](#) defines a coordinated and consistent process for identification, development, approval and administration of all university policies, both administrative and academic. Responsibility for implementation of the Policy is assigned to a [Policy Oversight Committee \(POC\)](#). Membership includes the vice-provosts, associate vice-presidents, two representatives from University Council, and one representative from Deans' Council. [Terms of Reference](#) for the Committee establish that it is as an advisory committee to the University Secretary and Chief Governance Officer, with the mandate to coordinate university-level policies.

The committee considers notices of intent for new policies, and drafts of revisions to existing policies, oversees activities relating to approval, implementation, and communication of new policies, and undertakes periodic reviews of existing policies for possible changes or deletion.

The Policy Oversight Committee generally meets four times a year. This year, the committee met on September 8 and November 3, 2020, and February 23 and May 18, 2021.

This report itemizes and summarizes new policies approved, and existing policies amended or deleted between October 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021. Links to the policies are provided where applicable and available.

Approved New and Amended Policies

[Academic Courses Policy](#)

Approved by Council on September 17, 2020.

This change rescinded the March 13, 2020, Coordinating Committee of Council's "COVID-19 Declaration Regarding Syllabi Changes" that allowed the university to pivot to remote delivery of all courses in March 2020 to limit in-person interactions. The September 17, 2020, Council decision reverted to the previous language in the *Academic Courses Policy*. It re-established a level of assurance for students regarding the expectations in their courses during the unusual and uncertain times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, the hybrid mode of in-person and remote delivery for USask classes for the 2021-22 academic year are clear, and contingency plans for hybrid teaching are in place so that instructors would not need to change syllabi mid-stream. The reversion to the original policy provides students certainty about the contents of syllabi, including mode of delivery, examination processes, and means of assessment.



Centres Policy

Council approval of amendments was October 15, 2020, and Board approval was December 13, 2020. The original policy approved 1997 and revised in 2004.

Significant changes in the university and national research environment (e.g., increasing emphasis on multi- and inter-disciplinary research; expanding opportunities for external partnership, new interdisciplinary schools) and a decade and a half of administrative experience with the current Centres Policy, necessitated a review of and revisions to the Centres Policy. There were five main modifications to the policy, including: simplifying the centre categories, adding the concept of a research collaborative, improving the approval process, adding a process for disestablishment, and developing guidelines and reporting mechanisms.

Emergency Management [name changed from Emergency Measures]

Revisions approved by the Board of Governors in March 2021. Original policy was approved in June 1999 and revised in March 2001.

This policy was amended to reflect more fully the university's structure and approach to emergency management. The policy articulates the authority and responsibilities for university emergency management and provides a framework to enable the university to prevent, prepare, respond, and recover from emergencies and crisis. This updated policy provides a framework for implementation of emergency management plans.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion


Board of Governors approval was October 5, 2020, Council October 15, 2020, Senate October 24, 2020.

The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Policy replaced the *Employment Equity Policy* and *Gender-Neutral Language Policy*. The purpose was to reaffirm USask's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, and to create and nurture a diverse and inclusive university community that encompasses our legal, moral, and ethical responsibilities. The principled change was to move away from compliance-based policy and to improve alignment with USask's *Mission, Vision, and Values*. (Non-compliance will be dealt with in other complementary policies). EDI is one of the university's priorities, but funding agencies also have expectations for EDI. An EDI strategy and initiatives are also under development.

Living Our Values

Approved by Council on June 17, 2021, approved by the Board of Governors on June 22, 2021, and being considered for confirmation by Senate on October 30, 2021.

The impetus for this policy was an external governance review conducted in 2014, which recommended a code of conduct for USask, and which the Board, legal counsel, and auditors all



agreed was necessary. The *Living our Values Policy* is USask's response to that recommendation. The policy sits alongside other cornerstone institutional documents such as the *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy* and core frameworks such as the *Mission, Vision, Values*. Together they set out core principles of who we are at USask, what we represent, and how we relate with our communities. The policy provides definitions of our values and reaffirms the responsibility of all those connected with the university to act in accordance with them. (Non-compliance will be addressed through connection to other compliance-based policies.)

[Postdoctoral Fellows Policy](#)

Approved by University Council April 15, 2021, and the Board of Governors June 22, 2021. The original policy was approved in 2004.

The postdoctoral fellows (PDF) landscape in Canada changed over the past 16 years, and in 2019, an interest arbitration finalized the first collective bargaining agreement between the university and the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) Local 40004, both of which necessitated revisions to the original PDF Policy. The major changes to the policy were alignment with current procedures; updates to language and out-of-date terminology; providing links to relevant policies and procedures; expanding the definitions for faculty members and supervisors; defining the different appointment categories for postdoctoral fellows (in-scope and external); and defining the maximum term for a PDF.

[Responsible Conduct of Research](#)

Revisions approved by Council on June 17, 2021. The original policy was approved in June 2013.

Policy revisions were needed to align with the Tri-Agency Responsibly Conduct of Research (RCR) Framework of 2016. This framework will be updated again in 2021, and USask's revised RCR Policy will need to be reviewed again to ensure alignment. The revisions clarify the roles of different people in the process, address potential conflicts of interest, and the need for an improved process for students. The Associate Vice-President Research is now the official contact for the implementation, in accordance with the Tri-Agency framework which requires a single point of contact at the senior administrative level. A revised list of breaches and reporting requirements aligns with the 2016 framework. In addition, after eight years of implementing the 2013 USask Policy, changes were needed to address several issues.

Deleted Policies

[Gender Neutral Language](#)

This policy was replaced with the EDI Policy, above.

[Employment Equity Policy](#)

The *Employment Equity Policy* dated back to 1994 and was last revised in 2001. The priority for EDI has evolved since that time, and this policy was outdated and therefore replaced with the EDI Policy, above.



Other Policy Work in Progress

Policies Under Revision

Gift Acceptance

Alumni Affinity Policy

Students with Disabilities: Academic Accommodation and Access

Employment Practices

Sexual Assault Prevention [name will be changed to Sexual Assault Prevention Policy]

Authorization of General Operating Funding

Discrimination and Harassment Prevention

Student Academic Misconduct Regulations

Policy on the Development, Approval and Administration of University Policies

New Policies in Development

Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression

Decolonization of Policies

Inventions and Enterprise Creation

Emergency Measures/Organizational Continuity

Professor Emeritus