

# Policy on Educational Policy Creation

## I. PURPOSE

Our institution should have a clear pathway to the creation of new educational policies, one that assures stakeholder input, discussion, and review, so that such policies are well-crafted and based on group consensus, consistent with applicable legal and regulatory guidance, and ultimately help the school fulfill its mission effectively and efficiently.

## II. SCOPE

This policy applies to anyone creating educational policy at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine (UPSOM).

## III. POLICY

Any individual, group, office, committee, or department can propose new educational policies. Typically, educational policies fall in four categories:

- Curriculum
- Student Affairs
- Admissions/Financial Aid
- Faculty

In designing a policy, authors should follow a standard format:

- Purpose (what the policy addresses—needs/problems/opportunities)
- Scope (who the policy applies to)
- Policy Specifics
- Author(s)
- Related Policies/Procedures (if any)
- References (if any)
- Dates of Approval/Revision

For Curriculum policies (pertaining to the curriculum and student assessments within the curriculum), the Curriculum Committee makes the final decision, and its decision cannot be overruled by any other party in the organization, including the Dean of the Medical School. All other policies are subject to review and approval by the Educational Policy Council, Executive Committee, and ultimately the Dean of the Medical School (see below).

For non-Curriculum policies (Student Affairs, Admissions/Financial Aid, Faculty), proposals will be submitted to the Educational Policy Council (EPC), chaired by the Associate Dean for Medical Education. This submission begins the process of approval. EPC consists of these other members:

- Vice Deans for Education and Faculty Affairs
- Associate Deans for Student Affairs, Admissions, Learning Environment, and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)
- Assistant Deans for Medical Education and Student Affairs
- Curriculum Committee Chair and Vice Chair
- Curriculum Committee Executive Subcommittee At-Large Faculty Members
- Two elected medical student members (one MS1-2, one MS3-4)

The EPC chair will make recommendations on development and review in consultation with the Vice Dean for Education. The first level of review will be conducted by the most directly relevant vetting body (e.g., Admissions Committee for admissions-related policies, etc.). Some policies may require approval from more than one body; other policies may not have a direct vetting body at all. The EPC chair will make that decision in consultation with the Vice Dean for Education.

The EPC will work with other administrative leaders to ensure that any policy proposal or revision is consistent with legal, regulatory, and university standards. Policies reviewed by the full EPC will require a simple majority for approval.

Once approved by EPC, the policy will be sent to UPSOM's Executive Committee for review and approval.

Once approved by the Executive Committee, the policy will be sent to the Dean for final approval.

At any point in this process, suggestions may be made to improve the policy; authors will be responsible for making requested changes and resubmitting the modified policy for consideration at the level that requested changes (again, excepting Curriculum Committee policies, which do not get reviewed at these levels).

Once a policy achieves final approval, it will be posted on the website of the Office of Medical Education, which houses the central repository of policies. New policies take effect immediately after final approval unless otherwise stated. UPSOM administrators are responsible for communicating the policy to the community as appropriate.

Any subsequent policy revisions must go through the same process.

Existing policies must be reviewed at least every two years by the EPC to assure continued appropriateness; any needed changes can trigger a revision, which should involve the policy's original author(s).

Procedures, initial or revised, can be made independently by offices, committees, or departments. Procedures do not require EPC approval, as long as they are crafted to fulfill policies that have been adopted institutionally.

#### **IV. POLICY AUTHOR(S)**

- Educational Policy Council

## **V. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

None.

## **VI. REFERENCES**

LCME Standard 1.5 (Bylaws): A medical school promulgates bylaws or similar policy documents that describe the responsibilities and privileges of its administrative officers, faculty, and committees.

LCME Standard 8.1 (Curricular Management): A medical school has in place an institutional body (i.e., a faculty committee) that oversees the medical education program as a whole and has responsibility for the overall design, management, integration, evaluation, and enhancement of a coherent and coordinated medical curriculum.

## **VII. APPROVALS**

Dean, School of Medicine, initially approved August 5, 2022. Revision approved January 6, 2025.

Educational Policy Council, last revision approved August 22, 2024.  
Executive Committee, last revision approved November 7, 2024.

## VII. PROCEDURES

Before writing a policy, authors are encouraged to consult with the appropriate Associate Dean for guidance. <https://www.medschool.pitt.edu/about/administration-offices> If an author is uncertain as to who would be most appropriate, they should consult with the chair of the Educational Policy Council (EPC), which is led by the Associate Dean for Medical Education.

Authors should solicit stakeholder input routinely as part of the policy design effort. Students, staff, administrators, or faculty who may be affected by a policy should be given opportunity to make suggestions before a policy is enacted. This input can occur at any phase of development prior to final approval.

Authors may also be asked by EPC to seek guidance on regulatory and legal aspects of policies (e.g., LCME standards, federal or state laws), and ensure that proposed policies are consistent with, or at least not in conflict with, those of the University of Pittsburgh as a whole. Although they may help, concordance and appropriateness is ultimately the responsibility of institutional review committees.

Although the Curriculum Committee retains primacy over curriculum-related policies, these policies must be developed in close collaboration with the Dean of the School of Medicine to assure that we have institutional resources necessary to execute such policies. Once curricular policies are approved, the interpretation and application of such policies fall within the purview of the Office of Medical Education, the Vice Dean for Education, and ultimately the Dean of the School of Medicine.