University of La Verne

Policy Workshop: DGC Digest

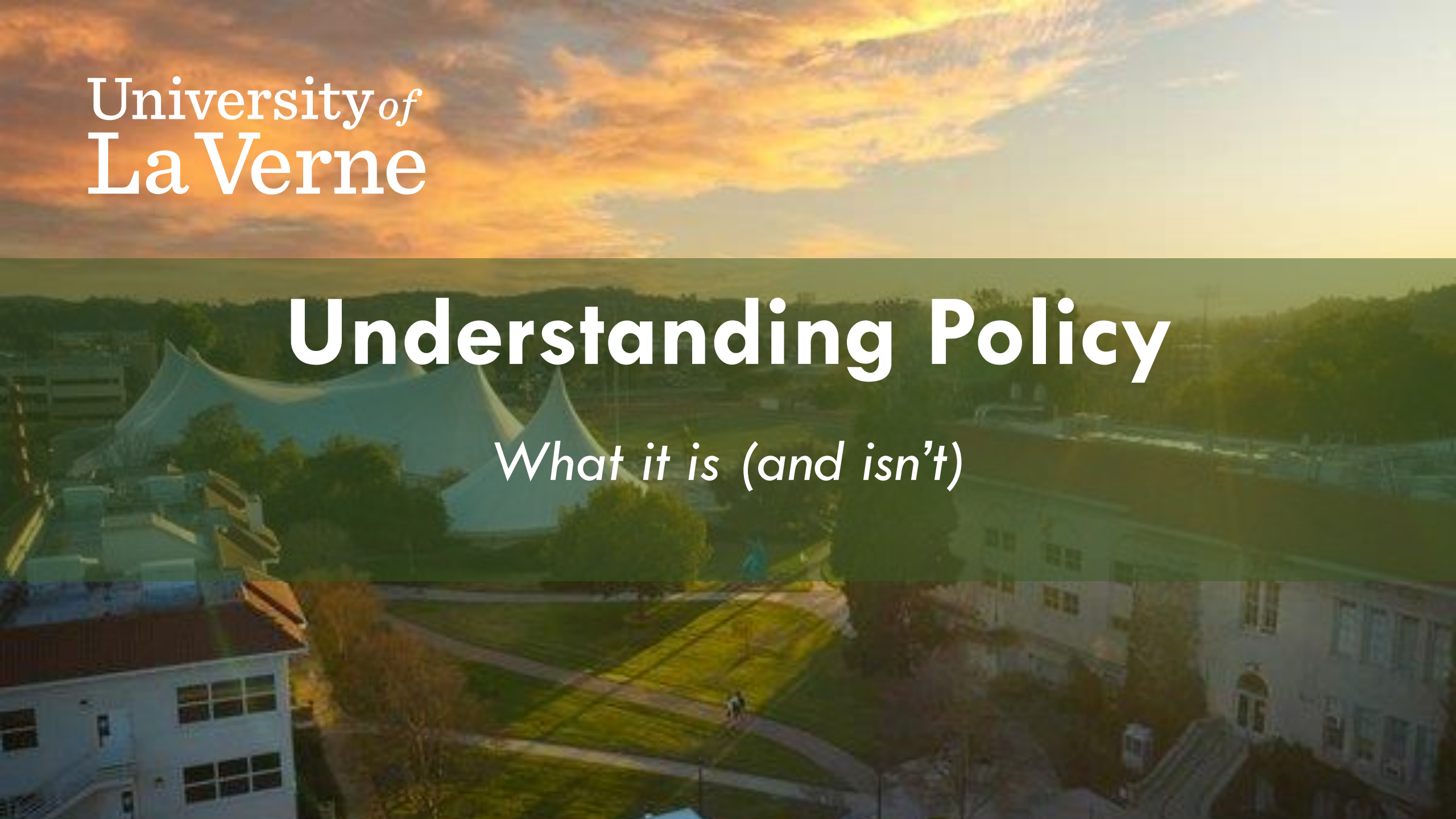
Creating Clear & Effective Policies & Procedures

Spring 2026

Outcomes

By the end of this workshop, you will be able to:

- Decide whether an issue needs a **University policy or another tool**
- Distinguish **policy language from procedural language**
- Draft **clear, enforceable policy statements** and identify when procedures are required
- Apply the university's **policy vetting process** to draft and move a policy toward approval



Understanding Policy

What it is (and isn't)

Why we're changing how we use 'Policy'

- Historically, "policy" has been used as shorthand for control or authority
- Now, "policy" has a specific institutional governance meaning
- Colleges, Depts, Units still manage themselves—just with different tools/documents

What is a University Policy at ULV?

What it Is	What it Is Not
University-wide	Unit-specific
Governing (carries compliance, legal weight)	Operational
Approved through formal process	Informal
Stable	Frequently changing

Policy 101: Policy on Policies

Key Excerpts

• **II. Scope "**This policy applies to all **University Policies that affect one or more stakeholder groups** (e.g., all students, all faculty, all staff, all administration). **University Policies supersede guidelines, practices, rules, handbooks, or procedures at the college, department, program, or office level.** Amendments to the Faculty Handbook are governed by the process set out in that Handbook."

- *Does not apply to department/unit-level practices, guidelines, procedures*
- *Development/vetting process applies to administrative (not faculty-led) policies*

•**4.5** "**Policies may not exist except at the University level.** Divisions, colleges, departments, programs, offices, etc. may have guidelines, practices, handbooks, and standard operating procedures if they comport with University Policy."

•**4.8.1.1 "**Draft policies or other documents that have not gone through the official Policy Approval process as outlined in Section VI, Procedures **are not official university policies."**

Tool Terminology & Legality Distinctions

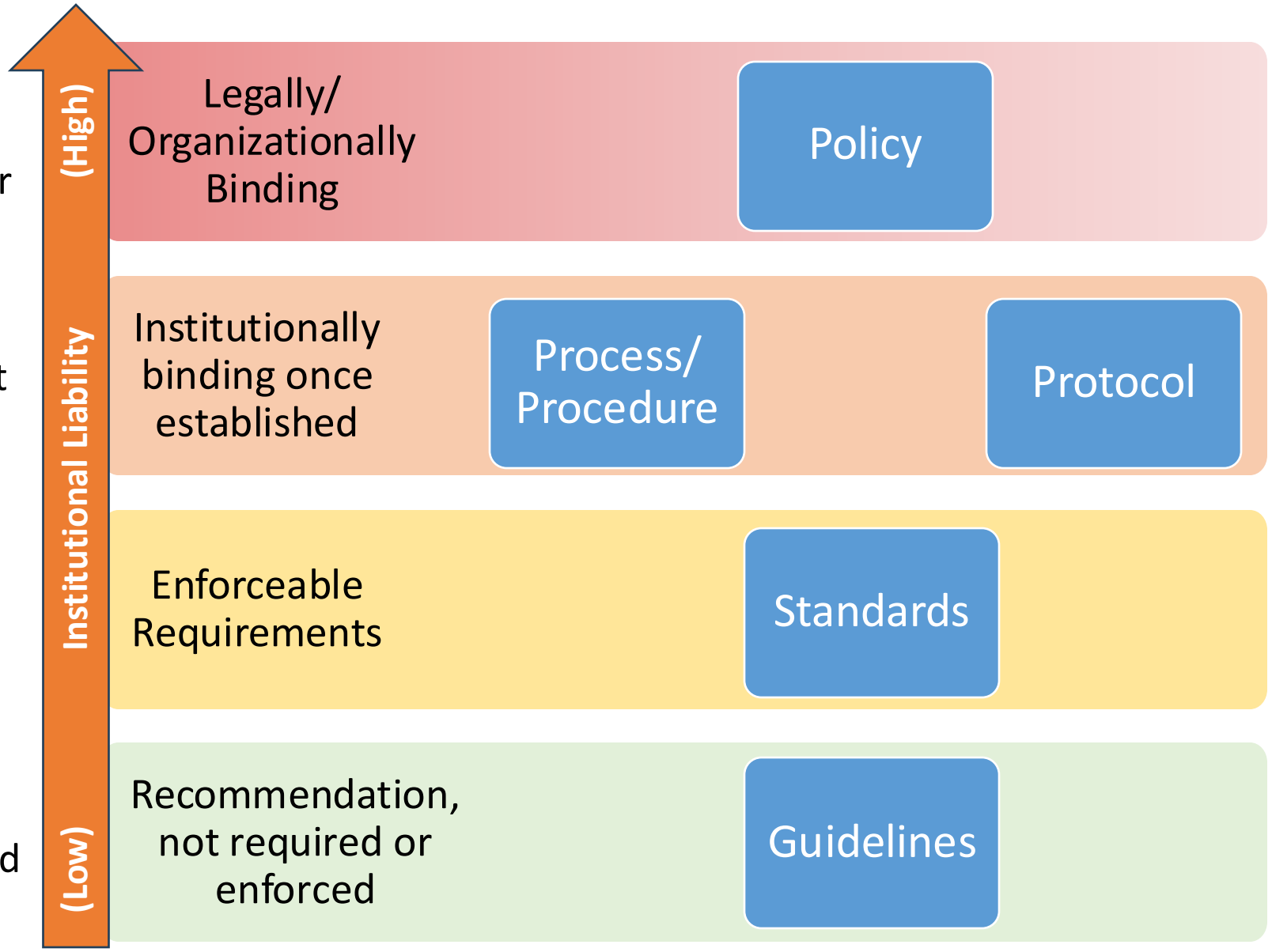
- **Policy:** A formal rule statement of the University. Used for institutional governance; provides a framework for consistent decision-making.

- **Process/Procedure**: Step-by-step instructions for following the rules set forth in a policy.

- **Protocol:** Required response in specific situations; If X, then Y.

- **Standard:** required specifications, measurements, benchmarks.

- **Guideline:** Recommendation, preference, best practice; not required



What Constitutes an Institutional Policy?

If the answer is **"yes"** to these, you're likely dealing with an **institutional policy:**

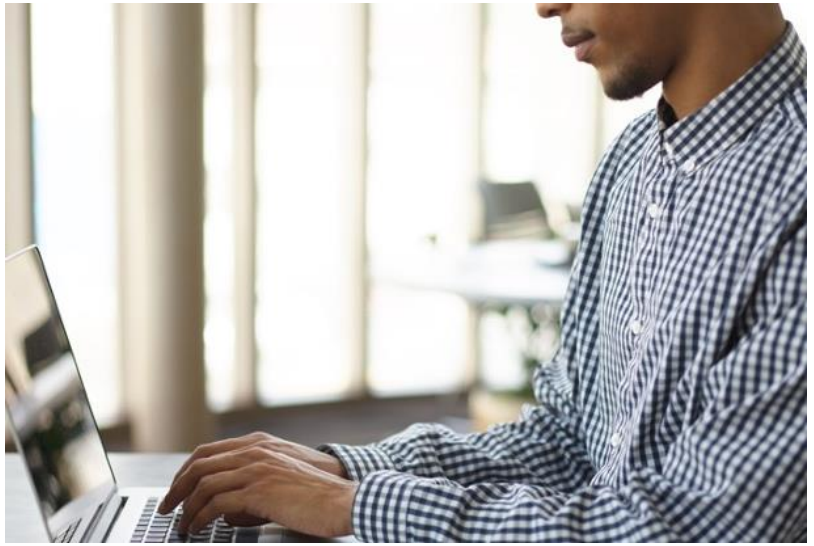
- Does this apply across multiple divisions, colleges, or departments?

- Would inconsistent application create legal, financial, safety, or reputational risk?
- Does this need to be enforced consistently, regardless of department culture or leadership?
- Would employees reasonably expect the same rule to apply everywhere at the institution?

- Is this driven by law, regulation, accreditation, or external oversight?
- Would failure to follow this rule have institutional consequences, not just local ones?

- Does this establish a non-negotiable expectation ("must," "shall")?
- Would this rule still make sense if leadership or staff changed?

- Does this define institutional values, responsibilities, or boundaries?
- Would this benefit from centralized review and approval?



Where Department Docs Fit

Departments manage their work — just not through University policy.

Importance =/= Policy

Important information can live in:

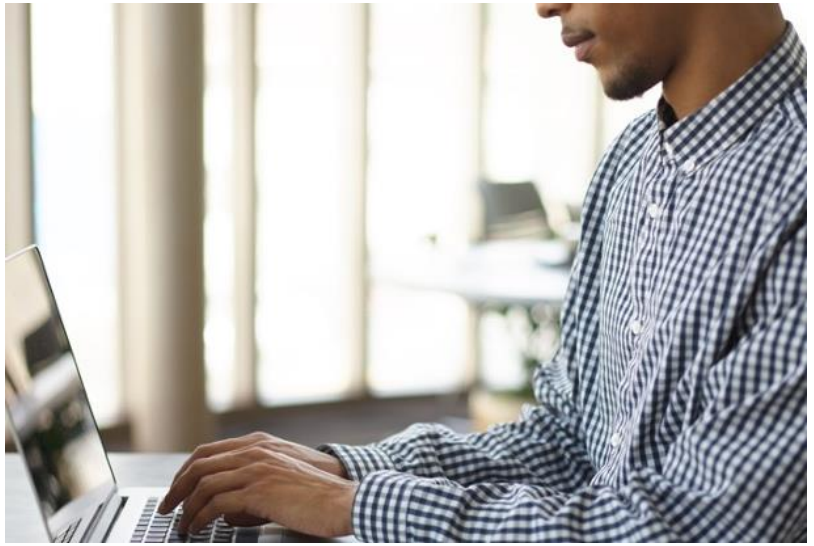
- Process/procedure docs
- Standards
- Protocols
- Guidelines
- Training materials

Items	Purpose	Example
Policy	States what must be done and why	"All employees must complete annual lab safety training."
Procedure	Instructions/steps/details of how to comply with a policy; how to *do* something.	"1. Human Resources will post the training schedule to the Portal. 2. Employees sign up to training via the registration link in the Portal."
Protocol	Step-by-step response for specific situations; can support related policies/procedures or stand alone.	"In a lab spill, follow these 5 steps…" "In the event of an earthquake, the response sequence is as follows…"
Guideline	Suggests best practices; flexible	"Supervisors are encouraged to hold refresher sessions."
Standard	Specifies measurable criteria or benchmarks; often in support of a policy or procedure.	"Password must be 12 characters minimum."

When something is likely NOT an institutional policy

If these resonate, you're likely working with a different documentation tool:

- Could another department reasonably do this differently and still comply with university policy?
- Does this reflect "what works well for us" rather than "what **must** be done"?
- Is this advice rather than a requirement?
- Is the risk of non-compliance low or informal?
- Would enforcement feel awkward or unnecessary?
- Is this likely to vary by role, situation, or preference?
- Would formal approval feel excessive for this content?
- Does this need frequent updates as systems or staff change?
- Would this be confusing or irrelevant outside the department?
- Is this meant for staff who perform the task, not the entire institution?



Writing Clear Policies & Procedures

Policy & Procedure – Signal Words

Signal Mindset:

If the statement tells someone what they must do → it is a **policy** statement.
If compliance with the statement requires steps → it **needs** a procedure.
If the statement tells someone ***how*** to do it → that **is** the procedure.

Example:

- "Supervisors must report workplace accidents immediately." → Policy
- *Compliance requires knowing how & where to report the accident → Needs a procedure*
- "Supervisors complete Form 27-A within 24 hours." → Procedure

"Signal words" in policy statements that indicate a procedure is needed:

- Must
- Required to
- Will be responsible for
- In order to
- Authorized to
- Must ensure

Policy & Procedure – Signal Words

If a reasonable person could ask three or more "how" questions, a procedure is required.

Examples of "how" questions:

- How do I report this?
- How do I know the deadline?
- How do I complete the task?
- How do I know I've complied?

Use the "If, Then, How" chain-builder to draft procedure section.

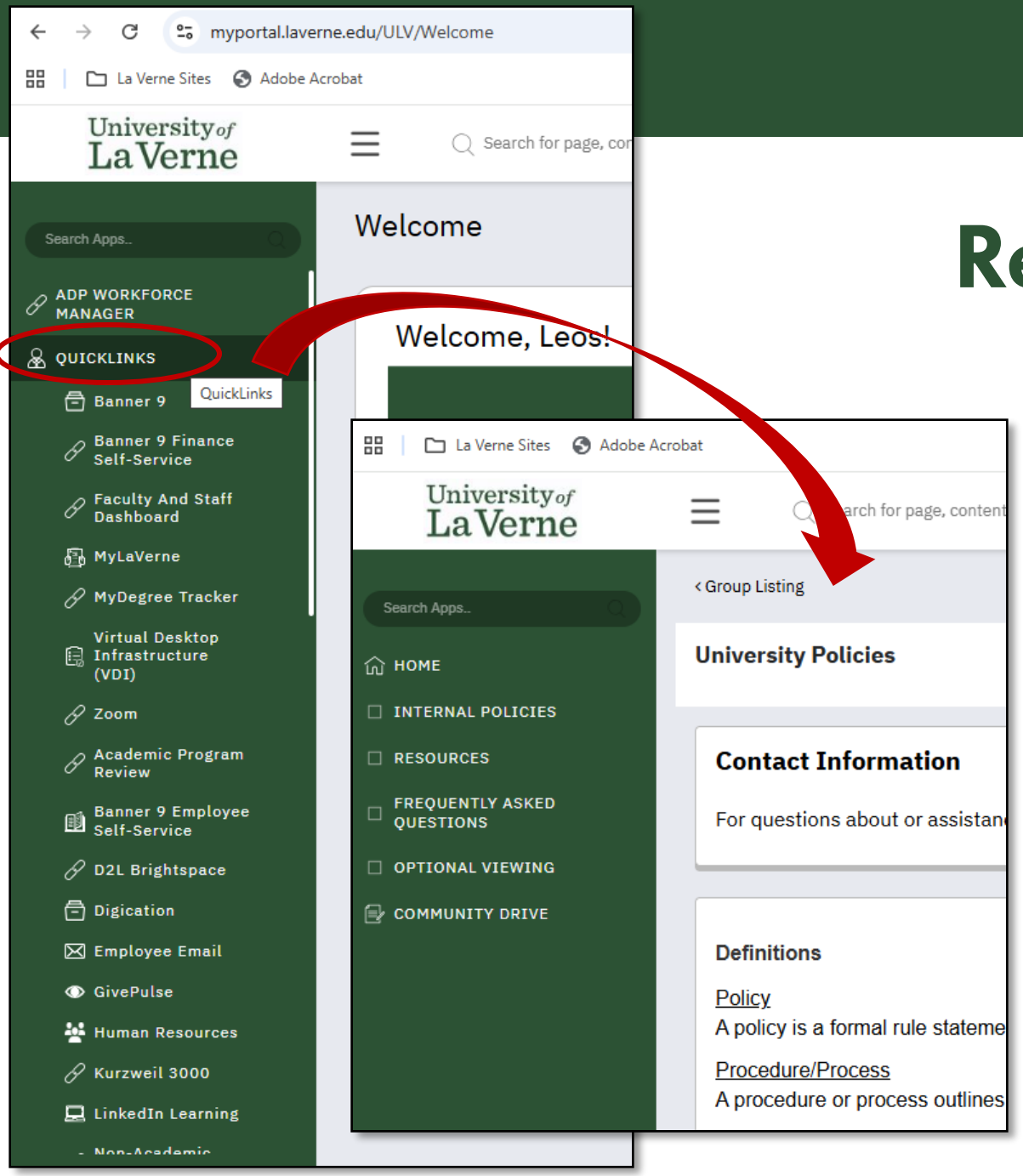
Example:

Policy Statement: All equipment must be inspected daily.

If… equipment must be inspected

Then… someone must perform an inspection

How… procedure: steps for conducting a safety inspection



Resources

- **University Policy Library** *(laverne.edu/policies)*
  - Policy Action Request Form
  - Policy 101: Policy on Policies
- **University Policies Portal Page**
  - Accessible from "Quick Links" menu (last item)
  - Resources (decision tree, process workflows)
  - Writing Guide
  - FAQs
  - Internal-facing policies *(in progress)*
- universitypolicies@laverne.edu

Key Takeaways

- Not everything important is a policy.
- Policies govern *institutional expectations*; procedures explain *how to comply*.
- If a rule applies broadly, carries risk, or requires enforcement → it may need to be a University policy.
- If compliance requires steps, a procedure is required.
- The Central Policy Office exists to help you navigate gray areas, not to police you.

Questions & Final Thoughts

University of La Verne

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Policy 101: Policy on Policies

Formalizing Roles, Responsibilities

- **Approver:** The Board of Trustees and Officers of the University, as outlined in the Bylaws, are all authorized approving bodies for University Policies.
- **Owner:** the individual ultimately responsible for developing, maintaining, implementing, communicating, and reinforcing the policies within their area(s) of responsibility, as well as the processes/procedures related to the policies they own.
- **Steward**: an individual or committee who, under the director of a policy owner, facilitates the development and advancement of a policy proposal through the Policy Approval Process.

A = Accountable
Ultimate authority, takes responsibility
"Who has ultimate accountability for this policy at the university-wide level?"

O = Oversight
high-level responsibility for division/unit
"Which senior leader is responsible for ensuring that this policy is known, followed, and updated within their division or area?"

S = Specifics
Subject-matter detail, drafting, day-to-day work
"Who has the subject-matter expertise and is closest to the day-to-day work of drafting, revising, and implementing this policy?"

Central Policy Office's Role

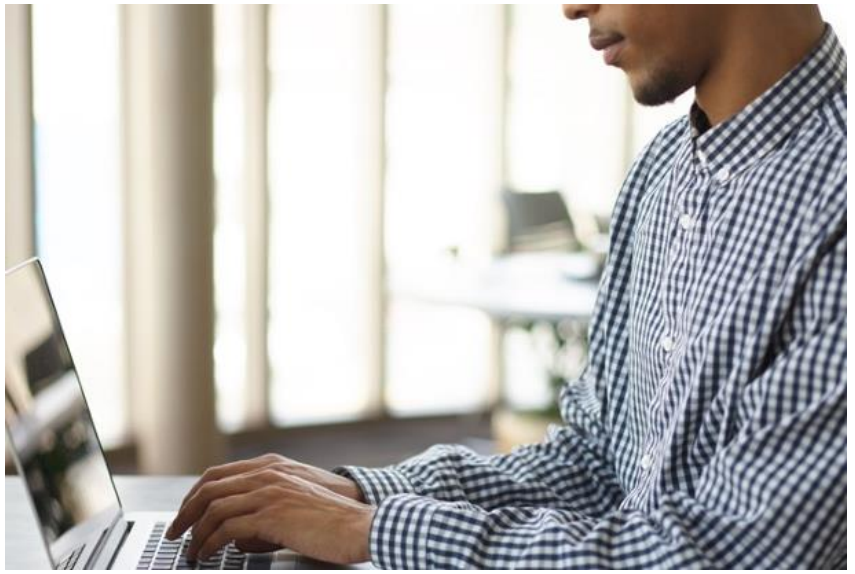
Centralization - "Air Traffic Control"

- Serve as key checkpoint for official policy work.

-Maintain central OneDrive for policy document management.

- Maintain updated links within the Policy Library.

- Assist Policy Owners and Stewards
    - Notify of similar/duplicative policies
    - Move through the review/approval process



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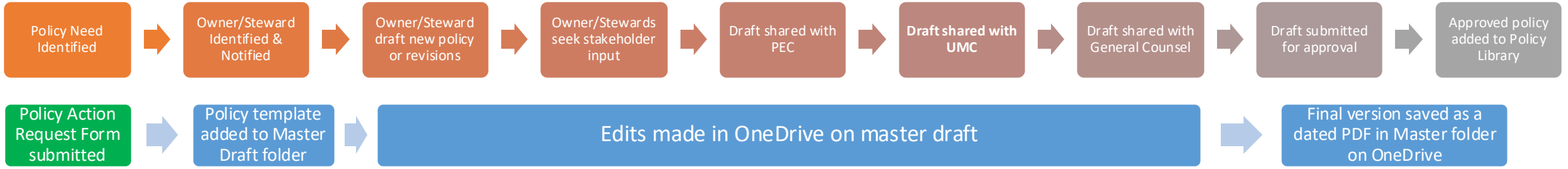
Policy 101: Policy on Policies

Policy Development/Revision, Vetting & Approval Process



Policy Document Management (Parallel) Process

Central Policy Office notified at each step.

Example: Chocolate Chip Cookie Recipe

Important: Not every policy requires ALL of these supporting tools.

- **Policy** (rule statements)
  - All chocolate chip cookies must include chocolate chips, a fat, a sugar, salt…
  - Cookie dough must be baked before consuming.
- **Standards** (required specifications, measurements, benchmarks)

1 cup (2 sticks) butter	2 ¼ cups flour	**Oven Temp:** 350 F
¾ cup brown sugar	1 tsp baking soda	**Bake Time**: 9-11 min
2 cups chocolate chips	…	

- **Process/Procedure** (Step-by-step instructions)

1. Cream the butter and sugar on high speed until fluffy.
2. Add eggs and mix until incorporated
3. ….

- **Protocol:** (Required response in specific situations; If X, then Y)
  - If cookies begin to burn, immediately remove them from the oven.
- **Guidelines** (Recommendations, preference; not required)
  - Chill dough before baking for chewier cookies.
  - Optional mix-ins include nuts, toffee pieces, pretzel bits