**Policies and Procedure Explained**

**What's the Difference?**

Policies and procedures are both important parts of how an organization runs, but they each play a different role and have their own unique features.

**Policies** are big-picture guidelines that reflect the values and direction of the college. They’re usually created by upper-level leadership and help shape decisions across the board. Policies don’t change often—they’re meant to be long-term and provide a consistent framework for how things should be handled.

**Procedures**, on the other hand, are the step-by-step instructions for how to get things done. They’re more detailed and hands-on, explaining exactly how to carry out tasks or follow processes. Procedures are usually developed by people who work directly in those areas, like department chairs or staff with specific expertise, and they may change more frequently as needs shift.

In short, policies explain **what** needs to be done, while procedures explain **how** to do it. Working together, they help keep things running smoothly, make sure everyone’s on the same page, and support the goals of the college.

This overview looks at how policies and procedures differ, why both are important, and how they work together to support day-to-day operations and long-term planning.

**Comparison**

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| **Attribute** | **Policy** | **Procedure** |
| Definition | High-level statement of intent or direction | Detailed step-by-step instructions |
| Scope | Organization-wide or department-specific | Specific to a task or process |
| Objective | Outlines goals and desired outcomes | Specifies how to achieve the goals |
| Level of Detail | General and broad | Specific and detailed |
| Flexibility | Less flexible, provides guidelines | More flexible, allows for variations |
| Approval | Requires higher-level authorization | May require lower-level authorization |
| Frequency of Updates | Less frequent | More frequent |
| Format | Written document | Step-by-step instructions or flowcharts |
| Compliance | Enforced and monitored | Followed and executed |

**Further Detail**

***Policy***

A **policy** is a formal set of principles or guidelines that define an organization’s overarching goals, objectives, and standards of acceptable conduct. It serves as a high-level framework that guides decision-making and provides direction for the organization. Policies are typically broad in nature and are designed to be flexible enough to accommodate various situations and scenarios.

One of the key attributes of a policy is that it **sets the** **tone** for the organization. It establishes the values and principles that govern the actions of employees and stakeholders. Policies are often created by top-level management or the board of directors and are meant to reflect the organization's mission and vision.

Policies are also **enduring** in nature. They are not meant to be changed frequently and are designed to provide stability and consistency within the organization. However, policies can be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure they remain relevant and aligned with the organization's goals.

Another important attribute of policies is that they are **enforceable**. They define what is considered acceptable behavior and provide a basis for disciplinary actions if violated. Policies are often communicated to employees through various means, such as employee handbooks, training sessions, or digital platforms, to ensure everyone is aware of the expectations and consequences.

Lastly, policies are often subject to **legal and regulatory standards**. Organizations must ensure that their policies comply with applicable laws and regulations to avoid legal repercussions. Policies related to areas such as ethics, diversity, and safety are particularly important in maintaining a positive organizational culture and avoiding legal liabilities.

***Procedure***

**Procedures** provide the detailed, step-by-step instructions necessary to execute specific tasks or processes within an organization. They serve as a roadmap that employees can follow to ensure consistency, accuracy, and operational efficiency.

A key attribute of procedures is that they are **task oriented**. Their focus is on the precise actions needed to achieve a particular result. Typically, procedures are developed by subject matter experts or departmental leaders who possess in-depth knowledge of the relevant processes.

Procedures are also **dynamic** in nature. Procedures may need more frequent updates to reflect changes in technology, best practices, or organizational requirements. Regular review and revision of procedures help organizations adapt to evolving circumstances and improve operational efficiency.

Procedures also bring **clarity and uniformity** to daily operations. By documenting the specific steps and actions required, procedures eliminate ambiguity and ensure that tasks are performed in a standardized manner. This level of precision is especially vital in sectors where accuracy is critical, such as healthcare, manufacturing, or aviation.

Moreover, procedures play an essential role in **risk management**. By defining the correct sequence of actions, procedures help mitigate potential errors or deviations that could lead to accidents, financial losses, or other negative consequences. They provide a framework for employees to follow, reducing the likelihood of mistakes and ensuring compliance with quality standards.

**Conclusion**

In summary, policies and procedures are integral components of an organization's framework. While policies provide a high-level direction and set the tone for the organization, procedures offer detailed instructions for carrying out specific tasks or processes.

Policies are enduring, enforceable, and reflect the organization's values, while procedures are dynamic, task-oriented, and ensure consistency and efficiency. Both policies and procedures contribute to the overall functioning of an organization, providing guidance, clarity, and risk management.

By understanding and implementing effective policies and procedures, organizations can enhance their operations, maintain compliance, and achieve their goals.

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