

UW-W Practice Directive and Procedure Process

Intent:

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater encourages our campus to establish practice directives & procedures that are aligned with, and in support of, UW System Policy as well as campus, State and Federal legal requirements.

Scope:

This procedure applies to each stakeholder on campus, specifically those who are seeking to create practice directives and procedures.

Definitions:

Policies. Guiding authority that express our institutional culture, goals, and philosophy. Policies promote consistence and operational efficiency, enhance our mission and mitigate significant organizational risk. Policies allow for some discretion by guiding decision making and limiting or setting parameters or choices.

Practice Directives. Guiding principles, aligned with UW System, State and Federal policies, for decision making and related processes at all levels.

Procedures. Actions and descriptions of the tasks required to support and carry out organizational policies. Procedures articulate the process for accomplishing controls. Procedures might also document a course of action accomplished in a defined order, ensuring the consistent and repetitive approach to accomplish control activities.

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Procedure:

Please refer to the steps below for more information and guidance on creating practice directives and procedures.

Distinguishing Between Practice Directives and Procedures:

The distinctions between practice directives and procedures can be subtle, depending on the level of operations described in the statements. In the tables below, you will find characteristics that can help discern practice directives from procedures.

Typical Characteristics

PRACTICE DIRECTIVES	Vs.	PROCEDURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are Non-Negotiable • Change Infrequently • Are Expressed in Broad Terms (Transparency) • Are Statements of “What” and/or “Why” 	Vs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a Narrow Application • Are Prone to Change • Are Often Stated in Detail • Are Statements of “How”, “When” and/or “Who”

Steps for Completing Practice Directives:

The following steps are recommended for accomplishing this task.

The Department Contact will create or revise their Department’s Practice Directives before submitting them to the Quality Assurance Improvement Manager (stokesa@uww.edu).

1. The Department Contact reviews each practice directive administered by their Department and determines whether it is a practice directive or a procedure.
2. For documents that are identified as a practice directive:
 - a. Determine if the practice directive is current and still applicable;
 - b. Review each current practice directive and determine whether it requires minor changes or is acceptable in its present form, or is outdated and/or requires content revision; Minor changes include, but are not limited to:
 - Ensuring that position titles are updated with incumbents of those positions.
 - Updating position titles and department names as appropriate.
 - Removing references to specific room numbers, phone numbers, buildings, etc.
 - Citing authority references such as UW System Policy, Board of Regents Policy, Wisconsin State Statutes, Federal Law, Delegations of Authority, etc.
 - c. For practice directives that need minor changes or that are acceptable under present form:
 - Practice directives should be updated and then submitted to the Quality Assurance Improvement Manager for review.
 - Once the practice directive is approved, the Quality Assurance Improvement Manager will upload the information onto the [Practice Directives and Procedures website](#).
 - d. For documents identified as a practice directive that need to be rewritten, or have new or updated information added:
 - Refer to the [UW-W Practice Directive Template](#) to ensure that all relevant information is included.
 - Practice directive changes and/or additions should be reviewed or made in collaboration with appropriate campus constituents and affected departments.

3. For documents that are identified as procedures:

- The Department Contact will be responsible for posting procedures to their Department's website and other web pages.
- Refer to the [UW-W Procedure Template](#) to ensure that all relevant information is included.

Responsible department/office drafts practice directive and procedure in approved template (will be housed on the *Practice Directives and Procedures Website* location); form to be sent for initial review by *Quality Assurance Improvement Manager* for missing/incomplete information; *Administrative Affairs* sends complete practice directive and procedure to the *Vice Chancellor of Administrative Affairs*.

Chancellor's Cabinet review (includes stakeholders, practice directive and procedure owners, etc.); discussion of purpose, risks, impacts, implementation, resources, communication plan and any revisions to proposed practice directives and procedures.

Submit to the *Chancellor* for approval. If approved, go to next step. If not, send back for revision or if practice directive and procedure not needed, end process.

After approval, *Quality Assurance Improvement Manager* will ensure the practice directive and procedure is uploaded to the *Practice Directives and Procedures Website*. The approved practice directive and procedure will be linked to associated UW System and campus policies, controls, assessments, and job aides.

Content Guidelines:

If there is a primary source of information related to a practice directive or procedure, then cite that source rather than trying to summarize it. The State maintains a website that is searchable and is up-to-date: <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes>. This minimizes misinterpretation of the primary source and decreases the need to update practice directives and procedures.

Use vertical lists to highlight a series of requirements or other information in a visually clear way. Vertical lists help your reader focus on important material: <https://developers.google.com/style/lists>.

Use tables to make complex material easier to understand. Tables help your audience see relationships that are often times hidden in dense text. Moreover, for most readers, it is not necessary to understand all possibilities and conditions, only those that apply to the reader’s situation.

Step	Action: Preparing a French Omelette
1.	Crack the eggs into a bowl
2.	Add salt and pepper to eggs
3.	Preheat pan to medium heat while whisking the eggs
4.	Add oil or butter to the pan
5.	Pour eggs into the pan
6.	Constantly mix and fold till the eggs till it begins to coagulate
7.	Turn off heat
8.	Place ingredients onto the omelette
8.	Fold onto plate and enjoy

Style Guide:

Good Policies and Procedures are easy to read. “Plain language” is a writing style that helps readers:

- find what they need
- understand what they find
- use what they find to meet their needs

Guidelines for plain language writing are available online (see references below). In general, follow these principles:

- Write in the “active voice”. In an active-voice sentence, the person or department/unit taking the action is the subject of the sentence. Passive-voice sentences often do not identify who is performing the action:

Passive voice	Active voice
The lake was polluted by the company.	The company polluted the lake.
New regulations were proposed.	We proposed new regulations.
The following information must be included in the application for it to be considered complete.	You must include the following information in your application.
Regulations have been proposed by the Department of Labor.	The Department of Labor proposed new regulations.

More than any other writing technique, using the active voice and specifying who is performing an action will change the character of your writing.

- Avoid the word “shall”
- Use “must” for an obligation, “must not” for a prohibition, “may” for a discretionary action, and “should” for a recommendation.
- Be aware of the “weight” of each of these words as you are developing or revising practice directives and procedures. Legal writing experts now recommend avoiding the archaic and ambiguous “shall” in favor of another word, depending on your meaning.
- Use pronouns. Pronouns help readers relate better to your documents. They are more likely to understand what their responsibility is. Using pronouns also makes sentences shorter and your document easier to read.

Don't say	Say
Copies of receipts must be provided.	You must provide copies of your receipts.

- Omit unnecessary words. Wordy, dense documents are confusing to the reader. Edit your practice directive and procedure to reduce unnecessary or redundant information. This task can be difficult for the writer him/herself or for a subject matter expert, so have a friend or colleagues read your document and provide feedback. Watch out for “of, to, on” and other prepositions. They often mark phrases you can reduce to one or two words.

Don't say	Say
A number of	Several, a few, many
A sufficient number of	Enough
At this point in time	Now
Is able to	Can
On a monthly basis	Monthly

- Use short words (one or two syllables).
- Avoid the use of jargon, unnecessary technical expressions and fancy vocabulary.
- Use common words (e.g., ‘use’ instead of ‘utilize’).
- Avoid “legalese” --These words make documents “stuffy”.

EXAMPLES		
above	hereafter	therewith
aforementioned	hereby	whatsoever
foregoing	thereafter	wherein
henceforth	thereof	whereof

- Write short sentences. Long, complicated sentences often mean that you are not sure about what you want to say. Shorter sentences are also better for conveying complex information; they break the information up into smaller, easier-to-process units. Resist the temptation to put everything in one sentence. Break up your idea into its parts and make each one the subject of its own sentence.

Resources:

[UW-W Practice Directive & Procedure](#)

[UW-W Practice Directive Template](#)

[UW-W Procedure Template](#)

Administration:

Approval Details

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Revision History

Version	Revision date	Description of changes	Author
1.0	07/01/2018	Procedure established	Quality Assurance and Improvement Manager

Contact Person/Unit

Contact Person/Unit:	Quality Assurance Improvement Manager
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Keywords

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