

Guidelines for the Review and Update of Standard Practice Guides (SPGs)

I. Overview

The Standard Practice Guide (SPG) is the official collection of institution-wide policies and procedures for the university. As official policies, the SPGs are intended to inform and define the key requirements applicable all departments and units of the university. Standard Practice Guide (SPG) 601.35, *Development of University Policy*, was issued in 2014 and established a consistent process and format for approving, issuing, reviewing, and maintaining all SPG policies. With respect to reviewing and maintaining, SPG 601.35 requires “...At least every five years, it is the responsibility of the policy owner(s) to review, and to update policies when necessary...”

II. Purpose of this Guidance

This guidance is intended to highlight key areas that should be considered when reviewing and updating a SPG to meet the requirements of SPG 601.35.

III. Key Areas to Consider

1) General Considerations

- a. Plan ahead to allow sufficient time for the SPG to be reviewed, updated (as appropriate), and re-issued to meet the five year requirement (SPG 601.35).
- b. Significant changes to your policy requirements should be addressed timely and not wait until five years. The five year requirement defines the maximum period for SPG review and updates.
- c. Consider limiting the actual SPG to key principles and objectives, with links to supporting information and procedures on ways to achieve the policy objectives. This separation should allow easier updates to procedures (which may change over time) and keep the SPG focused on the key policy principles and objectives (which should be more constant over time).
- d. Does the SPG or accompanying procedures address how compliance with the policy will be monitored?
- e. Assess any implications of the updated policy, including cost and resource requirements. Consider how can units or departments get assistance in policy implementation if they do not have the in-house expertise.
- f. Be careful to distinguish words like “must” (what is required) and “should” (what is recommended but not required)
- g. Does the SPG or accompanying procedures address the consequences of non-compliance with the SPG requirements?
- h. Are there any related SPGs? If so, it might be helpful to reference and/or link the related SPGs to your SPG.
- i. Make use of subject matter experts to review your policy and procedures, as appropriate.
- j. Have key stakeholders, co-owners of the SPG, and the chain of command of the policy owners been engaged, as appropriated, to solicit input/feedback on the policy review?
- k. A Word file of the current SPG and a template for the correct version for new and updated SPGs is available from the Office of University Audits.

2) Potential Additions

- a. Does information or new requirements need to be added to the policy because of something that did not exist at the time of the prior version (e.g., new technology)?
- b. Are there new laws or regulations that should be addressed?
- c. Are there additional requirements or information that should be included to enhance the effectiveness of the policy?
- d. Does the SPG or accompanying procedures provide a resource to contact if readers have questions concerning the SPG? If not, consider adding.

3) Potential Revisions

- a. Is the SPG meeting its objectives and having the desired effect? If not, is there information or requirements that need to be clarified?
- b. Are there links to associated procedures or other information that need to be updated?
- c. Do any related forms, training materials, delegations of authority, business processes, and web sites also need to be updated?
- d. What policy violations are most common? Could a policy revision or procedural clarification help to prevent the recurring violations?

4) Potential Deletions

- a. Is the policy or sections of the policy still relevant and necessary?
- b. Does information or certain requirements need to be deleted from the policy because of something new that did not exist at the time of the prior version?
- c. Remove anything no longer relevant (e.g., a system, tool, or process no longer is in use).
- d. Guidance on specific subjects is very important and beneficial. However, if the guidance is intended to be informational and not a formal requirement (i.e., policy), it should be removed from the SPG and communicated via a link to a separate document.

IV. Update the Policy (as appropriate)**V. Communicate Changes to the SPG**

- 1) Communicate information on changes made to the SPG to the university community, as appropriate. This is your responsibility as the SPG owner.
- 2) Should the update be shared with key stakeholder groups (e.g., BAG, APG, HR Community of Practice)?
- 3) Is this change significant enough to warrant broad university communication such as a 3D email or a University Record article?
- 4) Consider adding a note to the footer of the SPG to highlight a summary of the significant updates or note that the policy was reviewed with no changes.

VI. Get it approved.

- 1) Get the updated policy approved by the policy owner(s) and submit the updated version and the approvals to University Audits. Note: if there are no changes or the changes are minor (e.g., title updates, link changes) the policy can be sent to spgonline@umich.edu with no signature approval.
- 2) If you plan to decommission your SPG because it is no longer relevant, policy owner approval is required.