



INDIANA UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND
MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

Antiracist Agenda Suggested Guidelines for Reviewing Policies

The suggested guidelines are only a consideration for units, groups, and campuses to consider in conjunction with current practices. Periodically reviewing policies for relevance is good practice. It is also good practice to encourage individuals and groups to be mindful of the importance to separate policies from procedures in documents.

Policies are guiding principles that express institutional culture, goals, and philosophy and should be free of bias or preference for one specific group. Policies promote consistency and operational efficiency, enhance the university’s mission, and mitigate significant institutional risk. Policies are a set of instruments that outline the high-level objectives, roles, and responsibilities of a given unit, program, or area. They are usually mandatory, and failure to abide by them results in consequences. Policies are often supplemented with guidance documents such as procedures or guidelines. We hope that all of our policies can be an intentional map of actions that serve to guide an organization or group in decision making to attaining positive results.

Procedures (*guidelines*) are detailed descriptions of the tasks required to support and carry out organizational policies. More specifically, procedures provide recommendations on carrying out the objectives set out in the policy. Procedures often document a course of action to be accomplished in a defined order while ensuring consistency, fairness, equality, and equity are obtained to achieve desired activities and outcomes. Procedures are never compulsory compared to policies, but they set precedence and are essential for the process. Procedures (*guidelines*) are generally created based on evidence-based research.

Policies

- Have widespread application
- Are non-negotiable, change infrequently
- Are expressed in broad terms
- Are statements of *what* and/or *why*
- Answer major operational issues

Procedures

- Have a narrower focus
 - Details a process
 - Are subject to change and continuous improvement
 - Have a more detailed description of activities
 - Are generally statements of *how*, *when*, and/or *who*, and sometimes *what*
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Reviewing policies and procedures is necessary to ensure that they are free of bias, language that is uneven, unbalanced, or not a fair representation. More specifically, "biased language," which refers to words and phrases that are considered discriminatory, offensive, hurtful, or an impediment to an inclusive community, should be edited, removed, and approved through the appropriate

governing bodies within units. Biased language includes expressions that demean or exclude people because of age, sex, race, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, physical, mental traits, and other personal characteristics.

Please consider the following list of questions for consideration when reviewing existing policies to ensure that the review is conducted thoughtfully and thoroughly from an antiracist lens.

1. **Continued need for policy.** Is the policy still necessary in light of its stated purpose and goals and are they free of bias or preferences? Would the document function better as procedures or guidelines?
2. **Institutional values and objectives.** Does the policy clearly and effectively communicate IU's values, including those related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, as the general purpose for the policy?
3. **Effectiveness.** Does the policy function well as written, or should it be revised (e.g., by drafting it more clearly and intently) to improve its aim towards an antiracist institution?
4. **Current and alignment with best practices.** Is the policy current? Does it align with best practices in the area?
5. **Implementation.** Is the policy being followed in practice fairly, equitably, and consistently per case and in each cycle, or is there a need to address and improve policy, procedures, and practical implementation?

All campuses and units should adhere to their appropriate governance structure for approval of changes or recommendations to policies, procedures, and practices.