



Northern Lights  
College

**Policy Development Manual**  
**Northern Lights College**

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The Policy Development Manual is a living document that will be updated as suggestions, revisions, and deletions are acknowledged by the College Policy Committee. Please send any ideas or comments to [nlcpolicies@nlc.bc.ca](mailto:nlcpolicies@nlc.bc.ca)

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## Purpose of this Manual

This manual is intended as a resource guide for NLC employees engaged in policy development and revision. If this manual does not agree with the requirements with the Policy Development policy (A-5.06), the official Policy shall prevail.

## Process Narrative

The policy development process begins when a College employee is directed by a policy **owner**<sup>1</sup> to develop a new policy, or revise an existing policy.

Ideally, the policy **author**<sup>2</sup> has received a Request for New Policy or Policy Revision or Policy Retraction document, outlining the specific issue(s), problem(s), or systemic change(s) that need to be addressed in the new policy.

Policies should be reviewed for relevance and appropriateness every five years. It is possible that following a review that includes Phase 1 and Phase 2, no revisions are necessary. In this case, the process jumps to Phase 5.

### Phase 1: Gather materials

In this phase, you will want to ensure you have:

- Current copy of the policy, and/or any *Related Policies*
- Any related statutory regulations and collective agreements
- The current *Policy Template* (MS-Word docx available on the Policy web site)
- The Policy Development Checklist (see Appendix A)
- A *Request for New Policy or Policy Revision or Policy Retraction* form if one has been submitted.

### Phase 2: Research

In this phase, your goal is to review any materials related to your policy development goals. This may include dialogue with college staff, faculty, administrators, Board members, students, and alumni. It may also include materials or conversations with external contacts including legal, other post-secondary institutions, and local school districts.

Note: Research does not constitute “consultation”.

### Phase 3: Policy draft

In this phase, you take what you have learned, and author the first draft of the policy (or revised policy). Use the descriptors in the ***Writing the Policy*** section to assist with policy writing.

### Phase 4: Consultation

In this phase, you present your draft policy to the identified stakeholders, or stakeholder representatives, for feedback and advice on your draft. It is important to retain the details of the consultation, as they will form part of your presentation to the Policy Committee. The Policy Committee

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<sup>1</sup> The senior executive responsible for oversight and/or execution of the policy in question.

<sup>2</sup> The individual responsible for crafting the new policy or policy revisions.

itself can be a stakeholder, and consulted on the draft of the policy, separately from its policy oversight responsibilities.

### Phase 5: Approval Process

In all cases, the final version of the policy is presented first to the Policy Committee. In addition to the final draft, you must submit your policy with a cover sheet that addresses each element in the **Policy Development Check List**. The draft and the cover sheet should be emailed to [nlcpolicies@nlc.bc.ca](mailto:nlcpolicies@nlc.bc.ca).

The Policy Committee will review the policy to ensure it **aligns to the current policy template and that you consulted stakeholders appropriately**, and either recommend changes, or:

- Section 23 Policies: Recommend the policy to Education Council for advice, and the Board for approval.
- Section 24 Policies: Recommend the policy to Education Council for approval.
- Section 25 Policies: Recommend the policy to both Education Council and the Board for joint approval.
- All other policies: Provide final approval.

### Phase 6: Communication

The Policy author is responsible for providing the approved version of the policy to the Registrar ([registrar@nlc.bc.ca](mailto:registrar@nlc.bc.ca)) for publication. Once the Registrar has received a PDF version of the policy plus a summary (125 words or less) of the change and why, the Policy will be posted to the NLC Policy Manual web site ([www.nlc.bc.ca/About-NLC/NLC-Policies](http://www.nlc.bc.ca/About-NLC/NLC-Policies)). The Registrar will notify the College community of the revision to the Policy Manual.

### Phase 7: Implementation

The Policy owner and author are responsible for implementing the new policy. This may include a formalized communication plan, a phased-in approach to the new policy, and/or simply adopting new procedures that resulted from the approval of the policy. Note that implementation is tied to the **Effective Date** approved.

## Writing the Policy

“Yikes – I have to develop a policy! Now what?” Policy development begins with identifying what issue or issues need to be addressed. Generally, the issue needs to be discussed in a number of forums to clearly identify the underlying issue; for that reason, good policy development often begins with an informal consultation with a few stakeholders that are familiar with the underlying issue.

The goal of good policy development is to author policy that can be applied effectively even when the issue at hand did not exist when the policy was developed. The NLC Policy Committee has developed a Policy Template intended to meet both current and future needs of policy users at the College. This section of the Policy Manual describes each element of a policy, and provides advice and structure on how to use the template.

A current copy of the Policy Template can be downloaded from the NLC Policy Manual web site ([www.nlc.bc.ca/About-NLC/NLC-Policies](http://www.nlc.bc.ca/About-NLC/NLC-Policies)).

### POLICY HEADER

- Policy Name:** This is the title of the policy. Avoid abbreviations. Do not use *NLC* or *College* or *Policy* in the title. The title is the name of the policy as it appears in the Policy Manual.
- Policy Number:** This is the unique number of the policy. If this is a new policy, the number will be assigned by the Policy Committee. Numbering is prefixed by the category code.
- Category:**
- A – Administration (policies related to general administration of the College)
  - B – Board (policies applying to the Board)
  - E – Education (policies relating to educational matters, typically under the jurisdiction of Education Council)
  - F – Finance (policies relating to financial matters of the College)
  - H – Human Resources (policies related to human resources)
- Effective Date:** The date this version of the policy becomes effective. For most administrative policies, this is immediately following the approval of the body with jurisdiction. For education-related policies, this normally would not be effective until the September following the *Approval Date*.
- Approval Process:** The approval process for this version of the policy as identified in Procedures Section 3: Policy Approval of the Policy Development Policy:
- Administrative Policies
  - Section 23 of the College & Institute Act
  - Section 24 of the College & Institute Act
  - Section 25 of the College & Institute Act
- Approval Date:** The date this version of the policy received final approval from the body with jurisdiction. This should be left blank until approval is received.

**Date Last Reviewed:** If a policy is new or is changed, this field is updated to the date this version of the policy received final approval from the body with jurisdiction. If the policy has simply been reviewed without revision, this field is updated to the date the policy received was approved as reviewed by the body with jurisdiction.

## POLICY

The Policy section of the policy template is a very high-level policy statement. Good policy stands the test of time, although other elements in the policy document may change over time.

Never include exact values in a policy statement (e.g. “GPA of 2.00” or “minimum of \$20.00”). These values belong in the Procedure. Instead, use statements like “an average level of academic performance” or “a minimum fee”.

All references to Northern Lights College should be “the College”.

The policy should reflect the College’s commitment, our values, connection to our mission, and/or our responsibilities.

If you’ve excluded text from the policy because “that will never happen here”, that is a clue there is room for improvement in the policy language. Ask yourself: What if it does?

## PURPOSE

This section of the policy is establishes the intended outcome for the policy, and is typically short. “This policy defines the order in which...”. Do not say “The purpose of this policy is...”

## SCOPE

This defines to whom this policy applies and/or does not apply. Three common dichotomies seen at NLC are:

- EMPLOYEES: Staff / Faculty / Administration
- CURRICULUM: Education Council approved curriculum / Continuing education and apprenticeship curriculum
- STUDENTS: Applicants / Current students / Former students / Graduates

Examine who this policy should not be applied to versus who it should. Test your assumptions with your stakeholders.

## PROCEDURE

This is the section where you outline the details of the policy. Ensure your procedure is congruent with your Policy statement (e.g. if the Policy statement says “equitable access for students”, don’t write a Procedure that only applies to students with a GPA of 2.0)

Use *hierarchical* or *outline numbering*! Main items are 1, 2, 3. Sub-items are a, b, c, etc. This assists with understanding the process and facilitates easy discussion with stakeholders and approvers.

Do include specifics (e.g. “GPA of 2.00” or “minimum of \$20.00”) – or better yet, refer to another document that is outside of policy (e.g. “... the application fee (see the current Tuition and Fees table).”

## DEFINITIONS

Often Policy and Procedure statements use specific language that can be interpreted differently depending on the context. Identify those items that may be used elsewhere at the College to mean slightly different things, and provide an explicit definition here.

“Student” is a very vague term – few policies should refer simply to students.

## STAKEHOLDERS

These are the bodies or individuals that have a specific interest and/or will be impacted by the policy. This list is NOT “who you consulted with”, but rather with whom you should consult.

To consult with...

Students	contact the Director of Student Services who can identify the right representative(s).
Employees	contact the Executive Director of Human Resources and Organizational Development.

## RELATED POLICIES AND REFERENCES

As you are developing your policy, other policies, regulations, statues, or agreements might influence your work. Especially relevant are those policies that are referred to in this policy (e.g. “See the Student Appeals Policy”), but the relationship might be implied (e.g. “Students are admitted once the deposit has been paid” – where the Tuition, Deposits, and Refunds policy is where deposit is defined).

Use a two-way test... if you change your new policy, what related policies could be impacted. If a related policy is changed, could it impact this policy.

## HISTORY

This section will be completed and maintained by the College Policy Committee.

## NEXT SCHEDULED REVIEW DATE

This section will be completed and maintained by the College Policy Committee and is normally set at five (5) years after the Date Last Reviewed, but may, at the discretion of the approving body, be less.

## Appendix A

### Cover Letter Check-List

In addition to the new or revised Policy and Procedures, the Policy Committee asks that each submission include a cover sheet that addresses the checklist items noted below. Policy authors are encouraged to consider the checklist as policy development occurs.

1. **What is the *Policy Approval Process* and Rationale**

Identify the *Policy Approval Process* that is required for the proposed change, and the rationale for that determination. Clarify how the policy fits within the appropriate section (23, 24, or 25) of the College and Institute Act or if this is an Administrative Policy.

2. **Summary**

Provide a summary (125 words or less) of the proposed change and why. This summary will be forwarded to the College community once the policy has been approved.

3. **Detailed Rationale**

Provide a detailed rationale for the proposed change(s). Rationale should identify the specific issue(s) the proposed change is intending to address. Skip the detailed rationale if the Summary is sufficient.

4. **Consultations**

Describe the consultations that have occurred in preparing the proposed change(s). Specifically include how the *Stakeholders* identified in the Policy have been consulted.

5. **Effective Date**

Identify when the proposed change is intended to go into effect. Note that student-oriented policies normally are implemented in the next academic year. If implementation is required sooner, provide a rationale.

6. **Impacted Policies**

Identify any/all policies that must be updated as a result of the proposed change.

7. **Terminated Policies**

If the proposed change makes an existing policy obsolete or redundant, it must be ended the same way that a new policy is created. Identify the terminal policy here, and provide a coversheet specifically proposing elimination of the terminal policy.

8. **Impacted Resources**

Identify any/all critical NLC resources that may need to be updated as a result of the proposed change (e.g. College Calendar, Collective Agreements, forms).