Getting Started with Policy and Procedure Writing: Practical Tips for Success

Monday, February 28, 2022

Please introduce yourself and where you're from in the chat box as you come into the room.

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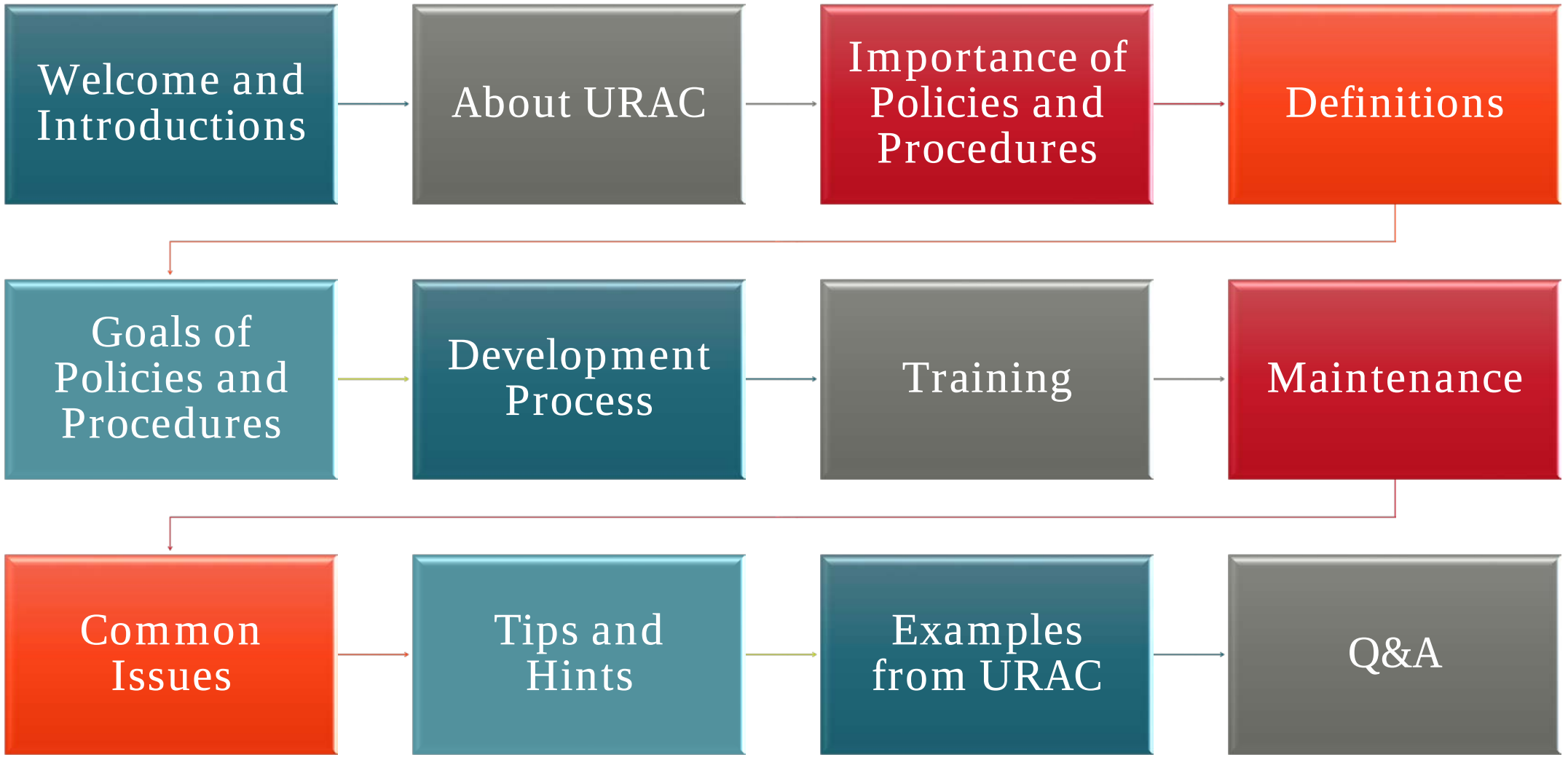
Before We Get Started

Message Jonathan Villiers-Farrow for any ***tech issues***

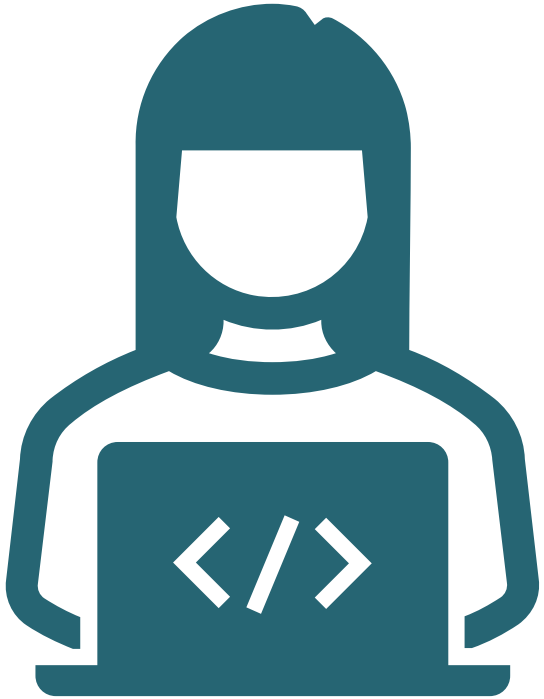
Use the chat box for ***questions*** and to ***introduce yourself***

Explore ***resources*** we'll share in the chat box

Agenda


Welcome and Introductions
About URAC
Importance of Policies and Procedures
Definitions
Goals of Policies and Procedures
Development Process
Training
Maintenance
Common Issues
Tips and Hints
Examples from URAC
Q&A

Who’s Here Today



What type of organization do you represent?

What's your organization's relationship to URAC?

About URAC

Our Clients

Hospitals
Health Plans
Pharmacies
Telehealth Providers
Independent Review
Population Health
Utilization Management
Credentials Verification
Health Websites
Case Management
Disease Management

Leader in Specialty Pharmacy, Telehealth and Remote Patient Monitoring Accreditation

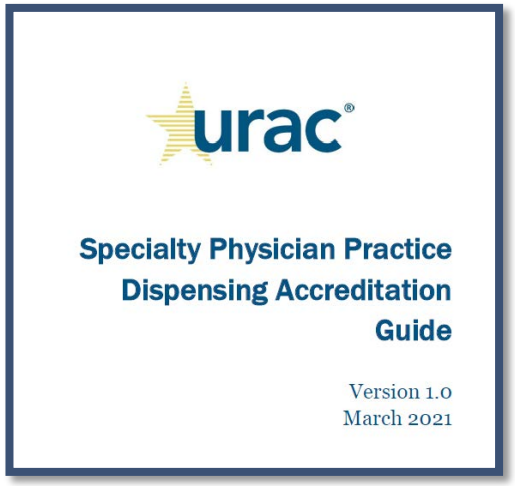
Some of Our Clients

Client Relations Manager

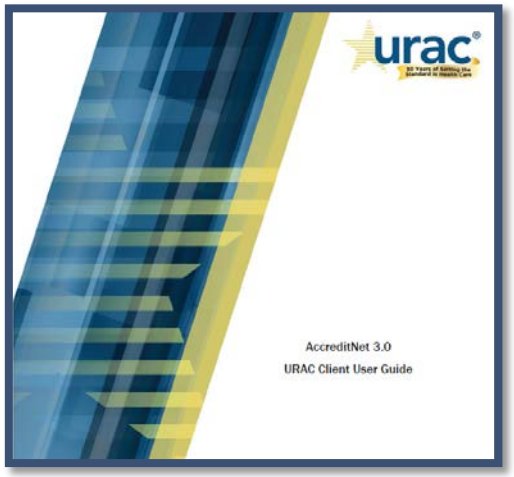
People

Tools

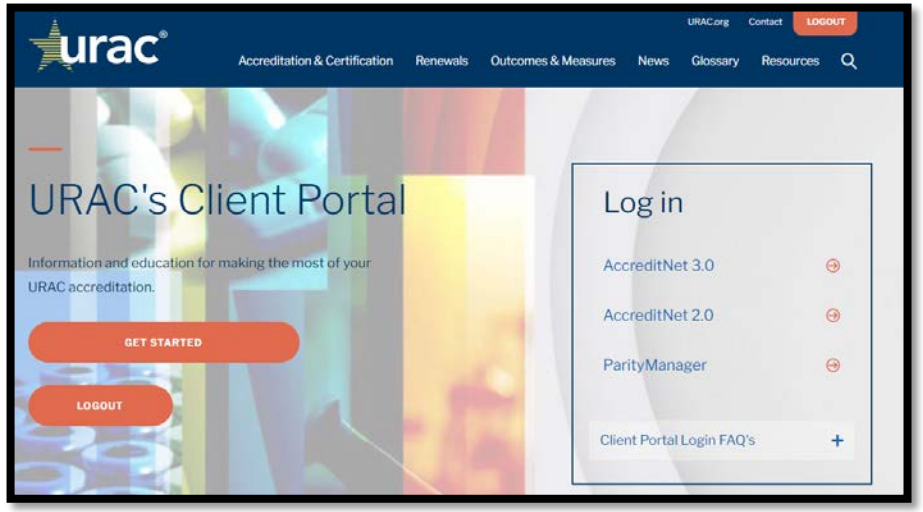
Accreditation Reviewer



Program Guide



AccreditNet Guide



Client Information Portal

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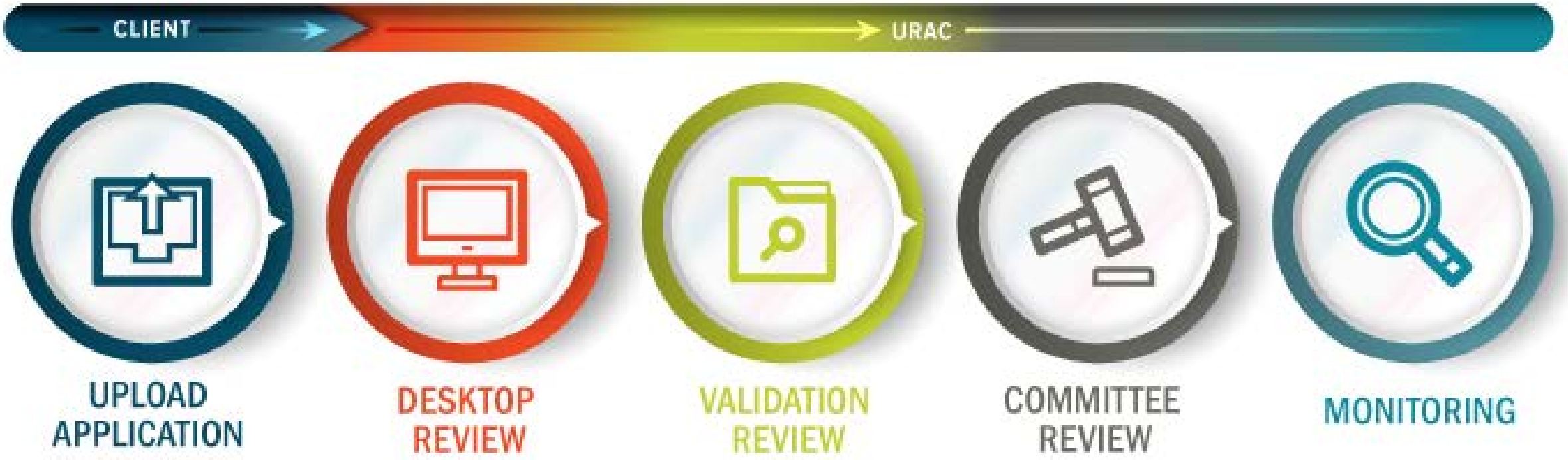
ACCREDITATION PROCESS



Importance of Policies and Procedures

Internal Reasons

- Establish rules of conduct
- Protect rights of workers
- Protect business interests
- Provide standardization in daily operational activities
- Providing clarity when dealing with issues and activities that are critical to health and safety, legal liabilities, and regulatory requirements

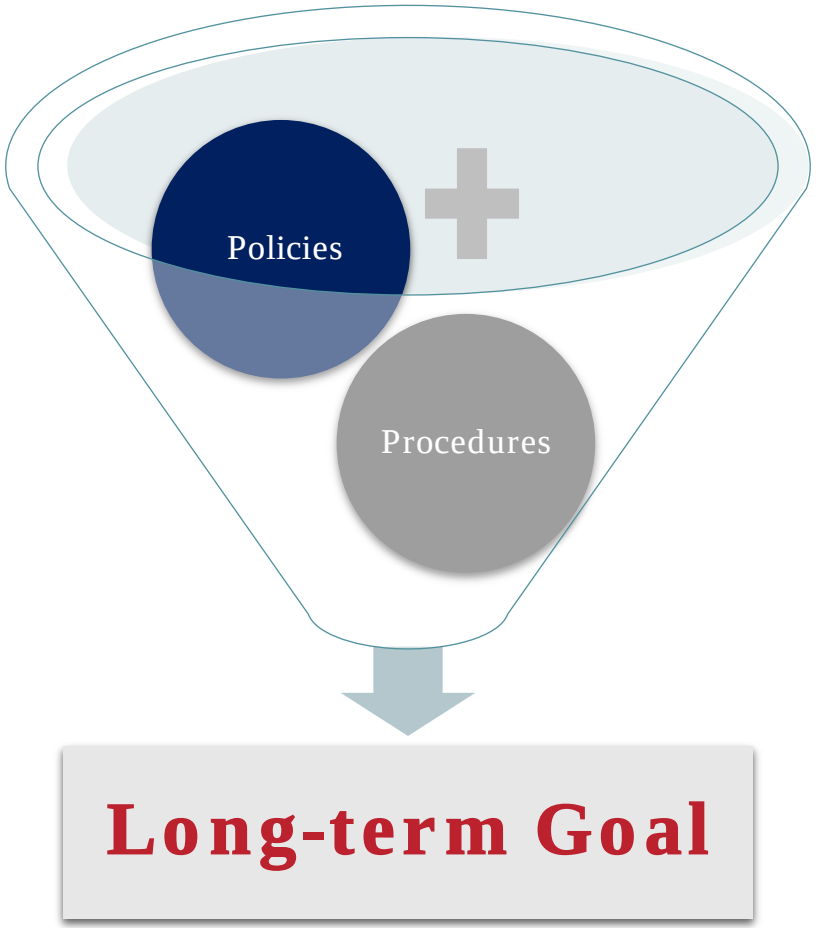
External Reasons

- To guide employees in meeting the standards
- To demonstrate continuing compliance with the standards
- To demonstrate that your organization has the capacity to meet the standards

Definitions

Business Dictionary

POLICIES are a set of principles, rules and guidelines formulated or adopted by an organization to **reach its long-term goals** and typically published in a shared repository that is widely accessible.



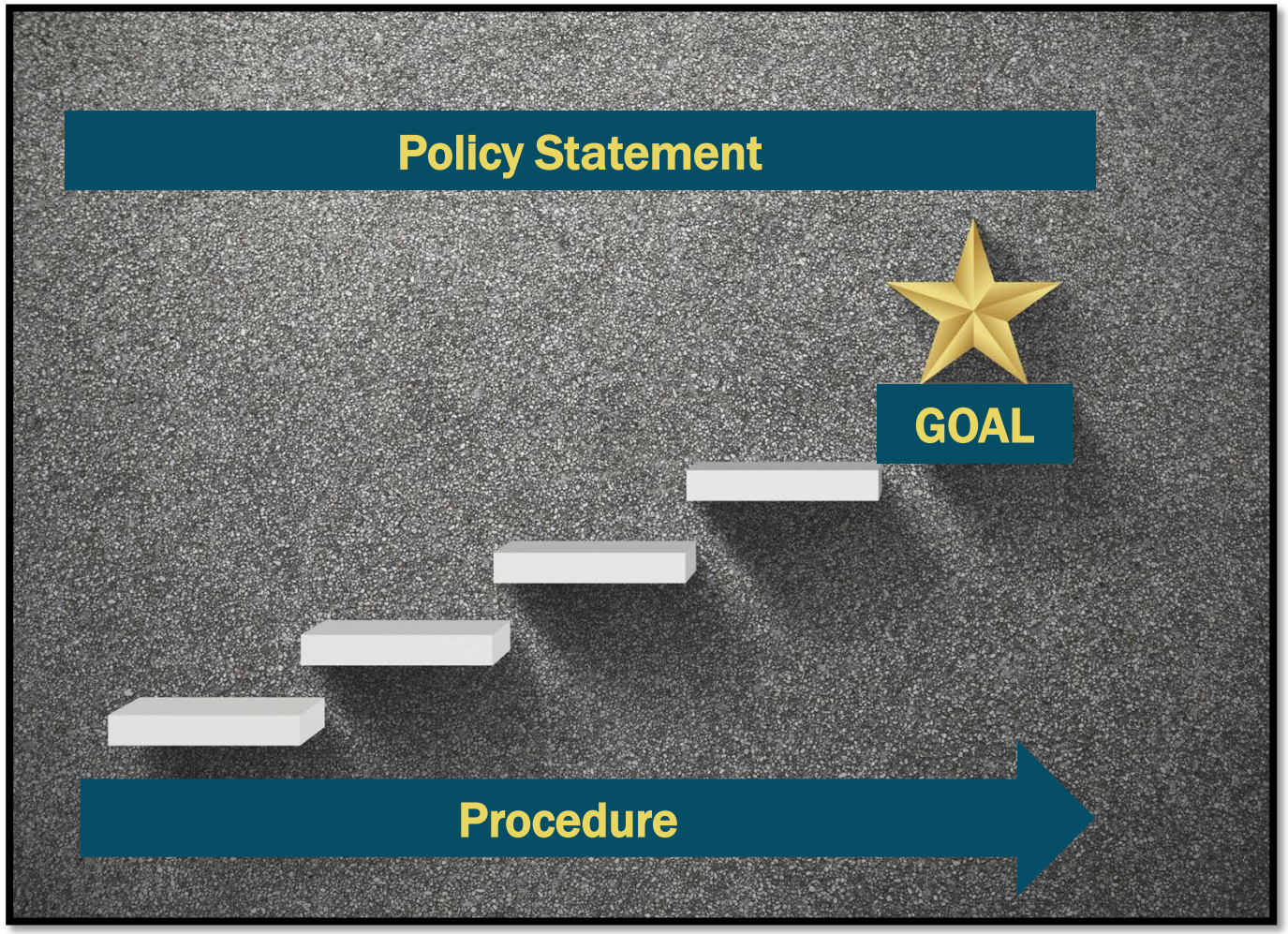
PROCEDURES are the specific **methods employed to express policies in action in day-to-day operations** of the organization.

Together, policies and procedures ensure that a point of view held by the governing body of an organization is translated into steps that **result in an outcome compatible with that view.**

Policy Statement v. Procedure

POLICY STATEMENT: should **define** your organization's **stance** or **GOAL** on a particular subject

PROCEDURE: should define the **process to achieve and maintain** the organization's stance or **GOAL** on a particular subject



Examples of Each

Policy: The What

- The organization will provide all members with the necessary training, immunizations and personal protective equipment (PPE) needed for protection from communicable diseases.
- We will meet the special needs of persons who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing.

Procedure: The How

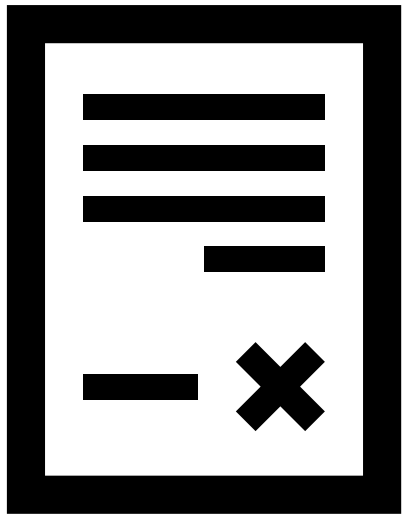
- Headquarters will mail a box of supplies to remote staff every other month with masks, gloves and hand sanitizer.
- Team members will submit a request for patient materials to be created with options for large-print, Braille or screen readers to the Marketing team.

Benefits of a Policy or Procedure

Defines the organization's stance or goal on a certain topic

Controls outcomes through defined processes

Ensures employee expectations are clear



Makes training easier

Manages and reduces company risk

Development Process

Templates

1. • Stick with one template
2. • Include the organization's name and/or logo
3. • Use strong numbering and naming conventions
4. • Include key dates: effective, review, and revision
5. • Include the approval authority

Development Process

Body of the Policy or Procedure

- Ensure the **title** of the policy and procedure adequately reflects the purpose of the policy and procedure
- Give a **number** to the policy and procedure
- Create a policy/**purpose statement**
- Define the **scope** and responsibilities
- Create a step-by-step **process on HOW** employees should go about achieving the goal or stance

Development Process

Additional Information

Include a section for

- Any referenced materials
- **Laws and regulations**
- External resources

Include a definitions section

- Especially if you are using **unique terminology** or terminology **specific to your organization**
- Define any acronyms or abbreviations here

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Development Process: The Master List

Serves as a reference point for everyone in the organization to have easy access to a list of all policies

- Policy Name
- Policy Number
- Effective Date
- Review Date
- Person Responsible for Approval

Development Process

Relevancy

Policies and procedures do not need to control every employee action

Not every policy and procedure is going to be relevant to every employee

Check your processes for relevancy (i.e., is it necessary to complete that step to achieve the goal of the organization?)

Employee Training

- Train only on policies and procedures that are **relevant** to that employee.
- Ensure that all employees **know where to access** the policies and procedures that relate to their job
- Be clear on which policy and procedures are to be memorized and which are to be referenced

MEMORIZE

Policy and procedure on emergency calls

REFERENCE

Policy and procedure on health literacy levels

Maintenance

- Review continuously
- Make changes to policies and procedures before implementing or changing a process
- Gather input
- Ensure staff have most up-to-date policies
- Make sure master list is updated

URAC Pro Tip

Policies and procedures must be reviewed and approved at least every 36 months

DON'T

- Forget to review policies at least every 36 months and update the review date
- Create new policies if there are existing policies on the topic
- Use policies and procedures that are not relevant to the organization
- Write in language that is difficult to understand

DO

- Have policies that reflect your organization's goals, priorities and workflows
- Use external documents to supplement policies and procedures (e.g., workflow documents, SOPs, etc.)
- Be clear so your employees understand what you expect of them
- Make the policy and procedure as flexible as possible while producing the desired outcome the majority of the time

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URAC Specific Tips and Hints

Reaccreditations are more difficult because of the documentation upkeep (including policies and procedures)

Know the standards that **drive your daily processes**

Not following procedures submitted on Desktop Review can be fatal on Validation Review

URAC does not expect you to have a separate policy and procedure for each standard; **one policy and procedure may address multiple standards or elements**

Make sure you **read every policy and procedure** you submit to ensure it is **meeting the intent of each standard**

The reviewer mindset is: ***How would I know what to do****/what is expected of me if I were an employee at your organization?*

URAC Reviewer Tips for Success

Own your policies and procedures

You know your own process best

Review for improvements continuously

Quality is more important than quantity

Know what you do

URAC Applicable Standard

Focus Area: Operations and Infrastructure (OPIN)
OPIN 1: Business Management
OPIN 1-1: Policy and Process Maintenance

The organization:

a. Maintains policies and processes that include a record of effective dates, review dates, revision dates and identification of approval authority

b. Reviews policies and processes at least every 36 months

c. Disseminates new, changed and/or updated policies and processes to staff in a timely manner

Focus Area: Operations and Infrastructure (OPIN)
OPIN 2: Business Management
OPIN 2-2: Maintaining and Complying with Policies

Documented policies and their associated processes support risk management and promote individual and program accountability, which are essential to quality performance. As such, the organization:

a. Maintains and complies with policies and processes that govern core business operations related to the scope of the accreditation

b. At least every 36 months (to the month), policies and processes are reviewed and if there are approved changes, they are disseminated, communicated and made effective within that 36-month time frame

c. Maintains staff access to a master list of all such policies and processes [2]

d. Maintains documentation of:
   i. Review dates [2]
   ii. Effective dates [2]
   iii. Identification of approval authority [2]

References

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  - Policy and Procedures Writing Guide- Drafting a Policy – Policy Format

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