



VANCOUVER ISLAND  
UNIVERSITY

## **POLICY AND PROCEDURE WRITING**

The Office of the University Secretariat will aid you in editing your text to conform to VIU policy standards. In general, we will apply appropriate formatting, grammar, etc. Below are what we consider the top five guidelines for drafting policy/procedure language, which you can employ as you develop your document:

### General Rules for Writing Policies/Procedures

1. Where possible, use the active voice rather than the passive.
2. Break up text using lists and headings.
3. You are writing for a general audience – the university-at-large. To maximize understanding by the average individual, use clear and precise language, brief sentences, and common words. Avoid jargon.
4. Avoid absolutes, like the word “ensure”, whereby the university might flout its own policy/procedure unwittingly by failing to deliver such a guarantee.
5. Avoid “should” and opt for firm language, such as “must”, especially as the actions required by this policy/procedure are not optional.