The Three Pillars of PolicyStat

Your site is built on three foundational concepts which we call the Three Pillars of PolicyStat.

These pillars are: Users Roles, Areas, and Approval Workflows.

We'll first look at User Roles. There are six roles that can be assigned based on permission settings and activity across your site.

Additionally, if your site uses a Global Guest Access Link to allow users to view your site content without logging-in, then those users qualify as a special seventh user role: The Guest. Guest users cannot be assigned acknowledgments or elevated permissions because they are not logged-in, but they can still search and view non-restricted policies.

If your site requires a login, the most basic role is the User. Users have the same search and view capabilities as Guests, but can be assigned acknowledgments and the ability to view Restricted policies.

For example, if a policy should only be visible to specific Human Resources personnel, the policy can be set as Restricted. Then, only users with View Restricted permission will be able to view it.

Members of an Approval Workflow are considered Approvers. In addition to marking their approval or rejection of a policy, Approvers can edit or modify a policy while it is pending through the Workflow.

Owners are the users ultimately responsible for the policy, often including making initial edits during the review and then kicking off the approval process. An Owner may have been the one to create the original policy, but do not necessarily need to be.

Users can also be assigned as an Area Editor, a role which can create new policies and edit any existing policies. This role can be assigned either by Area, or site-wide if desired.

Area Managers have the same permissions as Editors, but also manage an Area. Area Managers are typically managers or supervisors who require the ability to oversee action on policies within their department. This role can also be assigned site-wide.

Finally, the highest permission level is a Site Administrator. Such users manage and administer the entire site. Site Admins are the users responsible for the Three Pillars across your site.

The second pillar of PolicyStat is Areas.

Areas are categories to organize similar policies within PolicyStat. Frequently these reflect the Departments at your facility, but that is not required. Common examples of Areas include Administration, Human Resources, and Nursing.

There are a few elements about Areas to know and to remember.

First, Areas are the “buckets” or categories for storing your policies.

Areas also contain default review periods for their policies. The review period can be modified on a policy-by-policy basis, but most policies use the default.

Users can also be assigned elevated permissions within an Area. This works much like assigning permissions to a user from within their profile.

The third and final pillar of PolicyStat is Approval Workflows.

The lifecycle of a policy starts with a draft. This can either be a brand new policy or a new version of an existing policy undergoing an annual review.

When the draft is ready for review, the Owner Starts the Approval process and the policy’s status moves from Draft to Pending.

When the policy moves to a pending status, the Approval Workflow begins.

When edits are made to a policy, a draft version is created. Once those changes are completed, the user who makes the changes starts the Workflow to return it to a pending status.

This back and forth ensures Approvers can mark their approval for the most current version of the policy.

Using the example Workflow here, if Ash Williams corrects some typos during his review, this creates a new draft version. When he’s finished, he will Start the Approval process, and the pending version will return to the policy Owner for their Approval.

Once the approval process starts, the policy pends through the Approval Workflow.

This sample workflow displays 3 steps. The minimum requirement is one step with one approver, but Workflows can have as many steps and as many approvers on those steps as desired.

Our recommended best practice is limiting workflows to only include necessary parties to avoid backlogs that happen when you wait on too many approvers.

If a step has multiple approvers, they all must approve before it can move to the next step. If April Approver marks her approval, but Steve Skeptic needs a further review before approving, the policy will remain on step 2 until Steve provides his approval.

As soon as the final approver on the final step marks their approval, the status of the pending version moves to active and the policy is searchable for all staff.

As an option, a policy can also be scheduled to go live at a future date or after a period of days. Scheduling an effective date is done on a policy-by-policy basis and institutes a delay between the final approval and the policy becoming live.

Most often this feature is used to set a period of time during which users can be educated about the new policy or changes to the existing one prior to it officially becoming active. The effective date can also be set to coincide with a new regulation or other external requirements.

When a new version becomes active, the prior version is archived. Archived files cannot be viewed by most users, but are accessible to users with elevated permissions such as Approvers or Owners.

If the existing version is no longer needed, the policy can also be retired. Retired policies are removed from everyone’s view.

Retired policies can be restored if they were retired on accident, but only by a Site Administrator.

After a policy becomes active, if edits are required or when it comes due for review, a new draft will be made and the workflow restarts.

While the draft and pending versions exist, the Active version of the policy will remain available until the Workflow completes.

Use the links below to learn more about the Three Pillars.