SOP Template: Approval Workflow and Responsibilities

This SOP defines the **approval workflow and responsibilities** within the organization, detailing the step-by-step process for submitting, reviewing, and approving documents or requests. It clarifies roles and accountability at each stage to ensure timely and accurate decision-making. The procedure covers criteria for approval, escalation paths, communication protocols, and record-keeping requirements to maintain transparency and compliance with organizational policies.

1. Purpose

To establish a standardized approval workflow within the organization, assign responsibilities, and define processes for submitting, reviewing, and approving documents or requests. This ensures decisions are made accurately, efficiently, and in line with company policies.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all employees and departments involved in the creation, review, and approval of documents or requests requiring formal approval as per organizational requirements.

3. Definitions

- **Requestor:** The individual initiating the submission for approval.
- **Reviewer:** Person(s) responsible for checking or verifying the submission before formal approval.
- **Approver:** Authorized personnel empowered to grant final approval.
- **Escalation:** Process of routing a request to the next higher authority when predefined criteria are not met.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Requestor	- Complete and submit required documents/requests. - Ensure accuracy and completeness of submissions. - Monitor approval status and respond to clarification requests.
Reviewer	- Evaluate submissions for accuracy, completeness, and compliance. - Request additional information or clarification as needed. - Forward submission to Approver or revert to Requestor.
Approver	- Review and make final decision (approve/reject). - Document decision and rationale. - Escalate as per criteria if approval is outside authority.
Administrator (optional)	- Maintain records of all approvals and decisions. - Ensure workflow is followed and resolve issues.

5. Approval Workflow Procedure

1. **Submission:**
   - Requestor completes and submits document/request via designated system or form.
2. **Review:**

- Reviewer checks submission for completeness and compliance with guidelines.
- If incomplete or inaccurate, return to Requestor for correction.

3. **Approval:**
   - Reviewer forwards compliant submissions to Approver.
   - Approver evaluates and issues final decision.
4. **Escalation (if applicable):**
   - If request exceeds Approver authority, escalate to higher-level Approver per escalation matrix.
5. **Communication:**
   - Decisions communicated to all stakeholders (Requestor, relevant departments).
6. **Record-Keeping:**
   - Administrator ensures all documents and decisions are archived according to policy.

6. Approval Criteria

- Accuracy and completeness of submission
- Compliance with relevant standards, policies, and regulations
- Justification and supporting documentation provided
- No outstanding issues or clarifications required

7. Escalation Paths

- Requests exceeding authority limits are forwarded to next level Approver as defined in the escalation matrix.
- Unresolved or contested decisions are escalated to department head or designated escalation contact.

8. Communication Protocols

- All approval decisions must be communicated in writing (email or approval system).
- Clarifications, rejections, and escalations should include clear rationale and required actions.
- All communication should be documented and archived.

9. Record-Keeping Requirements

- Maintain an audit trail of all submissions, reviews, approvals, rejections, escalations, and communications.
- Records should be stored securely and retained per organization's data retention policy.
- Access to records must be restricted to authorized personnel only.

10. Compliance and Monitoring

- Periodic audits to ensure adherence to the approval workflow.
- Non-compliance or repeated process issues to be reported for corrective action.

11. Revision History

Version	Date	Description	Author
1.0	[Insert Date]	Initial creation	[Name]