

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) On Policy Development

The following will assist you in your policy development by answering commonly asked questions.

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For further information and a comprehensive guide to policy development, please refer to the [Policy Toolkit](#). The Toolkit outlines the processes involved in developing, reviewing, amending and rescinding a policy. Included in the Toolkit are templates and guidelines in policy development.

[When do you need a policy?](#)

Before committing your time to developing a new policy, it is worth asking the question - do I need a new policy? The University policy set is intended to be a collection of high-level resources which support decision-making and operations at all levels of the University. It may therefore be possible to incorporate the change to an existing policy, or to issue a new guideline under an existing policy.

The trigger for policy change may arise from a regular review of the policy by the Policy Owner or by someone who has an interest in the policy may identify the need for policy change. All policies should be reviewed regularly and all policies have a default review date three years after the approval of the policy, but when a policy is being approved a shorter review date may be identified.

External and stakeholder factors may drive the need for a policy review prior to the scheduled time. This may arise from needs identified through stakeholder surveys, regularly occurring complaints, or failures of a process to meet requirements, or through benchmarking activities.

Development in policy may also be driven by legislative changes.

It is the responsibility of each Policy Owner to ensure policies are regularly reviewed.

What does the Policy Owner do?

The Policy Owner is usually a member of the Senior Leadership Team who has responsibility for the area of operation covered by the policy.

The Policy Owner is responsible for ensuring the prompt publication of the policy on the [ECU Legislation and Policy Search Directory](#) (and if appropriate, removal of a now outdated policy) and developing a plan for the awareness raising and education of relevant areas in relation to the policy.

It is important to note that the Policy Owner manages the implementation but does not necessarily carry out the tasks associated with implementation.

Whilst a Policy Owner may have responsibility for ensuring a policy properly reflects best practices and meets the implementation aims of the policy, compliance with the policy is the responsibility of the relevant Schools and Centres covered by the policy. Occupational Health and Safety policies, for example, may be 'owned' by the Manager, Occupational Health and Safety, but each School and Centre is responsible and accountable for compliance with the policy.

The Risk and Assurance Unit within the Strategic and Governance Services Centre provides content on risk management, control and compliance policies in addition to auditing for compliance with University policies.

Who approves policies?

Policies will be approved by either University Council or the Vice-Chancellor, depending on their scope and nature. University Council will approve high-level University policies where Council scrutiny is appropriate, consistent with the [Matters to be Reserved to Council](#).

Minor amendments to policy (i.e. those changes which are largely updates and which do not change overall intent) may be approved by the Policy Owner.

The Policy Guidelines (where required) for an individual policy will outline the policy approval process and will provide guidance on the level of approval required.

Guidance on the appropriate level for the approval of policy is given in the ECU Framework for Instruments of Governance

The University Governance Unit within the Strategic and Governance Services Centre can provide you with assistance in determining the appropriate approval level. Please contact the Manager, University Governance Unit, [Mr Tony Lazzara](#).

How do people find out about the policy?

When the policy is approved it must be published on the [Legislation and Policy Search Directory](#). It is the Policy Owner's responsibility to ensure the policy is placed on the Directory in a timely manner. Delay in placing the policy on the Directory will delay the implementation of the policy.

The effective date of the policy is normally the date on which it is published on the web. Where a specific date is required (i.e. to coincide with legislation or other policies within the University), this should be stated in the policy.

How the policy is disseminated will depend on the nature of the policy and the breadth of the group of people whose activities are likely to be affected by the policy. You may find it appropriate to develop brochures or training seminars. It is the responsibility of the Policy Owner to decide how best to inform the relevant audience of the policy.

You should note there is the capacity to link procedures and forms to the policy under the “Other Relevant Policies/Documents” section in the Reference section at the end of the policy.

How do I change a policy?

If you are not the Policy Owner you need to identify the Policy Owner (this person should be specified in the Reference section at the end of the Policy) and contact them to explain the need and nature of the change. It is the Policy Owner's responsibility to determine whether and when the policy is required to be changed.

The type of change needs to be considered carefully as what may appear a minor change (e.g. the title of a person) may have significant consequences. The Policy Owner shall note the last date a policy is changed and a record shall be kept by the Policy Website Administrator of the changes made to the policy, the date the change was made and the authorising officer. The Policy Owner shall ensure the policy website administrator is informed of the policy changes.

- **Minor changes** - Minor amendments to a policy (i.e. those changes that are largely updates and which do not alter the overall intent) may be approved by the Policy Owner. These include updating telephone numbers, change in the name of a person (but effectively the same position), typographical and format changes (e.g. changes in numbering, changing to the new format).
- **Major Changes** - More significant changes will require the policy to be formally amended and resubmitted through the original approval process (via Council or the Vice-Chancellor)
- **Obsolete Policy** - it may become apparent that a policy has become superseded or obsolete but has never been formally rescinded. If the policy has clearly been superseded by a subsequent policy, or legislation, that deals with substantially the same matters, the Policy Owner must forward a memorandum requesting the policy approver to approve the rescission of the policy. This should be done at the same time as seeking approval for the replacement policy (if there is a replacing policy). When this approval is received it can be forwarded to the Website Administrator. Where there is no clear superseding policy or legislation the Policy Owner must determine whether a request to the Policy Approver for rescission is sufficient or, given the nature of the policy, the recommendation to rescind the policy should go through the usual policy development process.
- **Changes of substance to the policy** - this may include deletion of parts of the policy, addition of new sections or other substantive changes in the policy. The determination of whether something is substantive will rely on the expert judgment of the Policy Owner. Substantial changes will be required to go through the normal policy development process as outlined in the Policy Framework Policy. It is appropriate to consult with the Risk and Assurance Unit in relation to such changes.

Who should I consult with/ what committee should I put the policy through?

You need to determine who may be affected by the policy. In some cases the consultation may be through an email seeking feedback, convening a meeting to discuss the impact of the policy on various

areas or through formal committees. You should consider what committees would normally consider the issues covered by the policy. The Terms of Reference of the committees will provide you with guidance on this.

In relation to policies which will be approved by the Vice-Chancellor, if it is an academic policy you can contact the Academic Secretary, for guidance on which committee should consider the policy. Other policies may go through one of the Vice-Chancellor's Committees - please contact the Manager, University Governance Unit.

If it is a Council-approved policy you can contact the Manager, University Governance Unit for guidance on the appropriate committees.

The Collective Agreements may require some policies to be subject to a consultation process. For guidance you can refer to the provisions in the relevant Agreement or contact the Director, Human Resources Service Centre.

Does the Policy comply with Legislation?

When the policy is in draft stage it should be submitted to the Risk and Assurance Unit for checking that it complies with any relevant legislation.

Is the Policy confidential and/or how can I restrict access?

Policies are not confidential and are available to all members of the community. It is recommended that if there are confidential matters or Intellectual Property you wish to protect, that information should be contained in a separate document. The document can be referred to in the policy or linked to the policy, but on a restricted access basis.

ECU is the copyright owner of all policies, however, it does not object to the use of ECU policies by other educational institutions for non-commercial purposes.