

Policy: Policy Governance

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide the University with the governance framework for describing, ordering, developing, approving, reviewing and maintaining its policy documents and for ensuring consistency in the development, presentation and dissemination of these documents.

Scope

This policy applies to all ANU staff and students across the University.

All other policies, procedures and guidelines of the University are subject to the requirements of this policy. Only legislation, including statutes, rules and orders made under section 50 of the [Australian National University Act 1991](#) can override the provisions of this policy.

Overview

The Policy Governance Policy is intended to fulfil the following objectives on a whole-of-University basis:

- a. To provide staff and students with high quality policy documents that can be easily accessed and readily understood;
- b. To achieve an improved rate of compliance with legislation and other mandated requirements;
- c. To enable the University to achieve enhanced efficiency in its operations;
- d. To provide appropriate quality assurance and monitoring processes and ensure that the policies are being developed, reviewed and updated appropriately on a rolling systematised cycle; and
- e. To ensure policy documents reflect governance and policy development best practice in higher education and the broader Australian public sector.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy and any related policy documents, the following definitions apply:

Academic means all matters pertaining to teaching and learning, programs and courses, student administration and support, research and research training.

Act means the Australian National University Act 1991

Administrative means all matters that otherwise do not fall within the definition of academic or governance.

Amendment refers to all amendments made to a policy document other than a minor amendment.

Approval Authority means the Council or the University Officer with prescribed authority under this policy to approve a policy document.

Delegation means a delegation assigned to a person in accordance with the [Delegations of Authority Policy](#).

Governance means all matters of which the Council (and Committees of Council) has primary responsibility as the governing authority (which have not otherwise been delegated) including all matters of which the Council cannot delegate its power under the Act. This covers the governing arrangements, structures, systems, controls and assurance process that enable the Council to exercise its oversight and control function over the University.

Guidelines means advisory and explanatory statements offering any or all of detail, context or recommendations for good practice, which support policies, procedures or standards, and must be complied with unless there is a justifiable operational reason not to do so.

Legislation includes the Act, all other legislation, and all statutes, rules and orders made under section 50 of the Act.

Local Protocol means mandatory statements of principles, procedures or practices that apply within a particular College or Service Division, but which cannot be inconsistent with a policy document.

Minor amendment means a change made to a policy document to: correct or update a title, name, numbering, web link, metadata or a reference (to law, another policy document, a delegation, or other relevant document); correct document formatting, spelling, grammar, or clarity of language, which does not otherwise affect the document intent or content; reflect changes in the technical or process configurations of an associated enterprise system; or otherwise modify it in a way that does not significantly change the intent or content of the existing version of the policy document.

Policy means a statement of the mandatory principles guiding the University's operations and significant decision-making.

Policy document means the collective noun for all policies, procedures, standards and guidelines of the University.

Policy Library means the repository for all current and expired policy documents of the University.

Procedure means statements of the University's mandatory prescribed processes, practice and/or actions, which give effect to a policy.

Responsible Officer means a Service Division Director or other senior officer with relevant portfolio responsibility for a particular policy document.

Responsible Executive means the member of the University Executive to whom the Responsible Officer reports, unless otherwise determined by the Approval Authority. The Responsible Executive for governance policy documents is the Vice-Chancellor.

Standard means statements of the University's mandatory prescribed specifications as to the qualities of a product, service, system, infrastructure or other resource, which give effect to a policy.

University Policy Manager means the person authorised by the Vice-Chancellor to manage this policy and its implementation.

Policy Statement

Policy document hierarchy

1. Policy documents operate within a hierarchy, with the requirement that, documents lower in the hierarchy must be consistent with documents higher in the hierarchy.
2. The policy document hierarchy for the University is as follows:
 - a. Legislation
 - b. Policy
 - c. Procedures and Standards
 - d. Guidelines
 - e. Local Protocols

Categories

3. All policy documents are classified into one of only three categories, which are:
 - a. Governance
 - b. Academic
 - c. Administrative

Custodians

4. Each policy document is assigned a Responsible Officer, who is responsible for the coordination of development, implementation and review of that policy document.

Content and design

5. The content and design of all policy documents is to adhere to the following principles:

- a. Policies are principles-based documents, with operational detail incorporated in procedures and guidelines
- b. Policy documents are consistent with the law and Federal higher education standards
- c. Policy documents support and are consistent with the University's functions, values and strategic plan
- d. Policy documents are produced when there is a clearly demonstrated academic or business need
- e. Policy documents are relevant and transparent in their purpose and meaning
- f. Policy documents are developed with regard for the regulatory/administrative burden of implementation on organisational units, groups and individuals across the University
- g. Policy documents are written and presented clearly and succinctly, provide supporting information as specified by the [Policy Governance Procedure](#)
- h. Policy documents are comprehensive, ensuring that any existing informal procedures and approval practices not outlined within a policy document are included
- i. Policy documents take a holistic approach incorporating all aspects of a general topic, rather than segregated into multiple policy documents

Implementation and communication

6. An Implementation and Communications Plan is to be prepared for all policy documents, which is then executed following approval of the policy document by the Approval Authority.

Reviews

7. A Responsible Officer ensures that all policy documents that fall within their responsibility are subject to a major review at least every three years.

Policy Library

8. The University maintains a Policy Library, in which all policy documents are recorded.

Local Protocols

9. Local protocols are to be regarded as having the equivalent status as a written instruction from a senior manager.

Delegations relevant to this policy

2 executive delegation: Determine and authorise the release of University policy

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