



# Policy Framework

## Section 1 - Preamble

(1) This Policy Framework is effective from 5 August 2021.

## Section 2 - Purpose

(2) This Policy Framework:

- a. governs the development and review of policies to ensure that they are consistent with the University's objectives and legislation and are kept current;
- b. defines responsibilities for the development, review and implementation of policies; and
- c. sets out steps to ensure that policies are effectively implemented and well understood across the University.

## Section 3 - Scope

(3) All University policies and procedures must be:

- a. developed, approved and implemented
- b. reviewed and where appropriate revoked

in accordance with this Policy Framework.

## Section 4 - Policy

### Principles

(4) The University develops and implements policies to:

- a. embed principles for the operation of the University consistent with legal requirements and community expectations
- b. promote behaviours and practices in line with the University's objectives and values
- c. achieve a consistent approach across the University to essential University activities.

(5) University policies will uphold freedom of speech and academic freedom consistent with the commitments set out in the Deakin University [Code for Upholding Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom](#) (Code). The University will have regard to the Principles of the Code in the drafting, review or amendment of any policies.

(6) The University maintains clear and streamlined policies that enable efficient operations and decision making, achieved by:

- a. the introduction of new policies only where required and the consolidation of policies where possible

- b. regular review of policies and the revocation of those no longer required
- c. clear statements in policies about responsibilities and reporting lines.

## Regulatory framework

(7) Policies form part of a regulatory framework for University operations comprising:

- a. the [Deakin University Act 2009 \(Vic\)](#)
- b. the [Deakin University Statute](#)
- c. University Regulations, being the [Council Regulations](#), [Academic Board Regulations](#) and [Vice-Chancellor Regulations](#)
- d. the Deakin University [Code for Upholding Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom](#)
- e. policies
- f. procedures.

(8) Levels (a) to (c) in clause 7 are collectively known as 'University legislation'. The University's General Counsel is responsible for drafting the University Statute and Regulations and for providing legal advice on University legislation.

(9) Levels (d) to (f) in clause 7 are collectively known as 'University policy'. Procedures are a subset of University policy and references to 'policy' and 'policies' include procedures unless the context indicates otherwise.

(10) Any document in the University's regulatory framework must be consistent with documents at higher levels in the hierarchy. To the extent of any inconsistency, the higher level document prevails.

(11) All policy is published on the University's policy library and applies across the University.

(12) Any local work instructions, guidelines or similar information maintained by an organisational unit must be consistent with relevant documents in the regulatory framework set out at clause 7.

## Approval authorities

(13) Consistent with University legislation and specifically the [Council Regulations](#), [Academic Board Regulations](#) and [Vice-Chancellor Regulations](#) there are three approval authorities for University policies:

- a. Council is the approval authority for:
  - i. the Deakin University [Code for Upholding Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom](#)
  - ii. University governance policies; these are listed in the [Council Charter](#), section 5 'Matters reserved for or requiring Council Approval'
- b. the Academic Board is the approval authority for academic governance policies; these are listed in the '[Academic Policy Framework](#)'
- c. the Vice-Chancellor is the approval authority for management and administrative policies; these are all policies not covered by clauses 13 a and b above.

(14) The approval authority for each policy must be listed on the policy library.

(15) The relevant approval authority must approve the introduction, amendment or revocation of policies within their category of responsibility, except:

- a. an administrative amendment;
- b. a minor amendment;
- c. a revocation undertaken to consolidate multiple policies.

(16) An administrative amendment:

- a. is a clarification, correction or editorial change including an adjustment required to align with University legislation; and
- b. may be approved by the Council Secretary as the Implementation Officer for this Framework.

(17) A minor amendment:

- a. is an amendment which:
  - i. is consistent with the objectives of the existing policy; and
  - ii. does not raise any issues requiring the process of policy review and broad consultation set out at clauses 30 to 32.
- b. may be approved by the Responsible Executive.

(18) A revocation undertaken to consolidate multiple policies:

- a. involves combining two or more policies or subsuming the content of one policy into another to reduce the need for multiple policies; and
- b. may be approved by the Responsible Executive.

(19) The policy library must maintain a record of all policy amendments, including revocations.

## **Responsible Executive for policies**

(20) There is a Responsible Executive for every policy, being the member of the University Executive whose portfolio covers the policy area.

(21) The Responsible Executive is responsible for:

- a. appointing an Implementation Officer for the policy
- b. managing the approval process for policies in accordance with the requirements of the relevant approval authority, as follows:
  - i. for University governance policies by recommendation to Council or the relevant committee of Council
  - ii. for academic governance policies by recommendation to the Academic Board from the relevant committee of the Board
  - iii. for management and administrative policies by recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor or delegate using the 'Request for approval' form
- c. approving
  - i. a minor amendment in accordance with clause 17
  - ii. a revocation undertaken to consolidate multiple policies in accordance with clause 18.

## **Implementation Officer**

(22) The Implementation Officer for a policy:

- a. will be a staff member with management responsibility for the activity addressed by the policy
- b. generally have a direct reporting line to the Responsible Executive for the policy.

(23) The Implementation Officer is responsible for:

- a. leading the implementation of the policy following its approval, including providing information or training to assist students, staff and associates to understand:
  - i. changes resulting from any new or amended policy
  - ii. compliance requirements
  - iii. how to provide feedback to the Implementation Officer on the policy
- b. monitoring and reporting on compliance with the policy, including any reporting required under the [Compliance Management policy](#)
- c. advising the Responsible Executive about any issues or problems arising with the implementation of the policy and proposing remedial actions
- d. recommending minor amendments and revocations to the Responsible Executive for consideration and, if appropriate, approval in accordance with clauses 17 and 18
- e. leading the review of the policy in accordance with the relevant review schedule or as required by changes in the University's operating environment.

### **Implementation Officer for this Policy Framework**

(24) The Implementation Officer for this Policy Framework is the Council Secretary.

(25) The Council Secretary is responsible for:

- a. publishing approved policies on the policy library and ensuring that a bulletin board of recent policy changes is maintained on the policy library
- b. considering and if appropriate approving administrative amendments in accordance with clause 16
- c. providing advice to University staff on the operation of this Policy Framework and on the drafting and review of policies
- d. consulting regularly with the Academic Board Secretary on the academic policy review schedule to ensure that there is a coordinated approach across the University to keeping policies in all categories up to date
- e. meeting at least annually with Responsible Executives about their policy portfolios to:
  - i. ensure that the correct Responsible Executive and Implementation Officers are listed for each policy
  - ii. advise the date of the most recent review of each policy;
  - iii. identify policies to be reviewed in the coming year
  - iv. identify any policies to be considered for consolidation or revocation.

## **Section 5 - Procedure**

(26) There is no single prescribed procedure for the development and review of policy because approaches will vary according to policy content and the range of stakeholders but the Council Secretary will provide templates, tools and advice to support consistency and quality standards.

### **Policies, procedures, schedules and associated information**

(27) Policies will contain statements of principle to guide and enable decision making. Procedural steps to implement a policy may either be part of the policy itself or set out in a separate procedure, depending on which approach is most conducive to clarity and ease of reading. Separate procedures are implementation oriented and do not contain matters of policy principle. The repetition of information between policies and procedures must be minimised.

(28) Schedules have the same force as their parent document but should only be used where the information is essential to the policy and they are the best method for communicating the relevant information. In other circumstances schedules should be avoided to prevent readers having to consult multiple levels of documentation.

(29) Detailed background information should be excluded from policy but can be linked to policy documents as associated information.

## **Consultation**

(30) Policies typically affect many areas of the University. In the policy development process Implementation Officers must arrange for consultation with relevant areas affected by the policy to obtain their input.

(31) No single method of consultation is mandated by this Policy Framework but useful methods include:

- a. a working group with representatives from different areas
- b. circulation of drafts by email to different areas
- c. posting drafts for comment on a website
- d. committee review
- e. meeting and discussion groups or networks.

(32) Whatever method of consultation is used the Responsible Executive must be satisfied that adequate and effective consultation has been completed before endorsing a policy for approval by the approval authority.

## **Conformity with legislative instruments**

(33) To ensure that policy is consistent with legal requirements during policy development and review Implementation Officers must obtain and implement advice from the General Counsel regarding legal compliance where the policy relates to:

- a. a right or obligation under University legislation; or
- b. implementation of a requirement from external legislation.

(34) Policies should not be created to simply restate legislative obligations or render them in lay language. Instead advice must be obtained from the General Counsel on legal compliance obligations.

## **Preventing policy proliferation**

(35) Policy review processes must seek to simplify and streamline policy and counteract policy proliferation. Where possible policies should be consolidated so that students, staff and stakeholders do not have to navigate a multiplicity of documents.

(36) A policy must be considered for revocation where a review indicates that it is either no longer required or no longer the best method of achieving the objectives sought.

## **Approval**

(37) Submissions for the approval of policies must:

- a. explain the changes proposed
- b. identify any requirements for consequential amendments to or revocation of any existing policy
- c. attest that:
  - i. appropriate consultation has occurred and feedback integrated as required; and
  - ii. legal advice has been obtained where required by clause 33
- d. stipulate the date the changes are to come into effect, being either:
  - i. the date when the policy is published on the policy library; or

- ii. a specified future date.

(38) The approval authority may:

- a. approve the policy as submitted
- b. approve the policy subject to specified changes being made
- c. approve the policy to come into effect for a limited period and subject to further work being completed during that period
- d. request that the policy be resubmitted for approval after specified concerns have been addressed
- e. reject the proposed policy on grounds including but not limited to that it:
  - i. is not needed
  - ii. would impose administrative inefficiency
  - iii. is not the best method of achieving the objectives sought.

## **Review of new policies**

(39) The Implementation Officer must ensure that any new policy is reviewed within one year of being introduced. This is not required to be a lengthy review but is a check to ensure that:

- a. the policy is operating as intended
- b. any mechanisms to report on compliance with the policy are functioning effectively.

## **Review of established policies**

(40) To ensure that established policies are kept current:

- a. the Implementation Officer must advise the Responsible Executive of the need for the immediate review of any policy for reasons including but not limited to:
  - i. evidence that an existing policy is imposing unnecessary administrative burden
  - ii. a change in the operating or regulatory environment
- b. review schedules for all policies must be maintained by:
  - i. the Council Secretary for University governance and management policies
  - ii. the Secretary of the Academic Board for academic governance policies.

(41) Policies must be reviewed at least every five years.

# **Section 6 - Definitions**

(42) For the purposes of the Policy Framework:

- a. associates includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, visiting appointees and visitors to the University.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	5th August 2021
<b>Review Date</b>	5th August 2026
<b>Approval Authority</b>	University Council
<b>Approval Date</b>	5th August 2021
<b>Expiry Date</b>	To Be Advised
<b>Responsible Executive</b>	Iain Martin Vice-Chancellor vc@deakin.edu.au
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