

POLICY FRAMEWORK

Purpose

This Policy Framework provides guidance for institutional policy development, including approval, implementation, publication, and review and is overseen by the University Secretary's Office. The Framework aims to ensure the University has consistent, relevant and up-to-date governance documentation.

Scope

The Framework applies to all staff involved in the development of institutional University policy documentation and should be applied to all such documents with effect from the 2017/8 academic year. Any additions or potential exemptions to the Framework will be considered on an exceptional basis by the University Secretary.

1 Introduction

1.1 The Framework consists of the following:

- Definitions
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Policy Development Guide and Template
- Policy Approval
- Implementation and Communication
- Storage
- Review Process
- Compliance

2 Definitions

2.1 Please see the following definitions of official documents based on those currently used within the University and across the HE sector. Throughout this framework, the word 'policy' refers to both institutional policies and procedures.

Strategy	A plan of action to take the University in a particular direction or achieve the aims of the University Strategy Map.
Policy/Regulations	Set out the University rules, conduct or standards governing an area. Generally approved by a University Council or Committee.
Procedure	Steps and/or actions that must be taken to ensure consistency of practice, often in support of a policy or regulations. Generally approved by a Dean or Director/Head of Service.
Framework	A prescribed approach to be taken to an area/activity.
Code of Practice	A set of standards that indicate best and expected practice in an area.
Guidance	Detailed practical advice on a particular area/activity.

3 Roles and responsibilities

- 3.1 Directors/Heads of Service/Deans are responsible for identifying the need for a particular policy to help the University meet its strategic objectives and/or ensure legal and regulatory compliance. All staff with responsibility for policy development should be aware of, and ensure that their policies comply with, the Framework. The University Secretary's Office will communicate information on the Framework to all staff and publish the Framework on its webpages, together with links to all institutional policies.

4 Policy Development Guide and Template

- 4.1 Every policy must have an individual post-holder as owner. The owner will be responsible for the policy's development, dissemination, maintenance and review. The policy owner is usually the author of the policy but this may not always be the case.
- 4.2 A template is available at Appendix A to assist staff with policy development. This is not intended to be prescriptive (with the exception of 4.4 below) but to assist when drawing up new policies. The template can also be used for procedures, codes of practice and guidance.
- 4.3 Generally, a policy should include:
- University name and logo (where externally accessible) in the header of the first page
 - Page number, page x of y, and version number in the footer section of every page
 - Policy title and introduction to include the purpose of the policy, the aims and objectives and its scope.
 - Main body of the policy, with all sections and paragraphs numbered.
- 4.4 The last page of the policy **must** contain a policy sign-off and ownership details section and revision history as per the template in Appendix A. If a policy is not intended to be public-facing, it should be clearly labelled as such.
- 4.5 The University encourages all publications, including policies, to be written in a clear, concise and readable format and recommends the following:
- Use active rather than passive verb and avoid jargon as advised by the Plain English Campaign: <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/>
 - An average sentence length of between 15-20 words.
 - Avoid using information that may quickly become out of date (for example, use job titles rather than names)
 - If acronyms are used, the full name should be used in the first instance with the acronym in brackets
 - Formatting should be consistent with the template, i.e. Arial font size 12, to conform to accessible document guidelines.

5 Policy Approval

5.1 Before a policy can be implemented it must go through an approval process. This generally includes the following four stages: consultation, equality impact assessment (where relevant), approval and implementation.

5.2 Consultation

Consultation with key stakeholders should be carried out before a draft policy is submitted for approval with sufficient time allowed for meaningful consideration. Stakeholders should also be consulted as part of the review process. Consultation with relevant Deans and Directors/Heads of Service is important for all policies to ensure awareness of any implications for their areas of responsibility.

5.3 Policy owners should also take cognisance of, and ensure compliance with, other University policies in consultation with relevant policy owners, as appropriate.

5.4 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

When developing or reviewing key policies, it is important to ensure that it is fair, transparent, legal and consistently applied. It is also important to ensure that the proposed policy does not have an inadvertent negative impact on individuals by virtue of them being part of a protected group under the Equality Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation). An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) should be considered and carried out, if relevant, on all new policies, and where significant changes are made to existing policies, to anticipate possible barriers the policy could pose to particular people with these protected characteristics. If the policy disadvantages certain groups of people, the University has a legal duty to mitigate, remove or reduce the negative impact. EIAs are helpful in supporting the University's compliance with Equality legislation; and they are a recognised tool in improving policy development in identifying potential steps to advance equality and foster good relations, and to ensure that we do not discriminate unlawfully. Further guidance on EIAs is available on the HR webpages: <http://www.hud.ac.uk/equality/eias/>

5.5 Approval

Many policies have to be approved by University Council or Senate, for example Finance Regulations and Student Regulations, and many policies by virtue of their wide impact across the University must also be approved by the University's Senior Management Team. Approval of other policies is delegated to the relevant Committee or senior manager. Policy authors should refer to the terms of reference of the University's Committees to help with planning approval routes. If in any doubt, advice should be sought from the University Secretary. For existing policies, approval routes are documented within the Policy Schedule in the [Unishare Policy site](#).

5.6 Procedures, guidance and codes of practice should usually be approved by the relevant Director/Head of Service/Dean.

6 Implementation and Communication

- 6.1 The policy owner has responsibility for the effective communication of the policy to the relevant target audience. Staff policies will generally be promoted via the staff hub, supported by all staff emails. Student-facing policies will follow a similar approach and will be available on the student portal.
- 6.2 Where appropriate, the policy owner should develop bespoke support and training sessions for the users to enhance understanding of, and adherence to, the policy.

7 Storage

- 7.1 The Policy Library in T4 (the University's web content management system) is the primary location for all institutional policy documents.
- 7.2 To improve the accessibility of University policy documents for staff, students and other interested parties, links to all institutional policies will be available from a central listing on the University's Policies and Procedures [home page](#). The University Secretary's Office is responsible for ensuring that the latest version of the policy is uploaded to T4 in pdf format until an automated update facility is available.
- 7.3 The School/Service who owns the policy can include a link to the University Secretary's webpage from their own webpages if relevant but it is essential that the same document is not hosted in multiple different locations so as not to cause confusion about which is the definitive version.
- 7.4 To facilitate links from a central page, policy names should not be changed in order for such links to remain valid. The policy name should not contain any reference to versioning; this should instead be specified in the document's revision history table.
- 7.5 A schedule of policies within the scope of the Policy Framework, together with information on review dates and compliance measures, is available in the Policies and Procedures UniShare site which is accessible to all staff. The site also contains a copy of the policy template and other guidance.
- 7.6 The policy owner (or designated representative) is responsible for advising the University Secretary's Office when a policy review has been completed and for providing a copy of the final, approved version to the University Secretary's Assistant for upload to the Policy Library. The University Secretary's Office will update the review date in UniShare accordingly.

8 Review Process

- 8.1 It is important to review policies regularly to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and compliant with current legislation/regulations. Normally a three year review period is sufficient. In some cases review may be required earlier if there is a legislative or regulatory requirement or significant change and in other cases a review every five years may be more appropriate. In the preparation and review of

a policy, the reviewer should consider sector practice as well as external requirements.

- 8.2 It is the responsibility of the policy owner to establish the review date and complete the review at the appropriate time. The policy owner/author will receive an automated email (copied to the University Secretary's Office) to prompt review in advance of the specified date.
- 8.3 A reviewed policy, which is subject to the relevant approval process, will have a new version number. At each formal review the policy should have a new version number, starting with V1.0 with effect from 2017/18 upon the introduction of this Framework, V2.0 on subsequent review, etc. As mentioned in 7.4 above, versioning should be contained in the revision history table at the end of the policy, and not in the document title.
- 8.4 In addition to formal review, policy owners should ensure that an annual check of hyperlinks, roles and names is undertaken. There is no need to follow the formal approval process if no substantive changes are made at this point. Annual checks which involved no substantive changes would have a minor version number, for example, V1.1 for a change made to update hyperlinks, minor grammatical changes or a change in job title and the version history table should be updated to reflect this.

9 Compliance

- 9.1 The policy owner is responsible for ensuring compliance with the policy having identified appropriate measures and checks at the outset.

POLICY SIGN-OFF AND OWNERSHIP DETAILS	
Document name:	Policy Framework
Version Number:	V1.0
Equality Impact Assessment:	Not relevant for this policy
Approved by (date):	University Senior Management Team 25 May 2017
Effective from:	31 July 2017
Date for Review:	24 May 2022
Author:	University Secretary
Owner (if different from above):	
Document Location:	https://www.hud.ac.uk/media/policydocuments/Policy-Framework.pdf
Compliance Checks:	Monitor timeliness of policy reviews and spot check random sample of policies for compliance with the framework on an annual basis.

REVISION HISTORY			
Version	Date	Revision description/Summary of changes	Author
V1.0	25.05.2017	New policy	University Secretary

APPENDIX A – POLICY TEMPLATE

POLICY NAME

Purpose and Context

Brief description outlining why the policy has been created.

Scope

What and who the policy applies to – staff, students, partner organisations etc

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Paragraph

2.0 Next Heading

2.1 Paragraph

POLICY SIGN-OFF AND OWNERSHIP DETAILS	
Document name:	
Version Number:	
Equality Impact Assessment:	[Completion date or confirmation that equality considerations have been previously documented]
Approved by	
Date Approved:	
Date for Review:	
Author:	
Owner (if different from above):	
Document Location:	
Compliance Checks:	
Related Policies/Procedures:	List any applicable University regulations/policies/procedures that may impact upon the procedure.

REVISION HISTORY			
Version	Date	Revision description/Summary of changes	Author
V2.0	Sept 2019	Major redraft (approval required)	
V1.2	March 2018	Job titles updated (minor amends)	
V1.1	Sept 2017	Formatting updates (minor amends not requiring committee approval)	
V1.0	Sept 2016	First draft of new policy	