Policy Framework - Governing Policy

1. Purpose of policy

1.1 This policy is intended to set a broad framework for development of policy documents and related governance documents within the University and to articulate principles for consistency in the management of these throughout their lifecycle.

2. Policy scope and application

2.1 This policy applies to all staff and members of University decision-making and advisory bodies.

3. Definitions

Please refer to the University's Glossary of Terms for Policies and Procedures. Terms and definitions identified below are specific to this policy and are critical to its effectiveness:

Amendments:

- Consequential amendment is made to bring a policy document into conformity with a University committee resolution or legal requirement or approved title change.
- Editorial amendment includes updating redundant terminology and a typographical change such as amending spelling, grammar, links or formatting that does not change the substance of a policy document.
- Minor amendment includes changes to enhance clarity or initial intent and does not change the substance of a policy document.
- Major amendment includes amended the substance of a policy document such as strategic direction or updating processes and amendments to delegations.

Approval authority isthe committee or position with authority (or delegated authority) to approve a policy document within this Policy Framework.

Designated Officer is the most senior officer responsible for operationalising the policy document. The Designated Officer has delegated responsibilities to develop and implement the policy document on behalf of the Responsible Executive Member. Specific responsibilities are listed in full in the Policy Framework – Procedures.

Guidelines supports a procedure by providing further detailed statements on how to undertake the procedural element.

Local document sets out operational processes that facilitates policy documents or University activities.

Policy a statement of principles or position that is intended to direct decision-making and operations.

Policy documents includes any document that is part of the Policy Framework and includes policies, procedures, and guidelines.

Policy exception is a rare formal approval process to allow deviation from the policy document.

Procedures outline the operational steps required to implement policy.

Responsible Executive Member is the member of the University Executive with whom the policy matter most clearly resides. The Responsible Executive Member has overarching responsibility and accountability for the policy and related procedures and is accountable for the implementation and compliance of the policy. Specific responsibilities are listed in full in the Policy Framework – Procedures.

4. Policy statement

4.1 The Council and the Executive Committee are empowered by the *University of the Sunshine Coast Act 1998* (Qld) to regulate the University's activities.

4.2 The Policy Framework is guided by the principles set out in the Governance Framework – Governing Policy. The Policy Framework comprises of a standard model of concise high level policies and related detailed procedures and guidelines, which are complemented

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with various levels of documentation as required. Additionally, the University may draw these various levels together as overarching frameworks.

Figure one: Policy hierarchy

5. Principles

5.1 Policy documents should be relevant, transparent in its intent and meaning and developed in consultation with the University community and key stakeholders. It should comply with the requirements set out in the Policy Framework.

5.2 The University processes for drafting, approval, implementation and review of policy documents are outlined in the Policy Framework – Procedures.

5.3 The University endeavours to simplify and rationalise policy documents.

5.4 The latest approved version of all University policy documents will be stored and managed through the Policy Repository and made available to the public on the UniSC webpage: the Policy Library. The Policy Repository is considered the authority source for the University's policy documents.

5.5 Policy documents are to be reviewed at least every five years, or more frequently if required.

5.6 The policy hierarchy in Figure one demonstrates how policy documents are organised within the hierarchy. All documents must align with the policy documents higher in the hierarchy and comply with the relevant legislation and regulations.

5.7 Policy documents and local documents must be followed unless an exception has been granted. The process of obtaining a policy exception is outlined in the Policy Framework – Procedures.

5.8 Principles for policy

(a) A policy is a statement of principles or position that is intended to direct decision-making and operations that supports the achievement of the University's vision and objectives. Policies have a long-term focus and are applied across the University as a whole. They form the foundation of the University's governance processes and the basis of the quality system.

(b) Policies support the achievement of quality outcomes, address compliance with legislative obligations, and reduce institutional risk by establishing standards and internal controls. The principles outlined in policy are shaped by:

- the legislation and regulations that govern the University;
- national standards and community expectations;
- the values and vision the University articulates in its strategic plan; and
- a commitment to respecting human rights within a free, tolerant and inclusive society.

5.9 Principles for procedures and guidelines

(a) Procedures address processes and actions aligned with the policy principles. They outline the operational steps required to implement policy.

(b) Procedures will:

- provide clear instructions on the way policy will be implemented;
- step through the actions required to implement policy principles;
- assign responsibilities; and
- enable monitoring of policy implementation.

(c) Procedures may be further supported by guidelines. Guidelines provide further detailed statements providing guidance on how to undertake the procedural element. Guidelines also provide advice which assist in the establishment and implementation of effective practices to achieve quality outcomes.

(d) Organisational Units may develop a local document or business process instruments to set out operational processes that facilitates policy documents or University activities. These documents fall outside of the definition of policy documents, must be maintained by the relevant Organisational Unit and are not maintained in the Policy Repository or published on the external website.

5.10 Principles for frameworks

(a) The purpose of a framework is to draw together and integrate a range of policies and procedures and related plans and documentation.

(b) Frameworks may be public or internal documents, depending on the nature of the subject. Frameworks should be maintained as current, by annual review or as policy documents are updated.

5.11 Policy categories

There are three categories of policy within the Policy Framework:

(a) Governing Policy

Governing policy pertains to strategic positioning or investment, risk management, fiduciary responsibility, legislative and common law compliance. It gives effect to statutory or regulatory requirements (unless otherwise delegated) and relates to the processes of decision making and the controls and behaviours that support effective accountability and performance outcomes.

(b) Academic Policy

Academic policy relates to the core academic business of the University and covers matters of learning, teaching and research. This includes but not exclusively admissions; assessment; course and program approvals; discontinuation of courses and programs and student academic misconduct.

(c) Operational Policy

Operational policy relates to policy designed to support strategic intent and articulates both operational imperatives and outlines principles for administrative activities.

6. Approval authorities

The following authorities are delegated under this policy:

CATEGORY	APPROVAL AUTHORITY	APPROVAL AUTHORITY
	TO APPROVE NEW OR RESCIND POLICY DOCUMENTS AND, TO APPROVE MAJOR AMENDMENTS	TO APPROVE CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS AND MINOR AMENDMENTS
Governing Policy	Council (following endorsement by the relevant subordinate University committee(s). Relevant subordinate committee(s) include Executive Committee, Committee(s) of Council, Academic Board and its standing committee(s))	Vice-Chancellor and President
Academic Policy	Academic Board (following endorsement by the relevant University committee(s). Relevant committee(s) include Executive Committee and Academic Board standing committees)	Chairperson, Academic Board
Operational Policy	Vice-Chancellor and President (following Executive Committee endorsement)	Vice-Chancellor and President
Procedures (all categories)	Responsible Executive Member (unless otherwise determined when first approved)	Responsible Executive Member (unless otherwise determined when first approved) or the Vice-Chancellor and President if endorsed by Executive
Guidelines (all categories)	Responsible Executive Member	Responsible Executive Member (unless otherwise determined when first approved) or the Vice-Chancellor and President if endorsed by Executive
Frameworks	As per principal policy	Responsible Executive Member or the Vice-Chancellor and President if endorsed by Executive
Local documents	Head of Organisational Unit	Head of Organisational Unit

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RELATED DOCUMENTS

• Delegations Framework - Governing Policy

• Governance Framework - Governing Policy
• Policy Framework - Procedures

LINKED DOCUMENTS

• Policy Framework - Procedures

RELATED LEGISLATION / STANDARDS

• University of the Sunshine Coast Act 1998 (Qld)
• Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011 (Cth)
• Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cth)
• Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)

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