

Policy Framework

Section 1 - Audience

(1) This framework applies to any person, unit, division, faculty or committee responsible for the development, maintenance, approval or communication of UON policy documents.

Section 2 - Executive Summary

(2) This document sets out the system for the development, approval, implementation and management of UON policy documents. Stages 1 to 3 below form the key foundations of policy development, with Stages 4 to 9 building on this foundation to produce a policy document.

Section 3 - Purpose

(3) The University controls and manages its affairs in accordance with the [University of Newcastle Act 1989](#) and the [University of Newcastle By-Law 2017](#). The Council is the University's governing board and approves Rules and high-level policies relating to the governance of the University. Academic Senate is responsible for academic policy at UON and advises Council on core academic activities through its President, who is also a Council member. Both Council and Academic Senate are supported by a series of committees that are delegated to approve certain policies in accordance with their terms of reference.

(4) The hierarchy of UON legislation and policy documents is represented in the [Hierarchy of UON Policy Documents](#). In the case of an inconsistency between documents in the hierarchy, the higher document prevails. See diagrammatic representations:

- a. Policy Development and Review Life Cycle Diagram
- b. University Policy Development Foundation.

Section 4 - Scope

(5) This framework relates to all UON policy documents identified in [Hierarchy of UON Policy Documents](#).

Section 5 - Principles

(6) Please see Policy Document Development Timeline

No	Stage
1.	Concept and Brainstorming
2.	Discussions with Policy unit

No	Stage
3.	Preparation
4.	Drafting
5.	Broad Consultation
6.	Approval
7.	Publication and Communication
8.	Ongoing Evaluation and Review
9.	Rescission (as appropriate)

Stage 1: Concept and Brainstorming

(7) When reviewing existing policy documents, or before creating a new policy document, the Subject Matter Expert (SME)s or delegated policy writer should take the following into consideration:

- a. What is the problem I am trying to solve?
- b. Do I need a policy document?
- c. What outcomes are expected and could they be achieved through other means?
 - i. Are the same or similar outcomes achieved under existing policy documents, By-Laws or rules? This may prompt an amendment to an existing policy document if the other objectives are met.
- d. Identify stakeholders by school/unit, and within those, the individuals who will form a policy working group.
- e. Consider the consequences of:
 - i. the current approach
 - ii. not having a policy document
 - iii. amending an existing policy document
 - iv. a new policy document

(8) Is proposed document consistent with existing policy documents and the UON strategic plan?

- a. What other business supports, including position descriptions, due diligence, evidence based decision making, improved IT systems, strategic plans and budgets exist to support or drive the outcomes being achieved without creating a policy document?

Stage 2: Discussions with Policy Unit

(9) Talk to policy unit about the policy toolkit of templates and forms for policy development.

(10) Discuss the problem you are trying to solve and your proposed solution with the policy working group and the policy unit. Capture these discussions on the Policy Assessment Table (see policy toolkit).

(11) Prepare a Policy Approval Form (see policy toolkit) which indicates who has authority to approve the policy document, what input is required by other areas (eg Legal Office, Equity and Diversity Unit, Human Resource Services) and submission requirements for the approving body or person. Seek the assistance of the policy unit if required.

Stage 3: Preparation

(12) Work with policy working group to complete Stakeholder Engagement, Communication and Implementation Plan (see policy toolkit).

(13) Are there any IT considerations? (new systems, system upgrades, web content). If so, contact the relevant business unit as soon as possible.

(14) Are there any governance considerations? (insurance, privacy, delegations). If so, contact Assurance Services as soon as possible.

(15) Identify other impacts on budget / resources / business processes and required training.

Stage 4: Drafting

(16) Work with Policy Team (policy unit, policy working group and Legal Office) to:

- a. Draft your document using the [Policy Template](#) (see policy toolkit). As a first step, decide on the headings within your document, and build the document from there.
 - i. Definitions used must be consistent with the policy glossary (in development).
 - ii. Refer to the [Policy Style Guide](#) (see policy toolkit).
- b. If required, prepare drafts of any new documents / forms / website information or amendments to existing documents (including associated procedures, schedules, support documents, etc) / forms / website information (as applicable).
- c. Submit to policy unit (and Legal Office if required), ensuring adequate time for review.

Stage 5: Broad Consultation

(17) Circulate draft and communicate the consultation opportunity broadly within the University.

(18) Collate feedback and update the draft as appropriate.

Note: Several drafts may need to be circulated if the policy document has broad or significant impacts, is complex or controversial in nature. Good stakeholder consultation and a strong working group should reduce the number of drafts required.

Stage 6: Approval

(19) Ensure Legal Office and policy unit have approved final draft. This approval will be valid for three months.

(20) Ensure all those responsible have completed any tasks that are required to be completed in readiness for “go live” on approval.

(21) Prepare accompanying committee paper with recommended course of action.

(22) The content of a paper accompanying a policy document through the approval process must include:

- a. Details on the initial concept and stages of development.
- b. Summary of stakeholder input.
- c. Impact to UON (business unit, division, as a whole).
- d. Discussion of the risk/problem and how this policy

(23) Submit to appropriate person/committee

Stage 7: Publication and Communication

(24) Once approved, submit final draft and approval details to policy unit for publication.

(25) Ensure staff and/or students are engaged via relevant communications.

(26) Policy document will come into effect once published, unless another date is specified.

Stage 8: Ongoing evaluation and review

(27) The default review period for policy documents will be three years from the date of approval or the date of last review unless otherwise identified. This timeframe is flexible depending on the type of policy document.

(28) The SME/policy writer should track any issues raised with the policy document in a [Policy Issues Log](#) (see policy toolkit), and discuss these with the policy unit as they arise.

(29) A reviewed document will require re-approval by the relevant approver.

(30) Amendments to existing policies:

- a. Minor amendments to an existing policy document may be sent directly to the policy unit by approver for actioning.
- b. Major amendments to policy documents must be submitted to the original approver. Impacts on other policy documents, and whether the policy amendment would provide the best outcome must be considered. Contact the policy unit for advice on the most appropriate course of action.

Stage 9: Rescission (as appropriate)

(31) If a review identifies that a policy document should be rescinded (or the content included in another policy document), this must be approved by the appropriate approver and communicated to stakeholders.

Section 6 - Appendices

Policy Development and Review Life Cycle Diagram

University Policy Development Foundation

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	11th April 2017
Review Date	31st December 2019
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor
Approval Date	13th October 2017
Expiry Date	8th March 2020
Responsible Executive	Dianne Allen University Secretary dianne.allen@newcastle.edu.au
Enquiries Contact	Carol McGrath Policy and Delegations Officer +61 2 49216487

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Academic Senate" - The Academic Senate of the University as described in the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Council" - The governing authority of the University established under section 8A of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Council member" - A person who is a member of the University Council as described in Section 8B of the University of Newcastle Act, 1989.

"Risk" - Effect of uncertainty on objectives. Note: An effect is a deviation from the expected, whether it is positive and/or negative.

"Course" - When referring to a course offered by the University, a course is a set of learning activities or learning opportunities with defined, assessed and recorded learning outcomes. A course will be identified by an alphanumeric course code and course title. Course types include core courses, compulsory courses, directed courses, capstone courses and electives. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Minor amendment" - Is a change to a current policy document, as defined by the Policy Framework, that is of an insubstantial nature, not affecting the intent of the document.

"School" - An organisational unit forming part of a College or Division, responsible for offering a particular course.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

"Term" - When referring to an academic period, term means a period of time aligned to an academic year for the delivery of a course in which students enrol and for which they are usually charged fees for example semesters, trimesters, summer, winter or full-year term. The academic year for a term is determined by the academic year in which the course commences, not concludes. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.