



STANDARD ON UOW POLICY

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Custodian title & e-mail address:	Senior Manager Governance governance@uow.edu.au		
Author:	Governance Unit		
Responsible Division & Unit:	Governance and Legal Division Governance Unit		
Supporting documents, procedures & forms:	Coursework Rules HDR Award Rules Procedure for the Development and Management of UOW Policy UOW Policy Template UOW Procedure Template Policy Implementation and Communication Plan Policy Toolkit No Change Memorandum Template Minor Amendment Memorandum Template Administrative Amendment Memorandum Template		
Relevant Legislation & External Documents:	University of Wollongong Act, 1989 State Records Act 1998 UOW Strategic Plan 2011-2013 Delegations of Authority Policy Records Management Policy Inclusive Language Guidelines UOW Brand Book		
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1 Purpose

1. The purpose of this Standard is to establish a consistent and enforceable system for the development, approval, implementation and review of policy documents at the University of Wollongong (UOW). It will provide a mechanism to ensure that policy documents are compliant with the strategic direction of the University and with relevant legislation.

2 Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
Academic Policy	A policy document with a university-wide effect on teaching, learning, research or internationalisation. Policy documents comply with all relevant legislation and rules.
Academic Senate	The Academic Senate is the principal academic body of UOW and has responsibility for advising the Council and the Vice-Chancellor on matters relating to teaching, scholarship, research and related activities in accordance with its terms of reference.
Administrative amendment	A change to a current policy document that is superficial or administrative in nature. Administrative amendments refer to changes in nomenclature, editorial changes, updates to names and position titles, changes to the review or expiry date and updates to references.
Finance and Resources Committee	A formally constituted committee of the University Council that acts under delegated authority. It is the executive committee of the University Council with particular responsibility for monitoring policies and performance.
Approval Pathway	The pathway through which a policy document must move in order to be approved.
Code	A statement of rules and expectations which have been approved in some formal way but without the legal force of legislation or regulations. They focus on duties and responsibilities for particular circumstances, often outlining the required standard of practice or behaviour.
Delegated Authority	A person or body exercising powers or undertaking functions delegated by the University Council under the terms of the University of Wollongong Act 1989. All lawful delegations of University Council powers and functions are contained in the UOW Delegations of Authority Policy.
Guideline	An advisory document that provides guidance on how to implement UOW policy documents or apply processes effectively.
Legislation	An Act of the Commonwealth or NSW Parliament having the force of law.
Minor amendment	A change to a current policy document that is of an insubstantial nature, not affecting the intent of the policy. Minor amendments may affect responsibilities or operational aspects of processes.



Major amendment	A change to a current policy document that is likely to impact upon the intent of the policy document and/or have a significant impact on other related policy documents, stakeholders, aligned procedures or systems.
No Change Review	A situation where the cyclical review does not require any amendments to the current policy.
Operational Policy	A policy document with a university-wide effect in respect to the administrative and operational functions of the University. Operational policies must comply with all relevant legislation and rules.
Policy	A statement that outlines non-discretionary governing principles and intentions in order to regulate University practice.
Policy Document	A UOW Rule, Code, Standard, Policy, Guideline or Procedure.
Policy Custodian	The officer that has overarching responsibility for the policy document and for ensuring it is implemented, progress is monitored and reported against, and that it is reviewed.
Policy Framework	An overarching set of related policies, supporting procedures and guidelines around a central theme.
Policy Toolkit	A toolkit that includes templates, practical information and advice on the development and management of policy documents.
Procedure	A documented instruction that gives directions to carry out specified actions. For the purposes of procedures that support policy, they are mandated directions.
Rescission	The retraction or deletion of a policy document deemed to be obsolete following a policy review.
Rule	An authoritative, prescribed direction for conduct at UOW.
Standard	Standards dictate the minimum requirements for the administration of UOW activities.
University Council	The governing authority of the University. The University Council acts for and on behalf of the University and controls and manages the University's affairs and concerns.
UOW Policy Dictionary	A collection of words, terms and abbreviations which are frequently used within the University and require a standard definition. The policy dictionary is a tool that aids authors in applying consistent definitions.
UOW Policy Directory	The University's central web based repository for all UOW policy documents.



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3 Application, Scope and Exceptions

1. This Standard shall apply to any person, unit, division, faculty or committee responsible for the development, maintenance and communication of UOW policy documents within UOW.
2. The provisions in this Standard apply to all policy documents, including this Standard.
3. This Standard's framework consists of UOW Policy Template, Procedure for the Development and Management of UOW Policy, Procedure Template, related forms, the Policy Toolkit and material related to training.
4. The provisions contained in the Standard on UOW Policy apply to all UOW policy documents. Exceptions to the rules contained herein are:
 - a. Pursuant to section 21B of the University of Wollongong Act, any changes to the Commercial Activity Guidelines must be submitted by the University Council for approval by the NSW Minister for Education.
 - b. Students are bound by provisions relating to course content and structure contained in the version of the Coursework Rules or HDR Award Rules that was in effect at the time that they commenced their studies.

4 Principles

1. All UOW Rules, Codes, Standards, Policies and Procedures shall:
 - a. Support and be consistent with UOW vision, mission and values.
 - b. Assign responsibility and accountability to ensure due diligence in the operations of the University.
 - c. Comply with the requirements set out in this Standard.
 - d. Be consistent with all legislative requirements imposed on the University by Acts of the Commonwealth or NSW Government.
 - e. Be relevant, transparent in their intention and meaning and developed in consultation with the University community and other key stakeholders.
 - f. Be binding and applicable across the University.

5 Hierarchy of Policy Documents

1. All UOW policy documents are part of a structured hierarchy of documents that govern activities at the University.
2. The hierarchy of policy documents, descending from highest to lowest, is as follows:
 - a. Legislation;
 - b. By-Laws and Rules;
 - c. Codes, Standards and Policies;



- d. Guidelines and Procedures.
3. In the event of an inconsistency between two policy documents, the provisions in the document that has a higher position in the hierarchy takes precedence over the document that is lower in the hierarchy.

6 Interpretation of UOW Policy Documents

1. In interpreting UOW policy documents, unless the contrary intention appears, the following apply:
 - a. A defined term shall have the meaning ascribed to it in the policy document.
 - b. If a policy document defines a word or expression, other grammatical forms of the word or expression have corresponding meanings.
 - c. A word or expression that indicates one particular gender shall be construed as every other gender.
 - d. A reference to a word or expression in the plural form includes a reference to the singular form and vice versa.
 - e. A schedule or appendix to a UOW policy document constitutes part of the policy document.
 - f. The table containing operational matters and supporting documentation at the start of a UOW policy document does not constitute part of the policy document.
 - g. The word 'may' when used to bestow a duty or power indicates that the action or decision may be enacted or not, at discretion.
 - h. The words 'shall', 'must' or 'will', if used to bestow a duty or power, indicate that the action or decision must be enacted.
 - i. Headings are inserted for convenient reference only and have no effect in limiting or extending the language of provisions to which they refer.
 - j. An uncertainty or ambiguity in the meaning of a provision will not be interpreted against the University just because the University drafted the provision.
 - k. Reference to any statute or other legislation (whether primary or subordinate) is to a statute or other legislation as amended from time to time.
 - l. A reference to the word 'including' in any form is not to be construed or interpreted as a word of limitation.
 - m. The laws of the state of New South Wales apply.
 - n. Any reading down or severance of a particular part of a UOW policy document does not affect the other parts of that policy document.

7 Requirements of UOW Policy Documents

1. UOW policy documents shall identify all relevant legislation and shall be drafted so as to be consistent with the legislative framework within which the University operates.
2. All new UOW policy documents shall be approved by the delegated authority. Provisions for approval of UOW policy documents are stipulated in section 11.



3. All new UOW policy documents shall be developed by the policy custodian or delegate. As stipulated in section 11 of this Standard, the Governance Unit will support the policy custodian through the provision of advice and expertise in the policy development process and will oversee, on behalf of the University, the policy style and format and recommend the most appropriate approval pathway.
4. The policy custodian shall be responsible for ensuring that stakeholders are consulted during the development and implementation process. The policy custodian should refer to the Procedure for the Development and Management of UOW Policy for assistance with this.
5. A Policy Implementation and Communication Plan shall be required to accompany the policy through its approval process. The Policy Implementation and Communication form is intended to ensure that the implementation and communication of new policy or major amendments to policy are fully considered. The Policy Implementation and Communication Plan shall be developed in consultation with the Governance Unit where required.
6. The policy custodian must use the UOW Policy Template and UOW Procedure Template from the policy toolkit to ensure consistency in documentation. In some cases modifications to the template may be required in order to meet requirements of the specific policy document. This should be only in exceptional circumstances.
7. Consistent with the Non-Discriminatory Language Practice and Presentation Policy and Guidelines, UOW policy documents shall contain language that is in plain English and audience appropriate. The policy custodian should not assume a prior knowledge of the subject area by the reader.
8. Where appropriate, after completing relevant research the policy custodian may seek legal advice on identified issues relating to the policy document's compliance with specific legislation.
9. The UOW Policy Dictionary should be referred to and used when developing policies. Other UOW policies may also be of use in defining terms.

8 Stages of UOW Policy Development

1. Policy development at UOW shall follow a staged approach as set out below and provided in detail in the Procedure for the Development and Management of UOW Policy. The stages should include:

Stage One: Need for policy review or development

- 1.1. The policy custodian or delegate must contact the Governance Unit to register the need for a new policy or policy revision. Where the policy review is taking place as part of the Policy Review Schedule, the policy custodian or delegate must contact the Governance unit to inform them that the review is being undertaken.

Stage Two: Research

- 1.2. The policy custodian or delegate shall conduct relevant background research into good practice and shall identify implications for stakeholders and other Units/Faculties.

Stage Three: Drafting

- 1.3. The policy custodian or delegate shall draft the policy document, taking into consideration information gathered at Stage Two.



Stage Four: Consultation

- 1.4. The policy custodian or delegate shall ensure that relevant critical stakeholders impacted by the policy document have been consulted, and where required, University-wide consultation has taken place.

Stage Five: Policy approval

- 1.5. Approval shall follow the appropriate approval pathway (section 11). The Policy Implementation and Communication Plan shall be required to accompany the policy document through the approval process in order for the policy document to be approved, in the case of new policies and major amendments.
- 1.6. Policy documents shall become effective from the date they are approved by the designated authority, unless a future date is specified in the resolution. No policy documents shall have retrospective effect.

Stage Six: Communication and implementation

- 1.7. The Policy Custodian or delegate shall ensure that the Policy Implementation and Communication Plan is implemented.

Stage Seven: Policy maintenance and review

- 1.8. The Policy Custodian or delegate shall ensure any issues arising from policy implementation and over the life of a policy document are addressed at the time of the next review of the policy document or if the policy custodian believes that identified issues are critical, further refinement of the policy document may be required.

9 Review of UOW Policy Documents

1. The Policy Custodian shall review approved UOW policy documents by the date specified in each document, which must not be greater than 5 years after the previous review date. In some circumstances, such as a legislative change affecting the policy's implementation or content, policies will need to be reviewed prior to the scheduled review date.
2. Revisions made to a policy document that are classified as administrative amendments, which do not occur as the result of a review, do not constitute a review.
3. Review of policy documents should follow the Procedure for the Development and Management of UOW Policy and may result in minor or major amendments to the policy.
4. Following the review of a UOW policy document, the Policy Custodian may consider that no changes are required. In the case of a No Change Review, the Policy Custodian shall prepare a No Change Memorandum in consultation with the Governance Unit. The Governance Unit shall submit the No Change Memorandum to the appropriate delegated authority for approval.
5. A No Change Review for an operational policy document shall be reported at the next Finance and Resources Committee meeting occurring after the approval of the No Change Memorandum.
6. A No Change Review for an academic policy document shall be reported at the next Academic Senate meeting occurring after the approval of the No Change Memorandum.



10 Rescission of a Policy Document

1. During the process of review, the Policy Custodian may conclude the policy document has no continuing use. In these circumstances, the Policy Custodian shall contact the Governance Unit to determine the consultation and approval pathway required to rescind the policy.
2. Where a policy becomes void as a result of being superseded by a new policy document or additional provisions being made in an existing policy document, the Policy Custodian must contact the Governance Unit to determine the consultation and approval pathway required to rescind the policy.
3. The rescission of any Rule, must be approved by University Council.
4. The rescission of operational Codes, Standards or Policies must be approved by University Council.
5. The rescission of academic Codes, Standards or Policies must be approved by the Vice-Chancellor, on recommendation by the Academic Senate, and reported to the University Council.

11 Approval Pathway

1. Approval pathways depend on the nature of the policy, whether the policy is new and, for amended policies the extent of the change to the policy. The approval pathway of a new, revised or rescinded policy document shall be determined by the Policy Custodian in consultation with the Governance Unit.
2. By law, any amendments to Rules, including new Rules, must be approved by the University Council.
3. All new operational Codes, Standards and Policies must be approved by the University Council and must be accompanied by a Policy Implementation and Communication Plan.
4. All new academic Codes, Standards and Policies must be approved by the Vice-Chancellor on recommendation by the Academic Senate, and must be accompanied by a Policy Implementation and Communication Plan.
5. The approval of all new academic Codes, Standards and Policies shall be reported twice yearly to the University Council.
6. The approval pathways for minor and major amendments to Codes, Standards and Policies are given in sections 13 and 14 of this Standard.
7. Guidelines and Procedures, whether new or amended, must be approved by the relevant delegated authority.

12 Administrative Amendment

1. Administrative amendments to Codes, Standards and Policies can occur outside of the policy review cycle.
2. Administrative amendments to a policy may be made with the approval of the delegated authority. The Policy Custodian shall develop an Administrative Amendment Memorandum in consultation with the Governance Unit. The Governance Unit shall submit the memorandum to the appropriate delegated authority for approval.



3. Upon approval, the latest approved version of the policy shall be forwarded electronically to the Governance Unit so that it can be placed in the Policy Directory.

13 Minor Amendment

1. Minor amendments to Codes, Standards and Policies can occur outside of the policy review cycle.
2. Minor amendments to Codes, Standards and Policies may be made with the approval of the Vice-Chancellor. The Policy Custodian shall develop a Minor Amendment Memorandum in consultation with the Governance Unit. The Governance unit shall submit the memorandum to the Vice-Chancellor.
3. Upon approval by the Vice-Chancellor, all minor amendments to Codes, Standards and Policies shall become operational. The latest version of the policy document shall be placed in the Policy Directory by the Governance Unit.
4. Minor amendments to operational codes, standards and policies shall be reported twice yearly to the Finance and Resources Committee.
5. Minor amendments to academic codes, standards and policies shall be reported twice yearly to the University Council.
6. All minor amendments shall be documented in the Review and Change History of the policy document. The latest approved version of the policy document shall be forwarded electronically to the Governance Unit so that it can be placed in the Policy Directory.

14 Major Amendment

1. Major amendments to operational codes, standards and policies shall be submitted to the Finance and Resources Committee for approval.
2. Major amendments to academic codes, standards and policies shall be submitted to Academic Senate for endorsement and then to the Vice-Chancellor for approval.
3. Major amendments to academic codes, standards and policies shall be reported twice yearly to the University Council.
4. All major amendments shall be documented in the Review and Change History of the policy. The latest approved version of the policy shall be forwarded electronically to the Governance Unit so that it can be placed in the Policy Directory.

15 Urgent Amendment

1. Extraordinary circumstances may necessitate urgent amendment (either temporary or permanent) to UOW policy documents, for example where there has been a change to the external environment requiring urgent action to mitigate risk to students or staff of the University or to the University as a whole.
2. In such circumstances, urgent amendments to UOW policy documents (excluding Rules) may bypass the usual development, consultation and approval pathway, and may be expedited to the Vice-Chancellor for approval.
3. In each such case the Governance Unit shall develop the approval memorandum to the Vice-Chancellor in consultation with the Policy Custodian(s). In the case of temporary changes to the



policy documents, the memorandum shall specify the period during which the amendment is to be effective.

4. Upon approval by the Vice-Chancellor, all urgent amendments to UOW policy documents (excluding Rules) shall become operational.
5. All urgent amendments shall be documented in the Review and Change History of the policy document.
6. The latest version of the policy document shall be placed in the Policy Directory by the Governance Unit (including, in the case of temporary amendments, details of the period during which they are effective).
7. Urgent amendments to UOW policy documents (excluding Rules) shall be reported to the next available University Council meeting and, in the case of academic policies, to the next meeting of the Academic Senate.
8. In the case of temporary amendments, the amendments shall cease to have effect at the end of the specified temporary period and the previous provisions of the policy document will resume operation.
9. Any amendments to Rules, including urgent amendments, must be approved by the University Council.

16 Records Management

1. UOW policy documents shall be stored in the UOW Policy Directory, which is accessible through the UOW Website. Policies on the Directory shall be considered the authoritative source. Individual faculties/units shall always link to this source.
2. As stipulated in the UOW Records Management Policy, a full and accurate record of all business activities related to the creation and review of each policy document shall be developed and maintained by the policy custodian or delegate. This information shall be maintained as an issues log.
3. The policy custodian shall maintain a record of outcomes of the Policy Implementation and Communication Plan.
4. The policy custodian is responsible for ensuring that all previous and superseded versions of a policy document are correctly archived in line with the Records Management Policy.

17 Responsibilities

1. It is the responsibility of Units, Divisions, Faculties and Committees to identify those issues that require a new policy document or an amendment to a current policy document.
2. It is the responsibility of the Policy Custodian or delegate to:
 - a. Maintain and update an issues log for each policy document under their control.
 - b. Consult the Governance Unit when the need for a new policy document or an amendment to a current policy document has been identified.
 - c. Use the templates provided in the policy toolkit.
 - d. Develop, write and review the policy document in consultation with all relevant stakeholders.



- e. Ensure consistency between the policy document and any related policies, procedures, systems, Codes, Guidelines, Rules, systems and processes.
 - f. Consult the Governance Unit to determine the appropriate approval pathway.
 - g. Consider how the changes or responsibilities contained in new or amended policy documents shall be communicated with appropriate stakeholders. The Policy Custodian shall develop a Policy Implementation and Communication Plan in consultation with the Governance Unit for new codes, standards or policies or major amendments prior to seeking approval for the changes.
 - h. Develop and maintain full and accurate records of the policy document, as per section 15.2.
 - i. Review and update policy documents to comply with relevant legislation, as specified in the policy review schedule.
3. It is the responsibility of the Governance Unit to:
- a. Provide appropriate support and advice for the proposal, development and management of UOW policy documents.
 - b. Liaise with the Policy Custodian to determine, advise and facilitate the appropriate approval pathway for a new or amended policy document.
 - c. Oversee, on behalf of the University, the style and format of UOW policy documents and ensure consistency between the policy document and any related policy documents and legislation.
 - d. Ensure the correct document control and approval mechanisms are in place.
 - e. Maintain the UOW Policy Directory.
 - f. Ensure a policy review takes place in a timely manner in consultation with the policy custodian.



18 Version Control and Change History

Version Control	Date Effective	Approved By	Amendment
1	6 March 2007	Administrative Committee Resolution Number: 2007/10	New Standard
2	20 March 2007	Vice Principal (Administration)	Minor amendment: addition of definition for standard
3	5 February 2009	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)	Migrated to UOW Procedure Template as per Policy Directory Refresh
4	22 May 2012	Administrative Committee	Major amendments to existing Standard: sections on interpretation, requirements and rescission of all policy documents included. Approval pathway amended to include pathways for minor and administrative amendments.
5	29 April 2014	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	Updated to reflect change from Policy and Governance to Governance Unit; Administrative Committee to Finance and Resources Committee.
6	5 December 2014	Council	Updated to reflect approved changes in the Delegations of Authority Policy.
7	10 August 2018	Council	Amendment to reflect change to approval authority for new and major amendments to academic policy documents – Vice-Chancellor approval on the recommendation of Academic Senate.
8	13 May 2020	Finance and Resources Committee	Insertion of Section 15 Urgent Amendments.
9	1 January 2020 (Approved 10 June 2020)	Chief Operating Officer	Administrative amendments to reflect the rescission of General Course Rules replaced by Coursework Rules.