



# Adelaide Policy Framework

## Table of Contents

<b>1.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	2
<b>2.</b>	<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK STRUCTURE</b> .....	2
2.1	Policy .....	2
2.2	Guidelines .....	3
<b>3.</b>	<b>POLICY DIRECTORY</b> .....	3
<b>4.</b>	<b>POLICY DEVELOPMENT, REVIEW AND REVISION</b> .....	3
4.1	Getting started – Policy pathways .....	5
4.2	Guidelines for writing policy .....	6
4.2.1	Drafting Hints .....	7
4.3	New Policy .....	7
4.3.1	Development of a Stage One Proposal .....	7
4.3.2	Approval of a Stage One Proposal .....	7
4.3.3	Policy Development .....	8
4.3.4	Consultation .....	8
4.3.5	Approval of a Policy .....	8
4.3.5	Communication and Implementation .....	8
4.4	Review of Existing Policy .....	8
4.4.1	Amendments to Policy .....	9
4.4.2	Unchanged Policy .....	9
4.4.2	Deletion of Policy .....	9
<b>5.</b>	<b>ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES</b> .....	9
5.1.	<b>Authorities</b> .....	10
5.2.	<b>Records Management</b> .....	10
5.3.	<b>Monitoring Effectiveness</b> .....	10
<b>6.</b>	<b>ASSISTANCE</b> .....	10

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The University of Adelaide governs the organisation through Government legislation, University statutes, policies and guidelines. The University of Adelaide's Policy Framework is the operational structure for the developing, implementing, reviewing and maintaining the University's policies and procedures in a consistent format. The elements of the Adelaide Policy Framework are as follows:

- Policy Framework Structure
- [Policy Directory](#)
- Policy Development, Review and Revision
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Assistance

## 2. POLICY FRAMEWORK STRUCTURE

The University of Adelaide is governed by its Council which is established by the [University of Adelaide Act 1971](#). The Council makes [statutes](#) and [rules](#) which govern other aspects of the University's operations. The University's policies, and the principles and procedures within these policies, provide internal explanation of the regulatory requirement.

### 2.1 Policy

The following principles apply in respect of all approved University policies:

- All members of the University community must comply with University policies when carrying out their University activities.
- Policies must be applied fairly and consistently, in accord with general principles of common sense.

*Principles* are the standards or essential features which underpin decision-making and/or the way members of the University community conduct the activities of the University.

*Procedures* mandate operational activities and assign responsibilities. Procedures step through the practical actions required to support the implementation of Policy Principles, or to assist the University's operations and compliance with external requirements. Procedures may apply to a specific activity of the University or be of more general application.

A *University policy* consists of principles, procedures or both; with the following characteristics:

- It is proposed for long-term application to the University as a whole or a broad cross-section of the University community.
- It helps ensure that the University complies with relevant legislation, national standards and community expectations; assists the University to attain its strategic goals; promotes operational efficiency; and reduces risks.

There are three types of policies which align broadly with the University's structure:

#### 1. Academic policies

Academic policies relate to the academic business of the University. These policies are relevant to staff working on course development and planning, implementation and research management and compliance.

- Learning and Teaching
- Library
- Research and Research Training
- Student Administration

## 2. Management Policies

These are policies that underpin the University's administrative and operational functions:

- Human Resources & Health and Safety
- Financial Services
- Facilities and Infrastructure
- Infrastructure, Property and Technology
- Legal, Audit and Risk Management
- Equity and Diversity

## 3. Governance Policies

These are policies that underpin the University's governance and are approved by Council, unless otherwise delegated.

Policies will be published in the Policy Directory by the Council Secretariat.

### 2.2 Guidelines

A guideline provides helpful information and advice; guidelines are not mandatory and should not substitute for policies. Guidelines may take the form of a checklist and provide additional detail and context on aspects of a University policy. They may recommend particular practices or processes, or provide illustrative examples of the exercise of judgement in accord with a University policy, or list matters which might be taken into account in carrying out a University activity.

## 3. POLICY DIRECTORY

The policy directory, managed by the Council Secretariat, is an interactive website <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/> that encourages you to explore:

- Current approved policies
- Search facility by keyword
- New and newly amended policies
- Policies under review
- Feedback on policies
- Glossary of terms

The policy directory also provides you with assistance:

- Templates
- Feedback/issues log

## 4. POLICY DEVELOPMENT, REVIEW AND REVISION

Development or revision of a University Policy may result from:

- Recognition of a need (e.g. legislation, new University activity)
- Change in strategy or circumstance
- Policy review timetable
- Problems in implementing and interpreting policies or gaps in policy coverage identified in the Feedback/Issues log.

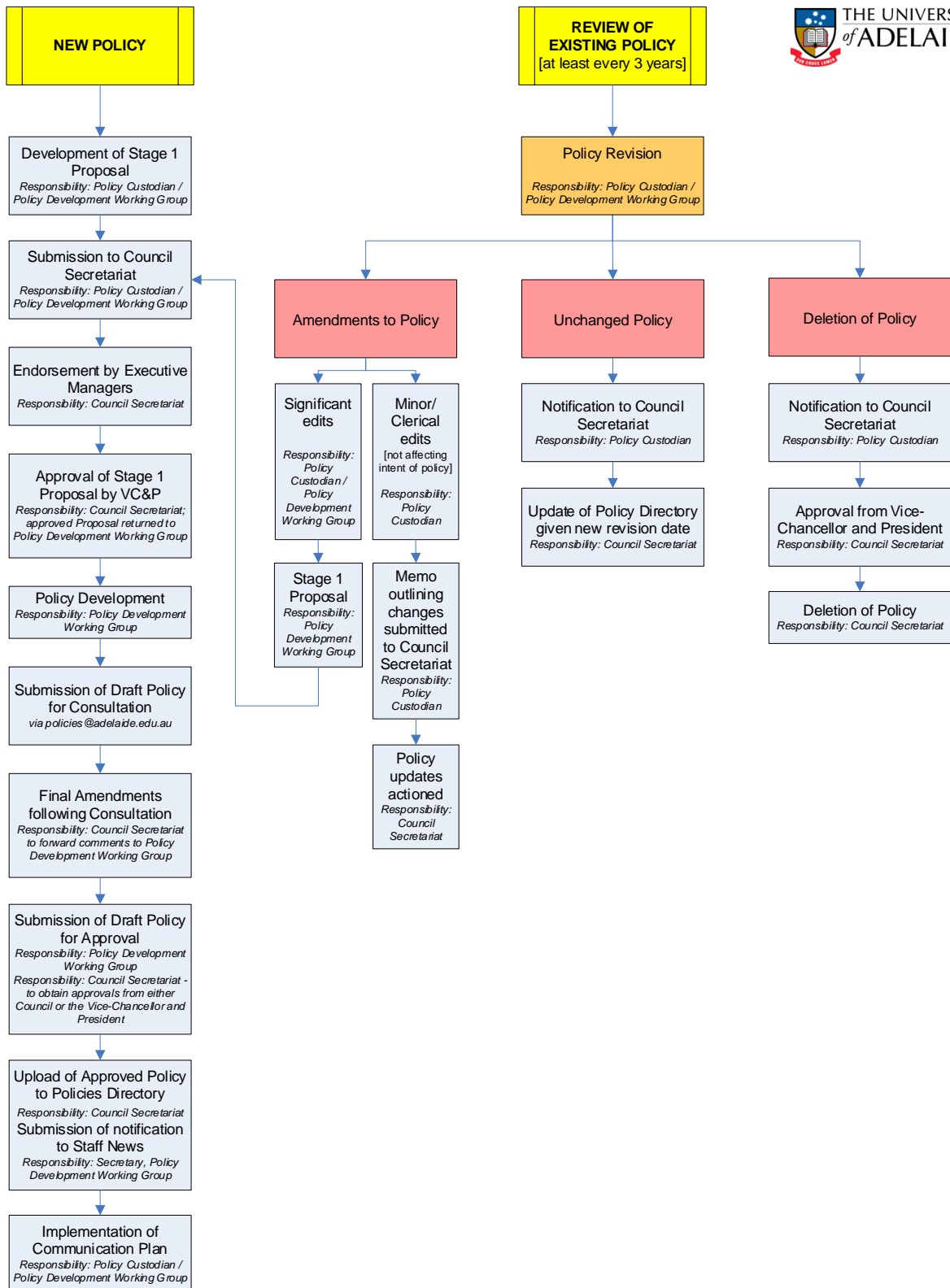
University policies must:

- support and embody the University's values and strategic objectives
- apply broadly across the Institution
- be relevant, transparent in their intention and meaning
- be developed in consultation with relevant members of the University community
- comply with relevant legislation and regulatory requirements

- assign a Policy Custodian who is accountable for reviewing the operation of the Policy, and for monitoring its continuing relevance and impact on the University's activities
- assign authority for decisions required under the policy
- assign a responsible officer for ongoing actions under the policy
- be aimed at reducing or managing institutional risk
- be developed using the Policy Template
- be posted to the Policy Directory
- use the Glossary of Terms for definitions, where appropriate
- be reviewed at least every three years

For more information on how to get started (see 4.1 Getting started p.5) and for who is responsible refer to Roles and Responsibilities (p.9).

## 4.1 Policy pathways



The above diagram is designed to assist you when deciding what action you need to take. Policy revision has three possible pathways – Amendments to Policy, Unchanged Policy or Deletion of Policy. Development of a new policy has its own pathway and the step-by-step process is outlined.

## 4.2 Guidelines for writing policy

A policy provides broad principles that direct the activities and operations of the University. It relates to matters that are of long-term relevance and application to the University.

A policy should be succinct and provide direction; it should avoid unnecessary procedural and operational information. If significant procedural information is required to underpin a policy, it is recommended that such procedures are appended to the policy as a separate document(s).

In drafting a policy, the following should be taken into consideration:*Format*

- All new or revised policies must be submitted in the template provided. Do not modify the styles; only use 'outline numbering' as in the example on the template. Ensure that the 'table of contents' at the top of the document reflects any additional sub-headings added to either the Policy Principles or the Procedures sections.

*Name of Policy*

- Ensure the title of the policy captures the subject of the policy, be as unambiguously as possible. Take into account the perspective of the reader when naming the policy. For the purpose of A-Z web searching, do not use 'policy', 'University', 'a' or 'the' as the first word in the title.

*Overview*

- Provide a succinct summary of the policy/procedure. When a search is performed on the University's website, the text contained in this section will be displayed in the search results. This section should not be longer than a paragraph (160 words maximum).

*Scope and Application*

- Provide a clear statement about when and to whom the policy applies.

*Policy Principles*

- Clearly state the standards or essential features which underpin decision-making and /or the way members of the University community conduct the activities of the University. Delete the Policy Principles section when procedures only are required.

*Authorities*

- Assign any decision-making authorities required under the policy or procedures, under the heading 'Authorities'.
- Authorities will be consolidated by the Council Secretariat in the Authority Register.

*Procedures*

- Procedures mandate operational activities and assign responsibilities. Procedures step through the practical actions required to support the implementation of Policy Principles, or to assist the University's operations and compliance with external requirements. Procedures may apply to a specific activity of the University or be of more general application.

*Responsibilities*

- Ensure all responsibilities under each procedure are clearly specified.

*Administrative information*

- Ensure that the administrative information required at the end of the policy template is completed, including the RMO file number.

### 4.2.1 Drafting Hints

- Write the policy in plain English. Be clear and concise, and avoid jargon, complex language and long paragraphs. Aim to communicate as simply and effectively as possible, as appropriate for the intended audience.
- Do not allow for every possible interpretation of the policy as this can complicate the policy unnecessarily. Stakeholders with difficulties interpreting the policy can consult the Policy Responsible Officer or add a comment on the feedback/issues log.
- If an action is mandatory, use 'must'. If the action is recommended, use 'recommended'. Avoid use of 'should' and 'shall'. Try to limit the use of 'will' to occasions when it is describing a future action; and not as a synonym for 'must'.
- Use the present tense and active voice where possible.
- Avoid gender-specific pronouns: for example, use 'they' instead of 'he or she'.
- Where acronyms are considered helpful, give the full term/title before using the acronym: for example, use 'Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic)' before employing 'DVC&VP(A)'.
- Use hyperlinks for supplemental information, however avoid constructing a sentence around a link phrase such as 'click here for more information'.

## 4.3 New Policy

When developing a new policy or a policy with significant edits refer to the Policy Pathways diagram (p.5) above to guide you.

Having identified a requirement for a new policy or a policy with significant edits, the Policy Custodian must prepare a Stage One Proposal establishing the case for the policy using the Proposal Template, and then submit it to the Council Secretariat: [policies@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:policies@adelaide.edu.au) who will seek the endorsement of all Executive Managers (i.e. Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Vice-President (Academic), Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Vice-President (Research) and Chief Operating Officer). Following endorsement, the proposal will be submitted to the Vice-Chancellor and President for approval.

### 4.3.1 Development of a Stage One Proposal

The Stage One Proposal must provide for a policy development working group, reporting to the Policy Custodian (or delegate), to develop the policy. The working group should contain a specialist policy writer, member(s) with content expertise and, for academic policies, at least one academic staff member. The involvement of the office of Legal and Risk is advised when developing a new and or reviewing a policy with significant edits. Appropriate benchmarking should be undertaken (e.g. Go8 universities).

Once you have established a case for the policy submit the Stage One proposal to the Council Secretariat via [policies@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:policies@adelaide.edu.au).

### 4.3.2 Approval of a Stage One Proposal

When approving the Stage One proposal, the Vice-Chancellor and President will determine the appropriate endorsing authority for the proposed policy. Following approval of the Stage One Proposal the Council Secretariat will inform the Policy Custodian.

### 4.3.3 Policy Development

Policies must be drafted in line with the [Policy Framework](#) using the [Policy Template](#), though the final policy format and structure may be determined by the policy content. Advice on language, common terms and drafting formats is provided above (see 4.2 Guidelines for writing policy and 4.2.1 Drafting Hints), in addition, please look at current policies in the Policy Directory. A glossary of terms is available on the Policy Directory website and may be helpful.

### 4.3.4 Consultation

Consultation with interested parties is strongly recommended throughout the development and review of a policy. Once a policy has been drafted, it needs to be made available for comment by:

- Legal and Risk (unless a Legal and Risk officer is a member of the policy development working group);
- Staff and students directly affected by the policy
- Formal committees and unions, if appropriate.

Following consultation please submit the draft Policy to the Council Secretariat via [policies@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:policies@adelaide.edu.au). Draft new policies or policy revisions will be published in staff news and available for comment/feedback (three weeks). Feedback received will be collated and forwarded to the policy development working group by the Council Secretariat.

The Policy Custodian submits the final draft of the policy along with any supporting documentation, in accord with the [Checklist](#) (see Templates), to the Council Secretariat at [policies@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:policies@adelaide.edu.au), who in turn is responsible for obtaining the relevant endorsing and approval authorities.

### 4.3.5 Approval of a Policy

The Council Secretariat will obtain approvals and provide confirmation to the Policy Custodian.

### 4.3.6 Communication and Implementation

The Council Secretariat will manage and update the [Policy Directory](#). The Policy Custodian is responsible for putting into operation the [Communication and Implementation Plan](#).

## 4.4 Review of Existing Policy

At least every three years University policies must be reviewed. Policies may be reviewed outside the stipulated review cycle if a need is identified. Existing policies should be benchmarked against other 'like' policies (e.g. Go8 universities or other appropriate sources). A policy under review will not lapse until the revised policy has been approved. Three possible scenarios are envisaged following a review of the policy by the Policy Custodian:

- Amendments to Policy
- Unchanged Policy
- Deletion of Policy

At least every six months, the Council Secretariat will prepare 'traffic light' reports showing the current status of all policies. These reports will be disseminated to each policy custodian.



#### 4.4.1 Amendments to Policy

Following policy review the Policy Custodian and/or the Policy Development working group will assess the scope of edits required. Significant edits will constitute additional sections, significant changes to text and or changes of intent. Such changes will result in the development of a Stage One Proposal.

If following policy review the Policy Custodian and/or the Policy Development working group find that only minor edits are required, that reflect changes in titles, names, references, or other minor amendments and which do not otherwise affect the policy content and/or intent; the Policy Custodian will provide a memo to the Council Secretariat outlining the changes to the Policy at [policies@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:policies@adelaide.edu.au). On receipt of the approved changes the Council Secretariat will update the Policy Directory.

#### 4.4.2 Unchanged Policy

If following policy review the Policy Custodian and/or the Policy Development working group determine that no changes are needed the Policy Custodian will notify the Council Secretariat at [policies@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:policies@adelaide.edu.au) and the Council Secretariat will update the Policy Directory and a new revision date will be set.

#### 4.4.3 Deletion of Policy

Deletion of a policy will require a review by the Policy Custodian and formal advice of the deletion to the Council Secretariat, for approval by the Vice-Chancellor and President. Once approved by the Vice-Chancellor the Council Secretariat will delete the policy from the Policy Directory.

### 5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The *Policy Custodian* has overarching responsibility for developing a University policy, obtaining the required approvals, and ensuring that the policy is implemented, monitored and reviewed. The Policy Custodians are listed below. The policies for which they are responsible reflect their portfolio responsibilities, as summarised in the following table:

Policy Custodian	Types of Policies and Procedures
Vice Chancellor & President	External Relations including: Alumni, Foundations, Gifts and Bequests
Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Vice-President (Academic)	Learning and Teaching Student Administration (including Student Administration) Library
Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Vice-President (Research)	Research and Research Training, Commercialisation and Innovation
Chief Operating Officer	Media and Marketing, including Visual Identity and Brand Management Human Resources & Health and Safety Financial Services Legal Compliance and Insurance Risk Management and Contract Management Infrastructure, Property and Technology Management
Council Secretary	Governance

A policy must specify a *Policy Responsible Officer* as the primary point of contact for assistance with policy implementation, interpretation and review.

## 5.1. Authorities

Type	Endorsing Authority	Approval authority
<b>Academic Policy*</b>	Academic Board	Vice-Chancellor and President (except where University Council has approval authority)
<b>Management Policy*</b>	Vice-Chancellor's Executive	Vice-Chancellor and President
<b>Governance-related Policy</b>		University Council
<b>Academic or Management policies that University Council has approval authority</b>	Academic: Academic Board Management: Vice-Chancellor and President	University Council

*\*Note: Where policies cover both the above areas, advice is obtained from both the Academic Board and Vice-Chancellor's Executive before approval.*

## 5.2. Administration and Records Management

The Council Secretariat is operationally responsible for maintaining the Adelaide Policy Framework, Policy Archives, the [Policy Directory](#), and monitoring compliance with the policy development and review process. The Council Secretariat is also responsible for maintaining the University's [Glossary of Terms](#), [Feedback/Issues log](#).

The Council Secretariat is responsible for registering and filing approved policy documents with the Records Management Office and maintaining the [Policy Directory](#) and Archive.

## 5.3. Monitoring Effectiveness

Policy users are encouraged to post comments on the effectiveness of policies and any difficulties in implementation and interpretation to the [Feedback/Issues log](#). The Council Secretariat is responsible for maintaining the log and advising the relevant Policy Custodian of feedback received.

## 6. ASSISTANCE

- For general enquiries, contact [policies@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:policies@adelaide.edu.au)
- For general enquires about the Adelaide Policy Framework, contact:  
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8 April 2013 approved by VC&P

29 May 2015 approved by VC&P

6 October 2015 – clerical amendment to s. 4.3.5 re: Minute Secretary to VCE

15 December 2017 – revised as part of regular three-year review; approved by A/VC&P