



University Policy Framework

This Framework ensures the University has consistent standards for the development, approval, publication, communication and review of its governance documentation.

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University Policy Framework

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

Universities are required to have clear, robust and accessible policy documents (often for legal and regulatory compliance) to allow staff, students and other stakeholders to understand their responsibilities and the decision making of the University. The purpose of this Framework is to ensure the University adopts a consistent approach.

1.2. Scope

This Framework refers to University Policy Documents, which includes Regulations, Strategies, Policies, Procedures, Codes of Practice and Guidance. The definition of University Policy Documents is that they:

- set out rules and guidance for large proportions of the University population; or
- have a significant impact on parts of the University; or
- contain information (rules and guidance) that must be available to an external audience

All University Policy Documents must comply with this Framework. Guidance documents and Directorate/School procedures, such as business processes and standard operating procedures will be managed locally and, therefore, are not within the remit of this Framework.

2. POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1. Justification for a University Policy Document

A new or revised University Policy Document may result from:

- an external driver/requirement, such as an amendment to or new legislation;
- a change in structure, responsibilities or circumstance;
- the need for clarity or to broaden the scope of the document; or
- the regular review of documents.

Alternatively, following review, it may be decided that an existing University Policy Document is no longer required. It is the responsibility of the policy owner to inform the [Governance team](#) if the document should be withdrawn from operation.

The definitions of each category of University Policy Documents are outlined within **Annex A**.

3. GUIDANCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OR REVIEW OF UNIVERSITY POLICY DOCUMENTS

3.1 Policy Development & Communication Checklist

When developing a new University Policy Document or reviewing an existing document, it is recommended that the Policy Development & Communication Checklist is completed by the author/reviewer – the Checklist is available at Annex B. It provides a helpful 10-point list of actions to complete during development, approval and communication of the policy document. The Checklist can also be used by committee members as a guide when reviewing/approving policy documents.

3.2 Format and Style

University Policy Documents should follow the format and style as set out within the templates provided within this Framework (Annex C & D) – this will assist when drafting new policy documents.

The format and style of the University Policy Document should follow accessibility guidance, including the [Accessibility Style Guidance](#), and should:

- be written in plain English;
- be concise and accurate;
- avoid use of terminology or references that may soon be outdated;
- use the current University logo;
- be presented in a structured format to support quick referencing.

3.3 Drafting and Consultation

Before you begin drafting a policy document, you must consider whether the document is likely to have an impact on individuals with protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. Assessments of likely impact should also consider socioeconomic status as a contributing factor to inequity. If it is concluded that there are potential impacts, an Equality Impact Assessment must be completed before the policy can be considered for approval – details are available here: [Equality Analysis Guidance](#)

If the policy document relates to a specific activity involving the processing of personal data, a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) must be completed before the policy can be considered for approval. - details are available here: [Data Protection Impact Assessment](#)

For policy documents related to education and the student experience, specific regard should be given to ensuring that they meet Office for Students (OfS) [Conditions of Registration](#), with a particular focus on B Conditions relating to Quality & Standards – details are available here: [Conditions of registration - Office for Students](#)

You are required to consider these in the very early stages of the development/review of a policy document and not after the document has been drafted and sent for approval.

During the drafting process, it is important to consider which key groups should be consulted as part of the development of the document. Consultation can be formal and/or informal and may include 1:2:1 conversations with key colleagues and stakeholders in the relevant area, sharing drafts with relevant committees or working groups, student consultation, consultation with staff network representatives and consultation with the Trade Unions (where the policy document is deemed likely to have a significant impact on staff terms and conditions and/or will result in a significant change to working practices. If you are unsure whether this is the case, it is recommended you seek guidance from Human Resources.

Trade Union Consultation

Where a policy, procedure or code of practice is likely to have a significant impact on staff, either via changes to working conditions, or significant changes to expectations or working practices, then consultation with the Trade Unions is required before the policy, procedure or code of practice is sought for approval.

Policies, procedures or codes of practice that require Trade Union consultation may be developed by any part of the organisation, but the consultation must be undertaken in coordination with Human Resources.

Trade Union consultation requires the University to seek the views of the Trade Unions on the proposed drafted policy, procedure or code of practice and to actively consider the representations or suggestions made by the Trade Unions on the proposed draft.

Following consultation, where amendments to the drafted policy, procedure or code of practice are possible, they should be incorporated into the final draft; where they are considered not to be appropriate, a response should be provided to the Trade Unions explaining why this is the case. The University is committed to ensuring effective consultation with Trade Unions, however, it does not require the agreement of the unions to implement changes to policy.

3.4 Approval and Review Process

Approval of Policy Documents

Before a University Policy Document can be implemented and published it must go through a formal approval process. This Framework (at Annex A) sets out the required consultation routes and the approval body (University committee) for each category of policy document. Policies may be approved by a Council committee where the theme of the policy falls within the terms of reference for that Committee. The document owner should ensure that the correct approval routes are followed and that this is mapped out at the start of the process.

We recognise that sometimes consultation does not always lead to a consensus view. In this circumstance and in cases where the two parties cannot agree on a final position on fundamental matters, the approving Committee should be provided with an overview of the matter(s) in dispute and will be asked to determine the final position on the policy, procedure or code of practice. The decision of the approving Committee will be final.

Minor Amendments

Where minor amendments are required to a policy document, for example to update a job title, directorate title or reference to a regulation number, this can be authorised by the Director (or equivalent) or Executive Dean and then submitted to the Governance team to update the version held within the Policy Zone.

Review of Policy Documents

Each University Policy Document will specify the date of the next review; this should be in accordance with the review periods set out in this Policy Framework (Annex A). The document owner is responsible for ensuring that this is undertaken.

The Governance team will present to the University Executive Committee (or its sub-group) a regular report, which will highlight the documents to be reviewed that year.

3.5 Storage, Accessibility and Version Control

University Policy Documents will be published in the Policy Zone, which is the primary location for all policy documents on the University webpages. A link at the bottom of the University's home webpage provides quick and unrestricted access to the repository of all current documents in a user-friendly format: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/policyzone/>.

The only version of the University Policy Document online should be the one in the Policy Zone and all related documents should refer users to that version. Additional versions should not be published locally.

A version control table should be included on all University policy documents in the format outlined within the template and must be fully completed and maintained by the document owner.

In the event that a Policy Document is no longer applicable, it will be removed from the Policy Zone following authorisation by the Secretary to Council.

The Policy Zone sits alongside the University's Schedule of Delegation, Publication Scheme and Freedom of Information Policy, and also facilitates audit and external reporting requirements.

3.6 Policy Framework Approval and Annexes

This University Policy Framework was approved by the University Executive Committee and subsequent minor amendments authorised by the Secretary to Council. A review will be undertaken at least every three years.

This Framework is stored, and freely available in the public domain, accessed via:

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/policyzone/>.

ANNEXES:

Annex A – Definitions of University Policy Documents

Annex B – Policy Development & Communication Checklist

Annex C – Policy Template

Annex D – Procedure Template

ANNEX A: Definitions of University Policy Documents

DOCUMENT	DEFINITION	APPROVAL BODY	REQUIRED CONSULTATION	LOCATION
University Charter	The Royal Charter (providing university status) defines the governance of the University: its objects, statutes, ordinances, regulations, officers and powers including the conferment of awards. All members of the University must comply with the University Charter.	Approved at a quorate meeting of Council by a Special Resolution passed by at least three-quarters of those members present; followed by submission to the Privy Council for formal approval before effective. Reviewed when necessary by the Governance team, at least every 3 years.	Senate	Governance webpages
Statutes	The Statutes contain the fundamental constitutional and governance provisions of the University, defining the structures, objects and powers. All members of the University must comply with the Statutes.	Approved by Council. Proposed amendments must be submitted to the Privy Council for formal approval before effective. Reviewed when necessary by the Governance team, at least every 3 years.	Senate	Governance webpages
Ordinances	The Ordinances set out, in more detail than Statutes, the rules for the conduct of the University's business. They establish key organisational structures such as Faculties, Schools and Research Institutes and also distribute the authority of Council to executive officers. They contain provisions regarding the Senate and the academic governance of the University, including disciplinary, appeals and grievance procedures. All members of the University must comply with the Ordinances.	Approved by Council Reviewed when necessary by the Governance team, in consultation with responsible staff, at least every 3 years.	Senate	Governance webpages
Regulations	The Regulations contain principles and standards designed to control or govern conduct or provide direction in an area (often academic) at a more detailed level than Ordinances. All members of the University must comply with the Regulations.	Academic Regulations – Senate; Financial Regulations – Audit and Risk Committee. Informal annual review by the responsible staff, in consultation with the Governance team. Formal review at least every 3 years.	Academic Regulations – Education Policy Sub-Committee; Financial Regulations – University Executive Committee (UEC) (or its sub-group).	Academic Regulations: Governance webpages. Financial Regulations: Finance webpages.

DOCUMENT	DEFINITION	APPROVAL BODY	REQUIRED CONSULTATION	LOCATION
Strategy	A Strategy identifies a plan of action for a designated time period to achieve the set objectives for the delivery of a defined service provided by the University. A supporting strategy will apply to all functions of the University that are involved in the delivery of that service.	Academic Strategies – Senate and then Council. Non-Academic Strategies – Council. Strategies normally exist for a 5 year duration, with periodic review; timescales to be specified within the Strategy document.	UEC; relevant University committee (dependent on theme).	Policy Zone
Policy	A Policy is a formal statement of the University's principles, intent and values that govern decision making. It sets out requirements and restrictions, establishes standards, rights and responsibilities that would normally be applicable across all functions of the University. Its subject is often administrative, but can be academic. The driver for a Policy is often an external requirement, either legal or good governance practice. All members of the University must comply with University Policies.	Policies relating to corporate governance or contractual employment matters – Council. Policies relating to academic matters – Senate. All other Policies – UEC (or its sub-group). <i>Minor amendments (e.g. readability improvements, job titles, regulation numbers, Directorate name, etc) – Director or Dean.</i> Policies normally have a 3 year approval period and a mechanism for annual review, as specified within the Policy document.	Senate (where academic related); UEC (or its sub-group); relevant University committee (dependent on theme); trade unions (where it would have a significant impact on staff).	Policy Zone
Procedure	A Procedure sets out the process and/or actions required to implement a policy, strategy, a University regulation or a legislative or regulatory requirement. It provides specific operational instructions and responsibilities for staff and/or students to ensure consistency of practice. Each Procedure will define its application, and for that purpose, members of the University must comply.	Procedures relating to corporate governance or employment matters - Council (or committee) or UEC (or its sub-group). Procedures relating to academic matters – Senate. All other Procedures – UEC (or its sub-group). <i>Minor amendments (e.g. readability improvements, naming titles, regulation numbers, etc) – Director or Dean.</i> Procedures normally have a 3 year approval period and a mechanism for annual review, as specified within the document.	UEC or a relevant University committee (dependent on theme); trade unions (where it would have a significant impact on staff).	University-wide Procedures: Policy Zone . Local Procedures: Relevant Directorate or Faculty webpage.

DOCUMENT	DEFINITION	APPROVAL BODY	REQUIRED CONSULTATION	LOCATION
Framework	A Framework provides a broad structure to support the effective implementation and understanding of a University Policy Document, outlining the interrelationships with other governance documents (policies, strategies, etc) and processes. Members of the University must comply with University Frameworks.	UEC (or its sub-group).	Relevant University committee (dependent on theme).	Policy Zone Link from relevant policy/strategy
Code of Practice*	A Code of Practice is a set of rules for a particular aspect of the University that details expected processes or actions to be taken and will often have ethical or professional considerations as the reason for its development. In some instances, there will be a legislative or regulatory requirement for the University to have a particular Code of Practice, e.g. for compliance with the Education Act. Members of the University must comply with Codes of Practice.	UEC (or its sub-group). Codes normally have a 3 year approval period and a mechanism for annual review, as specified within the document.	Relevant University committee (dependent on theme - where there is a legal requirement to have the Code, it may also need to go to Senate and/or Council); trade unions (where it would have a significant impact on staff).	Policy Zone
Guidance, Guidelines or User Guide	Provides direction, advice and support for a particular activity or service area; assisting users to achieve specific tasks. It is a flexible, timely and helpful document; often implemented to support compliance with a policy or procedure. Compliance is recommended but not mandatory.	Dean/Director. Periodically reviewed – process and timescale for review to be agreed at point of approval.	Local committee or working group, in addition to key users of the Guidance.	Relevant Directorate or Faculty webpage.

Notes on the Framework:

1. The policy documents appear in the table above in hierarchical order.
 2. Council reserves the right to amend the approval route on a case-by-case basis (document-by-document basis).
 3. Advice on interpretation of these definitions should be sought from the [Governance team](#) (Legal, Governance & Compliance).
- * Codes of Practice may be required for regulatory or legislative compliance, and in such cases, the documents would have increased standing in the hierarchy of University Policy Documents, in line with a policy or strategy.

ANNEX B

Policy Development & Communication Checklist

This Policy Development & Communication Checklist should be used by:

- *the author – as a guide to ensure effective development, approval and communication of University policy documents;*
- *committee members – as a guide when reviewing/approving policy documents.*

Name of Policy Document:			
	Checklist for Development, Review, Approval and Communication	Check	Date
1	Identify Approval Route: Identify and plan the approval route to map out all committee deadlines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	External Requirements: Read relevant external guidance, regulatory or legislative documents to ensure the policy document will meet the required standards, for example, Data Protection. Also ensure a review of sector best practice. For policy documents related to education and the student experience, specific regard should be given to ensuring that they meet Office for Students (OfS) Conditions of Registration , with a particular focus on B Conditions relating to Quality & Standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Accessibility: Ensure the language and terminology used within the policy document is accessible to all. Consider the Accessibility Style Guidance .	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	Format of University Documents: Read the University Policy Framework and adopt the templates for University policies and procedures for new and revised policy documents - ensure that each section is clear in its objectives and purpose. Identify other relevant University policy documents and ensure the content is consistent and cross-referenced.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	Equality Impact Assessment : After drafting/revising the policy document, complete and submit an Equality Analysis following the Guidance .	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6	Consultation: Ensure appropriate consultation has taken place, with sufficient time to include any feedback. Consultation should include students where appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7	Seek Approval: Submit to the specified committees for approval by the deadlines, along with the appropriate cover sheet.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8	Implementation: Once approved, the policy document should be sent to the Governance team to be uploaded to the Policy Zone . All other webpages should link to the Policy Zone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9	Communication: Alert all relevant staff to the policy document. Consider the best routes for communication e.g. Staff Intranet, email circulation lists, via students' unions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10	Future Review: Implement measures to ensure the policy document will be reviewed in accordance with the University Policy Framework (e.g. annual check and a formal review every. 3 years).	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Should you have any queries, please contact the [Governance team](#).

NAME OF POLICY

[The name should be concise, descriptive and start with a key word]

[Staff should consider accessibility for all readers, including the [Accessibility Style Guidance](#), when drafting a policy document.]

[Consider at this stage - Do you need to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment or a Data Protection Impact Assessment?]

1. INTRODUCTION

[A short overview statement about the document.]

1.1 Purpose

[This section should:

- *Clearly and succinctly outline the rationale and context for the University having such a policy;*
- *Include any regulatory and legislative requirements for having such a policy.]*

1.2 Scope

[This section should:

- *Include an overview of the areas and/issues covered by the policy;*
- *Include who must comply with the policy;*
- *Include brief definitions and/or explanations to provide context to what the policy is for, who it applies to and when it must be applied.]*

2. POLICY

[This is the core section of the policy document and should outline the principles and statements that form the policy. The policy should state and define what those principles, values and expectations are, rather than describe the operational detail, as this will be covered within a supporting procedure or guidance document, which will need to be clearly linked to the policy.]

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

[This section should include further detail about who the policy applies to, but also who (role description rather than a name) has strategic oversight of the policy, which committees review and monitor the policy, and contact information for at least one member of staff who can answer questions on the policy. For the elements of the policy that are mandatory, this section should also state how compliance will be monitored and enforced.]

4. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

[This section should reference the relevant University policies and procedures (or other key University documents) that may need to be read in conjunction with this policy; also reference (provide links) to any relevant legislation or University governance provisions.]

5. REVIEW, APPROVAL & PUBLICATION

[This section should:

- *Outline the review process, including who would be responsible for review, who/which committees would be consulted and the maximum duration between reviews;*
- *Include which committee will ultimately be responsible for approval;*
- *Include where the document will be located/published, including a link to University Policy Documents webpage and any other relevant webpages.]*

6. ANNEXES

[Where required, additional tables, diagrams or documents should be provided within an annex at the end of the policy, with clear referencing within the main policy. Annexes should be named Annex A - ...; Annex B - ...; etc.]

7. DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

[The table below should be completed by the document owner and included within every University Policy Document. The version control table will also be uploaded to the University Policy Documents webpage that hosts the policy, alongside the related procedure.]

Document Name	[Name, with the key word first]
Owner	[Name, job role and section]
Version Number & Key Amendment	[version number, with 0.1 increments for minor amends – state key amendments from previous version]
Equality Impact Assessment Form Submission Date	[Date form submitted]
Approval Date	[Day/month/year]
Approved By	[Committee name]
Date of Commencement	[Day/month/year]
Date of Last Review	[Day/month/year]
Date for Next Review	[Day/month/year]
Related University Policy Documents	[List all applicable]
<i>For Office Use – Keywords for search function</i>	

[Include page numbers on all University Policy Documents within the footer; also include the University logo, compliant with the current brand templates]

ANNEX D - PROCEDURE TEMPLATE:

NAME OF PROCEDURE

[The name should be concise, descriptive and start with a key word]

[Staff should consider accessibility for all readers, including the [Accessibility Style Guidance](#), when drafting a policy document.]

[Consider at this stage - Do you need to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment or a Data Protection Impact Assessment?]

1. INTRODUCTION

[A short overview statement about the document.]

1.1 Purpose

[This section should:

- *Clearly and succinctly outline the rationale and context for the University having such a procedure – including the name of the policy (or policies) the procedure supports;*
- *Include any regulatory and legislative requirements for having such a procedure.]*

1.2 Scope

[This section should:

- *Include an overview of the areas and/issues covered by the procedure;*
- *Include who must comply with the procedure;*
- *Include brief definitions and/or explanations to provide context to what the procedure is for, who it applies to and when it must be applied.]*

2. PROCEDURE

[This is the core section of the procedure and should clearly outline specific operational instructions and responsibilities for staff and/or students to ensure consistency of practice and/or necessary steps to be taken in order to implement a policy. The policy should state and define what the principles, values and expectations are, whereas the supporting procedure (and guidance) should describe the operational detail, which will need to be clearly linked to the policy. Where possible, incorporate a flowchart to provide a graphical representation of the procedure to explain the steps and responsibilities at quick reference.]

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

[This section should include further detail about who the procedure applies to and when it applies, but also contact information for at least one member of staff who can answer questions on the procedure. For the elements of the procedure that are mandatory, this section should also state how compliance will be monitored, recorded and enforced.]

4. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

[This section should reference the relevant University policies and procedures (or other key University documents) that may need to be read in conjunction with this procedure; also reference (provide links) to any relevant legislation or University governance provisions.]

5. REVIEW, APPROVAL & PUBLICATION

[This section should:

- *Outline the review process, including who would be responsible for review, who/which committees would be consulted and the maximum duration between reviews;*
- *Include which committee will ultimately be responsible for approval;*
- *Include where the document will be located/published, including a link to University Policy Documents webpage and any other relevant webpages.]*

6. ANNEXES

[Where required, additional tables, diagrams or documents should be provided within an annex at the end of the policy, with clear referencing within the main policy. Annexes should be named Annex A - ...; Annex B - ...; etc.]

7. DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

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Version Number & Key Amendment	[version number, with 0.1 increments for minor amends – state key amendments from previous version]
Equality Analysis Form Submission Date	[Date form submitted]
Approval Date	[Day/month/year]
Approved By	[Committee name]
Date of Commencement	[Day/month/year]
Date of Last Review	[Day/month/year]
Date for Next Review	[Day/month/year]
Related University Policy Documents	[List all applicable]
<i>For Office Use – Keywords</i>	

[Include page numbers on all University Policy Documents within the footer; also include the University logo, compliant with the current brand templates]