

# Instructions for Writing a Policy

These instructions are to be followed when developing new and revising existing policy and should be read in conjunction with the [Policy Framework](#).

To commence the process, a [Policy Instrument Tracker](#) should be filled out and submitted to the Policy Team via email. A new container will then be set up in Content Manager which will include a policy template that you will be able to edit. Please see the [Policy Resources Site](#) for further information on the overall process.

There are separate Instructions for [writing a Procedure](#) and [writing a Schedule](#).

Policy instruments must be written in clear, concise, grammatical plain English. Aim to capture the essential features of the policy as succinctly as possible.

Please refer to the [Policy Library Style Guide](#) for annotated information on how to structure a policy instrument.

## Policy Title

The title of the policy must not start with the words 'The', 'UniSQ', 'University' or 'Policy', or contain an abbreviation. Policies will be listed alphabetically within policy instrument categories, and the first word of the policy should be informative to facilitate recognition when scanning the list. 'Policy' must be the last word of the title (e.g. *Enrolment Policy*, rather than *Policy on Enrolment*).

The title of the policy must use key descriptors that reflect accurately the policy scope. Where there are multiple descriptors, the title should begin with the broadest descriptor and then be refined with narrower terms following a colon; for example, *Assessment: Alternative Arrangements Policy* rather than *Alternative Arrangements for Assessment*.

## 1 Purpose

Describe why the policy is needed. Begin the sentence with 'To', followed by a verb.

### **Example 1 – Assessment Policy**

*To articulate the principles and practices that underpin the approach of the University to assessing Student learning.*

### **Example 2 – Academic Integrity Policy**

*To articulate the University's expectations for maintaining principles of Academic Integrity and honesty and provide a framework for dealing with allegations of Academic Misconduct committed by Students. Allegations of Employee Academic*

*Misconduct would be managed in accordance with the Disciplinary Action for Misconduct or Serious Misconduct Procedure, or relevant employment contract.*

## 2 Scope

Identify who the procedure applies and identify any exclusions. Where no exceptions are identified, the scope may be described as follows: 'This procedure applies across the University'.

Indicate, as appropriate:

- the members of the University community to whom the policy applies (all Employees and Students; academic Employees; postgraduate research Students, etc.), with particular reference to the following key definitions:
  - Employee
  - Student
  - Research Worker
  - University Members;
- the functions and/or situations to which the policy applies;
- the type of course or program to which the policy applies (undergraduate courses; research programs; transnational courses, etc.); and
- if necessary, the boundaries separating the scope of this policy from that of related University policies.

### ***Example – Academic Programs and Courses Policy***

This Policy applies to all Academic Programs including pathway Programs offered by the University.

## 3 Policy Statement

This must be a concise, formal statement of the overarching objective/s of the policy, consisting of no more than a paragraph or two. The policy statement must be capable of guiding decision-making in areas within the scope of the policy, even if not explicitly mentioned in the policy or its related procedures. Start with the words 'The University, followed by a verb.

The Policy Statement section must include any mandatory requirements to be covered in related procedures.

### ***Example – Admissions Policy***

*The University establishes the expectations and requirements for Admission through this Policy. Admission is determined on the basis of Academic Merit or the capacity for university level study. The University recognises that this can be measured by formal qualifications and by means other than formally recognised educational attainment.*

*The Admissions Procedure sets out the criteria which an Applicant must satisfy in order to be admitted to the University.*

*Students seeking entry to programs at the University must satisfy the general Admission principles outlined in this Policy as well as the specific entry requirements as detailed in the Admissions Procedure.*

## 4 Principles

This section should focus on high level principles that align with the policy's purpose, and address the objectives in the Policy Statement. Principles should be clear and concise and not contain background information or detailed explanations. Any procedures or other supporting documents that follow from this policy should align with these principles.

**Apply caution when using terms such as 'must/will/normally' as these terms can create compliance obligations. If used casually/inappropriately, the University could find itself in a situation where there is audit risk due to a compliance breach of a self-imposed obligation.**

It is important not to get into a level of operational detail that belongs in the associated procedures.

### ***Example – Admissions Policy***

The Admission principles of the University are:

1. Admission to University Award Programs is determined on the basis of merit, specific program requirements and perceived probability of success.
2. Non-Award Programs and Courses do not have Academic Merit Admission requirements.
3. The University supports the Admission of Applicants who are considered to have a reasonable chance of success in the program to which they apply.
4. The University may establish and use alternative entry programs to assist the Admission of under-represented community groups.
5. There are a limited number of places available in each program. Where demand for a program exceeds the available number of places, Admission to the program may be denied, despite the Applicant meeting the minimum entry requirements.
6. The University may cancel the Enrolment of Students.
7. Admission requirements will be made available for Applicants.

## 5 References

Use the [APA referencing style](#) to insert any references to publications used in the development of the procedure. If specific sections of legislation are referred to in the content of the procedure, also add that piece of legislation as a reference.

## **6 Schedules**

The following standard statement is included in all templates:

*This Policy must be read in conjunction with its subordinate schedules as provided in the table below.*

## **7 Policy Information**

### **7.1 Accountable Officer**

The Accountable Officer will be determined by the policy type and must be referred to by position title only.

### **7.2 Policy Type**

Indicate whether the Policy Type is 'Governance Policy', 'Academic Quality Policy', or 'Executive Policy'. The Policy Framework outlines the different policy types at the University.

### **7.3 Date Approved**

This is the date the policy was approved by the relevant Approval Authority. No text needs to be entered in this field as it will be updated during the publication process.

### **7.4 Effective Date**

Unless otherwise determined by the Approval Authority, the policy will become effective from the date it is approved. No text needs to be entered in this field as it will be updated during the publication process.

### **7.5 Review Date**

All new policies or major amendments to policies are to be reviewed five years from the date the policy comes into effect, unless an earlier or later date is approved by the Approval Authority. No text needs to be entered in this field as it will be updated during the publication process.

### **7.6 Definitions**

Definitions should be listed alphabetically and should not be inconsistent with ordinary dictionary definitions. There is no need to define commonly-understood terms, however definitions can be used to define terms that change frequently; e.g. the name of government departments that are referenced through policy instruments.

Acronyms should not be included here but may be included in the body of the document, with the first use cited in full, followed by the acronym in brackets. On separate lines, state each key term followed by a colon, followed by the definition.

### **7.6.1 Globally defined Definitions**

Terms defined in the [Definitions Dictionary](#) have a common meaning across the University. When these terms are used in a policy instrument they should be capitalised in the body of the policy instrument and listed in the metadata table with (Approved) written next to the definition.

If the development of a policy instrument identifies new terms proposed for inclusion in the Definitions Dictionary, they should also be capitalised and captured in the metadata table, with (For Approval) written next to the definition.

### **7.6.2 Policy specific Definitions**

Terms that require explanation but are not likely to have a common relevance across the University should be captured in the metadata table as 'Definitions that relate to this Policy only'.

## **7.7 Related Legislation**

Use exact titles of Regulatory Compliance Instruments and hyperlink with reference to the Compliance Register. Italicise the full titles of legislation and regulations.

## **7.8 Related Policies**

Use exact titles of directly related policies, as approved and recorded in the Policy Library. Indirectly related policies should not be listed.

## **7.9 Related Procedures**

Use exact titles of directly related procedures, as approved and recorded in the Policy Library. Indirectly related procedures should not be listed.

## **7.10 Related Forms, Publications and Websites**

List any related documents, other than legislation or policy instruments. Any documents referred to in the body of the policy must be listed in alphabetical order and hyperlinked and may include forms, publications, websites etc.

## **7.11 Keywords**

Users can search for policy instruments in the Policy Library by keyword. Any word in the title or body of a policy instrument as a keyword is automatically included in keyword searches and should not be listed here. Instead, list any other words that users may enter to search for this document. Provide in a single line, in lower case, with each entry separated by a comma.

## **8 General information**

### **8.1 When drafting a Policy**

#### **Use:**

- everyday words
- the same word for the same concept throughout
- terms that are unlikely to change or become outdated (e.g. use position titles rather than the names of individual staff members)
- refer to 'the University' rather than 'UniSQ'
- short sentences
- short paragraphs of no more than 4-5 lines of text
- caution when using terms such as 'must/will/normally' as these terms can create compliance obligations (if used casually/inappropriately, the University could find itself in a situation where there is audit risk due to a compliance breach of a self-imposed obligation)
- active rather than passive voice
- gender-inclusive language (or make gender-specific pronouns plural or reword; avoid the use of 'he/she')
- the third person in preference to the second person (e.g. 'they' rather than 'you')
- the format DD/MM/YYYY for dates (e.g. 21/10/2006).

#### **Avoid:**

- wordiness and long chunks of text
- jargon
- the use of double negatives
- acronyms and abbreviations except where necessary - use the full term on the first occasion with the acronym immediately after in brackets; e.g. 'Chief Financial Officer (CFO)', then use the acronym in the remainder of the document.

### **8.2 Images/graphics**

Any images or graphics included in policy must be inserted as a picture only; i.e. jpeg, png, bmp ('SmartArt' will not display on the web). Alternative text must be added to assist readers with a disability. To add, right click over the image, select 'format picture', 'alt text' and insert a short title and description of the image.

## 8.3 Common terms and definitions

Definitions of defined terms contained in policy instruments are contained in the [Definitions Dictionary](#). All occurrences of a definition must be capitalised.

Definitions are normally developed in conjunction with the relevant policy instrument. If you wish to recommend inclusion of additional terms in the Definitions Dictionary, please contact the Policy Team. Please also refer to the [Instructions for Writing a Definition](#).

## 8.4 Tables and figures

Number and label tables and figures and refer to them by number. Insert a table title before the table and figure title after the figure, using the following convention:

**Table 1: <insert title>** (bold text, before table)

**Figure 1: <insert title>** (bold text, after figure)

## 8.5 Hyperlinks

Please try to include any links in the metadata table under the 'related forms/websites' section. If hyperlinks are required within the body of the document, then please follow the guidelines below. Contact the Policy team if you have any other specific requirements.

- Link to something only if it helps meet the user's need.
- When referencing policy instruments use the exact title as approved and recorded in the Policy Library:
  - **Write this:** [Higher Degree by Research Student Policy](#)
  - **Not this:** [HDR Student Policy](#)
- Write link text that makes the destination clear and avoid using non-descriptive terms like 'Click here':
  - **Write this:** Find out more about our [upcoming events on our Events page](#).
  - **Not this:** [Click here](#) to find out about our upcoming events.
- Put most links at the end of sentences:
  - **Write this:** Find out your eligibility for enrolment by filling out the [application form](#).
  - **Not this:** You need to fill out the [application form](#) to find out if you are eligible for enrolment.
- Write short calls to action that explain what they do:

- **Write this:** [Start your application](#)
- **Not this:** [Click here to apply](#)
- Link email addresses not names:
  - **Write this:** [sara.surname@unisq.edu.au](mailto:sara.surname@unisq.edu.au)
  - **Not this:** [Sara Surname](#)

## 8.6 Template Fields

Policies should be written as though they are already approved. The language used should reflect that.