

POLICY ON POLICIES

1. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that a consistent framework and format is applied to all policies at the University.
- 1.2 This policy also draws a distinction between policy and supporting documents and defines the terms for clarity.
- 1.3 This policy sets out areas of responsibility relating to policies as well as the process for creation, approval, review, and revision of policies and supporting documents.
- 1.4 This policy aims to ensure that policies and guidance are effective in enhancing operational efficiency, easy to access and understand, are subject to regular checks to ensure they remain fit for purpose, and that they support compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to the creation and maintenance of all policies at the University.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The Information Manager

- 3.1.1 The Information Manager is responsible for having oversight of policies across the University and for providing support and guidance to those tasked with drafting policies.
- 3.1.2 The Information Manager is responsible for the creation and amendment of the approved University Policy Template and for management of a central University Policy Bank.

3.2 Heads of Schools and Directors of Professional Services Divisions

- 3.2.1 Heads of Schools and Directors of Professional Services Divisions are responsible for ensuring that policies falling within the remit of their School or Division are assigned a Policy Owner and Lead Contact (author).

3.3 The Policy Owner and Lead Contact

- 3.3.1 The Policy Owner is the team or business area ultimately responsible for the policy in question.
- 3.3.2 The Lead Contact is the named role responsible for the development and regular review (including revision and update, where required) of any given policy.
- 3.3.3 The Policy Owner and Lead Contact are responsible for ensuring that the necessary supporting documents are in place to sit alongside the policy.
- 3.3.4 The Policy Owner is responsible for arranging to have their policies published on the relevant area of the University's website and, in the case of University Policies, for liaising with the Information Manager to ensure that policies are linked from the central Policy Bank.
- 3.3.5 The Policy Owner is responsible for raising staff awareness of their area's policies (in conjunction with the Communications team), and for facilitating and arranging the appropriate training of staff (where required).

4. POLICY

4.1 Definitions

- 4.1.1 A policy is a high level statement of guiding principles or set of ideas adopted by a group of people or an organisation which is used as the basis for taking actions or decision making in relation to a specific topic or area.
- 4.1.2 A '*University Policy*' refers to a policy that applies broadly across the University, reflects the University's values, and articulates expectations and requirements. Policies of this nature can address legal, compliance and regulatory requirements; regulations and internal standards; and/or seek to reduce institutional risk. University policies should ensure consistency of approach throughout the institution.
- 4.1.3 A '*Departmental Level Policy*' is an operational policy specific to a Division, School, or Department (e.g. dress code relating to lab or research areas) and should not contradict or conflict with any University policies. These policies should be limited and usually departmental level documents will be made up of guidance and process documents only.
- 4.1.4 '*Supporting documents*' are related guidance and procedural documents that refer to specific processes and practices which enable adherence to the policy. These are

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living documents that can be updated as systems and processes change. Standalone guidance and procedural documents may also exist separately and be unrelated to any policy.

4.2 The Policy Format

- 4.2.1 Each policy must follow the format of the agreed University Policy Template (see 'Review / Contacts / References').
- 4.2.2 Each policy must include a 'Review / Contact / References' box at the end of the document, as well as the control box at the bottom of each page.
- 4.2.3 Policies should be written in clear, accessible, and straightforward language.
- 4.2.4 Policies should generally not include the specifics of internal processes or procedures, as these should be detailed in the supporting documents.
- 4.2.5 Supporting documents should be included as separate appendices to the policy.

4.3 Development, Approval and Dissemination

- 4.3.1 Departmental Level policies can be initiated locally by individual teams or business areas, Schools, or Professional Services Divisions.
- 4.3.2 University Policies are required when there is a need to make clear obligations in relation to legislative or regulatory requirements, to formalise agreed University values or aims, and/or to communicate expected behaviours throughout the institution. These are often created upon instruction from the University's Executive Group.
- 4.3.3 For support in relation to the drafting of policies, use of the policy template, or the application of this policy, Policy Owners and/or Lead Contacts should engage with the University's Information Manager.
- 4.3.4 The University's Office of the General Counsel should be consulted where necessary during the drafting (or updating) of policies – for example, where they relate to a legal requirement, or where legal advice is required.
- 4.3.5 Policies must be approved through the appropriate Group(s) and/or Committee(s) at the University; areas of policy responsibility are outlined in the 'Organisation of the University' and its Statutes.

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4.3.6 As outlined in Section 3.3, the publishing of the policy, communications, and training related to the policy are primarily the responsibility of the Policy Owner.

4.4 Storage and Archiving

4.4.1 All University and Department Level Policies should be uploaded to one consistent location (URL) only on the relevant area of the University webpages and always replaced using the same the URL to ensure that only one and the latest version is available at any given time.

4.4.2 University Policies should also be linked from one central location (the University Policy Bank – see section 3.1), to be managed by the Information Manager.

4.4.3 Documents used in the development and policies, and previously approved versions of policies, should be retained locally / archived in line with the University's Master Records Retention Schedule.

4.5 Review and Revision

4.5.1 Policies should always have a default review date that is one year from the date of approval or last revision, unless a shorter or longer review timeframe is customary or required for any other reason (e.g. changes to legislation).

4.5.2 Policies should also be reviewed on an ad-hoc basis, to ensure they are still fit for purpose, should there be any changes or updates to related legislation or statutory requirements before the next scheduled review date.

4.5.3 Where changes are required to policies following review, these must be approved through the same appropriate Group(s) and/or Committee(s) that the original policy was approved by.

4.5.4 Supporting documents should be updated as required, whenever there are changes to processes and procedures related to the policy, and do not need to follow the same review and approval processes as policies themselves.

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Review / Contacts / References	
Policy title:	Policy on Policies
Date approved:	21 October 2019
Approving body:	University Executive Group
Last review date:	October 2020
Revision history:	Version 1.0 – October 2019
Next review date:	October 2021
Related internal policies, procedures, guidance:	<p>University Policy Template http://www.sussex.ac.uk/ogs/documents/policy-template-sept-2019.docx</p> <p>Policies http://www.sussex.ac.uk/ogs/policies</p> <p>Organisation of the University & Statutes http://www.sussex.ac.uk/ogs/govdocuments</p> <p>Records Management Policy and Master Records Retention Schedule http://www.sussex.ac.uk/ogs/policies/information/recordsmanagementguidance</p>
Policy owner:	Information Management Team (Division of the General Counsel, Governance and Compliance)
Lead contact / author:	Information Manager (Karen Blackman)

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