Policy Guide

Step	Summary	Outcomes
Step 1 Identify need & Submit proposal	The first step in any policy development should be identifying whether a university policy is the best mechanism to address the issue at hand. Before you submit a proposal to develop a new policy read through the *Policy Proposal Form* and ask yourself the following questions: • Does the Policy already exist? Is the issues already covered by existing University Statutes, Regulations or Policies? • Would the Policy apply to the University as a whole? • Could the issue be addressed in any other way, such as revising an existing policy? • Could other document types work better for the issue at hand (document types outlined in the Policy Management Framework, page 2: list of policy instruments)? If you need to review an existing policy, you should first establish whether the review requires committee approval. The policy processes outlined on the Policy Toolkit homepage will help you establish the required steps for your review. Requirements: 1. Complete a Policy Proposal Form (docx) and submit it for approval to the relevant Policy Approval Bodies (pdf). The Policy Proposal outlines what the policy is about and why UCD should have the policy. It also enables the approval body to consider the implications of policy at an early stage and to promote cooperation and consultation during the development. 2. Complete and submit an Equality Impact Assessment Form (docx) together with your Policy Proposal. Guidelines for the EDI Impact Assessment are provided by the UCD EDI Group. 3. Conduct a policy risk assessment based on the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). The UCD Data Protection Officer provides guidelines for GDPR. Recommendations: To help you draft the Policy Proposal: • Look over the note on identifying and engaging Policy Stakeholders (pdf) • Consider existing University Policies to identify related policies and other documents. • Read through Step 7 on implementation to ensure resource needs and implementation issues are adequately assessed. Tools for this section: • Policy Proposal Form (docx) • Policy Approval Bodies (pdf) • Policy Stakeholders (pdf) • Equality Impact Assessment Form (docx) • Guidelines for Equality Impact Assessment • Example of Policy Proposal - Appeals and Complaints Review (pdf)	Successful Policy Proposal approved by the relevant approval body

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Step 2
Plan
	Once the policy proposal has been approved, you may want to outline a more comprehensive policy development plan. Planning is a critical step in policy development. Comprehensive planning helps:
	
	• Clarify timelines and manage deadlines set by approval bodies.
	• Secure buy-in and early agreement on policy scope.
	• Predict and manage possible risks such as delays due to consultation outcomes.
	• Ensure continuity if key people in policy development change.
	• Plan and time appropriate formal consultation.
	• Support future reviews of the policy by recording your actions and decision points.
	
	Recommendations:
	1. Read through the whole online Policy Development Guide to understand the different stages of policy development.
	2. Draft a comprehensive plan in collaboration with all people involved in developing and drafting policy. The Policy Plan Template/Tool (docx) will give you pointers on what to include in your plan.
	3. Your approved Policy Proposal will provide the bare bones for the plan. See also the Checklist for Qualities of a Good Policy (pdf) and the Policy Submission Checklist (pdf) to help you draft a plan.
	4. By the end of the planning you should be clear on:
	   o Scope of the development/review
	   o Relevant stakeholders to involve in development, drafting and consultation phases
	   o Timelines and approval steps
	   o Communication and implementation planning
	   o Any supporting documents to be developed with the policy. The Policy vs Procedure - Explanatory Note (pdf) may help you decide whether to develop a procedure to support the policy.
	5. Agree plan with all relevant parties such as possible policy working group and any other committee/group you are reporting to on the policy.
	6. Track progress against the plan throughout the process.
	
	Tools for this section:
	• Policy Plan Template/Tool (docx)
	• Qualities of a Good Policy (pdf)
	• Policy Submission Checklist (pdf)
	• Policy vs Procedure - Explanatory Note (pdf)
		Policy Development Plan

Step	Summary	Outcomes
Step 3 Develop & Draft	Responsibilities for development, drafting and oversight should be agreed in a Policy Development Plan. Actual policy writing can be done by an individual or by a group of people. Often a working group is established specifically for the development and drafting of a policy. Requirements: 1. Conduct an initial discussion on the policy principles with Policy Stakeholders (pdf) before drafting the first version. Some policy developments involve establishing a policy working group with representation from key stakeholder groups. For other mechanisms for stakeholder feedback see the recommendations for Step 4:Consult. 2. Carry out any relevant research and compare to similar policies in other institutions and organisations. Relevant benchmark institutions depend on the policy in question, but the Benchmark Institutions Agreed by UMT (pdf) and university networks such as the Universitas 21 provide a starting point. 3. Draft the Policy using the Policy Template (docx) which outlines key sections for policy. Other sections may be added as needed. Recommendations: Draft a user-friendly and accessible policy with these Writing Tips (pdf). UCD Access and Lifelong Learning provide Guidelines for Accessible Documents. Other tips on Policy writing can be found for example in the University of California Policy Stylebook. Tools for this section: • Policy Template (docx) • Policy Stakeholders (pdf) • Benchmark Institutions Agreed by UMT (pdf) • Writing Tips (pdf) • Guidelines for Accessible Documents	Draft Policy Version 1

Step	Summary	Outcomes

Step 4
Consult
	Consultation takes place when drafting a policy. It is a feedback process in which stakeholders review the draft policy, negotiate policy issues and/or actively engage in resolving implementation issues. Consultation can support successful communication. A new policy or amendments to a policy will not come as a surprise to stakeholders, if they are consulted during the development.
	
	Policy consultation has two aspects:
	1. Consultation of stakeholder groups and other interested parties during the development or review of policy, and
	2. Formal consultation of university committees.
	
	Requirements:
	1. Make the draft policy available for formal consultation with the relevant approval body and any other University Committee with responsibility over implementation of the policy. To determine the requirements for formal consultation and endorsement specific to your policy read Policy Approval Bodies (pdf). You can also look into the approval of other policies in the same area as examples.
	2. Consider all constructive feedback and where deemed necessary or useful, incorporate in the policy.
	
	Recommendations:
	1. Consult stakeholders and interested parties throughout the development or review of a policy. Consultation helps identify gaps, test policy principles, identify implementation issues and test the usability and language of a policy. You can, for example:
	   o Establish a policy development working group with key stakeholders
	   o Consult a key group of experts as a policy advisory group at different stages of drafting
	   o Interview policy experts
	   o Organise focus groups to resolve specific policy issues or implementation issues
	   o Organise a policy workshop for key groups to discuss policy principles, review draft policy or resolve implementation issues
	   o Consult key groups as part of regular communication to these groups or as part of regular meeting(s) with these groups
	   o Consult university wide or with specific groups in the form of a survey
	   o Send tailored emails
	   o Provide online material, such as an open consultation on a website or forum or open feedback forms
	
	Tools for this section:
	2. Policy Approval Bodies (pdf)
	3. Policy Stakeholders (pdf)
	4. UCD Teaching & Learning Resources - gathering feedback and focus groups
		Draft Policy Version 2 and subsequent versions

Step	Summary	Outcomes
Step 5 Submit for Approval	Policy approval follows agreed approval steps which must be established at the outset of policy development or review. Sometimes a number of committees must be consulted on a draft policy before final approval. Requirements: 1. Make sure appropriate consultation has been completed before submitting the policy for approval. 2. Submit final draft of the policy for formal approval to the relevant Committee. These include the Governing Authority, Academic Council (and Academic Council Executive Committee) and University Management Team. 3. The policy must be resubmitted for approval in cases where the Approval Body: o Recommends amendments, o Requires clarification, or o Requires a further review, if they determine that the necessary steps for policy development have not been taken. Recommendations: 1. Accompany the policy with a report providing the background information needed for an informed decision on the policy. The tools below will help you identify whether you have provided the information expected by the Approval Body. You can use the Policy Report Template - with tips for completing report (docx) provided or another format you prefer. Tools for this section: • Policy Report Template - with tips for completing report (docx) • Policy Submission Checklist (pdf) • Policy Approval Bodies (pdf)	Final Approved Policy

Step	Summary	Outcomes
Step 6 Communicate	Getting the new policy approved is not the end of the policy development process. It needs to be published and communicated to those directly affected by it, and others may need to be made aware of it. A communication plan, which ensures that all stakeholders are informed of new policy/policy amendments, is an essential part of successful implementation and application of a new policy. Requirements: 1. Publish your policy in the online Document Library. Roles and responsibilities for policy publication are outlined in the Document Library Protocol. 2. Outline a high level communication plan as part of your Policy Development Plan at the outset of the policy development. Recommendations: 1. You may want to develop your own communication plan or expand on the Communication Checklist provided below to identify stakeholder groups relevant to UCD, appropriate communication channels and timelines. For effective communication you need to establish: o Objectives of your communication – An objective could be, for example: *to ensure that all university employees and students are aware of the implications of the Smoke-free Campus Policy before the policy takes effect, and that all visitors will be appropriately informed of the Policy when visiting.* o Responsibilities – Identify who is responsible for communication. o Key audiences – Consider your stakeholder list to identify different audiences. o Preferred communication channels – Consider what method of communication and what style is appropriate for each audience. o Timetable/timeline for your communication – Establish the most appropriate timing for each communication. Tools for this section: • Communications Checklist (docx)	Communication Plan

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Step 7
Implement
	Implementation will commence when the policy has been approved. Planning and preparation for implementation should start at the policy planning and drafting stage. Any major implementation issues, such as developing new processes or reviewing existing ones, along with training needs, should be resolved before the policy is approved. At the latest this should be done by the date the policy becomes effective.
	
	Requirements:
	  1. Plan implementation from the very start of a policy development process.
	  2. Specify who is responsible for overseeing implementation.
	  3. Discuss implementation with all areas, including committees, with a role in implementing the policy to agree a timeline for all required activities.
	  4. Assign responsibility for each activity.
	
	Recommendations:
	  1. Develop an implementation plan with the help of the implementation plan template provided below or another format you prefer. Make sure your plan identifies:
	     o Changes to administrative processes and associated timelines that may require testing, training and communicating
	     o Systems that may set limits to implementation or need changes
	     o Any new and existing resources needed for policy implementation
	     o Measures for monitoring policy implementation
	     o Who is responsible for oversight of implementation
	     o Actions required to address all implementation issues, a timeline and who is responsible for each action
	  2. Establish a log for issues that arise during implementation to inform future reviews of policy.
	
	Tools for this section:
	  • Policy Implementation Plan Template (docx)
		Implementation Plan
		
		Issues log
		
		Measures for monitoring policy implementation

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Step 8
Monitor & Review
	A review of a policy can happen at any time, as circumstances may require. A review can be initiated, for example, by a legislative change, change in operational environment or new strategic objective. A periodic review is required of all University Policies every 3-5 years. Policies remain in effect even if the review date has passed. Possible outcomes of a policy review:
	• Policy continues to be fit for purpose and no amendments are required
	• Revisions to policy are proposed
	• Consolidate policy with another policy
	• Discontinue policy as it is no longer required
	• Discontinue policy as the issue is managed through other means (such as guidelines or procedures)
	
	Requirements:
	1. Monitor policy compliance, for example, by recording issues arising from implementation, gathering feedback and by monitoring decisions taken under the policy. Use the information collected through monitoring activities during the formal review of the policy.
	2. Normally a policy review requires formal consultation and approval and follows the procedures outlined in the Policy Management Framework and this Policy Development Guide. Some editorial amendments can be implemented outside a formal review. To initiate a policy review you need to submit a Policy Proposal to the relevant Approval Body. For further details see Step 1: Identify Need and Submit Proposal.
	
	Recommendations:
	1. Read through the steps in the Policy Development Guide and plan your review as you would any new policy development. A policy review can employ all or some of the same methods as a new policy development, such as establishing a policy review group, consulting stakeholders and researching best practice. Additionally, a policy review should:
	   o Review any operational or other issues logged during implementation
	   o Consult people who implement policy on an operational level
	   o Analyse any available data on policy implementation
	2. Use the Checklist for Policy Review (pdf) for guidance in scoping the review.
	3. Review all procedures, forms and other supporting documents associated with the policy.
	
	Tools for this section:
	• Checklist for Policy Review (pdf)
		Policy Review Plan