

# Policy Framework Policy

## Section 1 - Purpose

(1) Under section 19(1B)(h) of the [Charles Sturt University Act 1989](#), the University Council is to establish policies and procedural principles for the University consistent with legal requirements and community expectations. The Academic Senate is also tasked with developing and implementing appropriate policies to ensure the high quality of teaching and learning within the University, under s 105(1)(b) of the [Charles Sturt University By-laws](#).

(2) The purpose of this policy is to:

- a. state the requirements for rules, policies, procedures, guidelines and local instructions, which together with the [Charles Sturt University Act 1989](#) and [Charles Sturt University By-law 2005 \(By-law\)](#), and committee terms of reference make up the University's policy framework.
- b. promote the development and implementation of rules, policies, procedures and other policy documents that are:
  - i. valued and trusted by staff and students
  - ii. clear, concise, reasoned and in as plain English as possible
  - iii. as few in number as possible to ensure ease of use and to minimise the work of governance and review
  - iv. monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure they meet their objectives
  - v. able to be changed as needed to reflect rapidly changing institutional, sectoral, legislative and regulatory requirements, and systems changes, and
  - vi. well understood by users, are adhered to and can be demonstrated as meeting their stated purpose.

### Scope

(3) This policy applies to:

- a. all rules, policies, procedures, guidelines and local instructions of the University
- b. any person engaged to develop rules, policies, procedures, guidelines and local instructions for the University, and
- c. all University staff and students and all members of the University's governing bodies.

## Section 2 - Policy

### Definitions of types of text

(4) The following types of text, their definitions and authority are the preferred text types to be used in the policy framework:

| Text                 | Definitions and authority                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| a. Rule              | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A legal statement of the authorities and requirements for a function of the University Council, a governance process, or an activity involving decisions that have major consequences for students or staff and may be prone to dispute.</li> <li>2. Must define requirements fully and unambiguously, as a direct statement of the intentions of the University Council or those to whom the Act or By-law delegates the making of rules on specific topics.</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| b. Policy            | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sets out objectives, authorities, responsibilities and high-level rules for an area of the University's activities.</li> <li>2. Applies University-wide unless its scope section limits the scope.</li> <li>3. Can set mandatory requirements for staff and students.</li> <li>4. Should avoid including process detail that is inappropriate for governance bodies or the Executive Leadership Team to consider. Such detail should be in supporting procedures or related instructional materials, which should be linked to the policy as relevant so that the full set of process rules for the activity is visible to the approving authority.</li> <li>5. Cannot contradict a rule: should this occur, the rule overrules the policy.</li> </ol> |
| c. Procedure         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supports a policy or rule by defining detailed process requirements for some or all aspects of the activity defined by the policy or rule.</li> <li>2. Applies University-wide unless its scope section limits the scope.</li> <li>3. Can set mandatory requirements for staff and students.</li> <li>4. Can support a rule directly without an intervening policy.</li> <li>5. Cannot contradict a rule or policy: should this occur, the rule or policy overrules the procedure.</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| d. Guideline         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describes good practice and provides advice to staff or students in applying the requirements of a rule, policy or procedure.</li> <li>2. Does not set mandatory requirements.</li> <li>3. Cannot contradict a rule, policy, or procedure; should this occur, the rule, policy or procedure overrules the guideline.</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| e. Local instruction | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describes the specific requirements of a faculty, division or equivalent organisational unit under a rule, policy or procedure.</li> <li>2. Approved by, and has the status of a written directive from, an executive dean, executive director or equivalent head of an organisational unit.</li> <li>3. Cannot contradict a rule, policy or procedure: should this occur, the rule, policy or procedure overrules the local instruction.</li> <li>4. Should generally not contradict a guideline, except in exceptional circumstances where the Executive Dean, Executive Director or equivalent requires a different application of a rule, policy or procedure for their organisational unit than is described in a guideline.</li> </ol>           |

(5) The University may also introduce other texts that support the policy suite (for example, where an external standard, regulation or convention requires a different term). Where used, these texts should state their equivalence to one of the types of text defined under clause 4 for the purpose of approval and authority. These types of texts may include the following:

- a. Codes – which generally establish rules of behaviour.
- b. Charters and statements – which generally set out principles, values and/or expectations relating to a particular key function/requirement of the University.
- c. Protocols – which generally are similar to procedures.

## Classes of text

(6) The classes of policy text (identified as the ‘document realm’ in the [policy library](#)) are determined by the delegated authority to approve policy texts for governance and management functions. The classes of text are:

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| a. Governance | <p>A policy text related to functions of the University that are retained by the University Council (the Council) and stated in <a href="#">Delegation Schedule A</a>. These include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. risk management</li> <li>2. investment management</li> <li>3. complaints, corruption and whistle-blowing</li> <li>4. legal, contractual and corporate entities</li> <li>5. academic and ceremonial dress</li> <li>6. commercial activities</li> <li>7. honorary awards and recognition, and</li> <li>8. other policies regarding University governance.</li> </ol> | Normally approved by University Council or a committee of the University Council, or as otherwise stated in <a href="#">Delegation Schedule A</a> . |
| b. Academic   | <p>A policy text that governs an aspect of the University's academic activities, such as curriculum, learning and teaching, research, higher degree by research candidature, student administration, the student experience or student success.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Normally approved by Academic Senate, or as otherwise stated in <a href="#">Delegation Schedule A</a> .                                             |
| c. Management | <p>A policy text that governs an aspect of non-academic management activities of the University such as advancement, communication, facilities, finance, global engagement, human resources, information technology, marketing, or other activities not considered matters for academic or governance policy.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Normally approved by Band 8 authorities, or as otherwise stated in <a href="#">Delegation Schedule A</a> .                                          |

## Responsibilities

(7) Policy owners and Policy Developers are responsible for:

- a. leading consultation activities with stakeholders to inform development and review of policies
- b. identifying and incorporating measures of effectiveness
- c. effective implementation of policy owner and developer requirements, and leading ongoing compliance with them
- d. maintaining the currency and compliance of policy texts with internal and external requirements
- e. logging issues with policies raised by users or revealed by monitoring of policy implementation, for the next review, and
- f. assisting the University Secretary to coordinate the policy suite and ensure consistent practice in development and review consistent with the policy framework.

(8) The University Secretary and nominees for policy work are responsible for:

- a. leading and supporting policy development and policy management
- b. coordinating the policy suite and managing the [policy library](#)
- c. endorsing proposals to develop a new policy, for the Vice-Chancellor's approval
- d. ensuring consistent practice in policy development and review
- e. reviewing and editing policy texts drafted by policy owners to ensure they meet the objectives and requirements of this policy
- f. deciding whether proposed changes to a policy text are major, minor or editorial (see clause 22), and directing them to the appropriate approval pathway
- g. verifying with the policy owner that arrangements to implement a new or changed policy text are in place before the new or changed document is published, and
- h. maintaining the schedule of policies to be reviewed.

## Consistency

(9) Lower texts in the policy hierarchy must be consistent with higher texts: the hierarchy is 1, rule (highest); 2, policy; 3, procedure; 4, local instruction (lowest). As guidelines cannot set mandatory requirements, they cannot contradict

other texts, and so are not included in the hierarchy.

(10) Content of policy texts must be consistent with the delegations of authority to specific bodies and officers by the University Council, as stated in the [Delegations and Authorisations Policy](#) and its schedules. The [Delegations and Authorisations Policy](#) and its schedules overrule any inconsistency in a policy or procedure.

(11) A proposal to change, add or remove a delegation must be approved by Council before a policy text relying on the change to delegation can take effect.

(12) Where texts are inconsistent, the higher text overrules the lower text and the lower text must be changed as soon as possible. Such amendments to address inconsistencies between documents in the policy hierarchy are considered minor changes (see clause 21).

(13) The [Enterprise Agreement \(EA\)](#) is a binding agreement between the University, staff unions and the employees specified under the EA as being within its coverage, which sets out conditions of employment for employees within coverage. Policies that set requirements for staff must be consistent with the EA, and any inconsistencies will be overruled by the EA.

## **Force of provisions**

(14) Statements in rules, policies and procedures that use the verbs 'must', 'shall' or 'will' state mandatory requirements for staff and/or students.

(15) Compliance with rules, policies and procedures is a condition of employment at the University, and a condition of enrolment at the University. Non-compliance may lead to disciplinary action (staff) or action for misconduct (students), or other specific consequences defined by particular policies or procedures, or by the EA.

(16) Where a rule, policy or procedure uses the word 'including' or the phrase 'for example', the examples are not intended as an exhaustive list and do not limit the provision to the example(s) stated, unless otherwise stated in the document.

(17) Responsibilities and authorities assigned to officers/units are exercised within the scope of responsibilities related to their position, unless otherwise stated.

(18) Where an organisational unit or position referred to in a policy text changes or is disestablished, the role, authority or responsibility stated in the text will escalate to the next line manager or transfer to the successor of the relevant function until the policy text is amended (except where this would be inconsistent with a higher text).

## **Approval**

### **Approval to develop a new policy**

(19) As far as possible the University will keep the number of policies to a minimum, and only introduce a new policy when:

- a. it is not sufficient to add sections to existing policies, and there is a strong case for a separate rule or policy (for example, where it is specifically required by legislation), and
- b. the Vice-Chancellor requests a policy be developed or approves a proposal to develop a new policy on the recommendation of the University Secretary, or the University Council or Academic Senate determines that a new policy is needed.

(20) Approval to introduce a new policy text is not needed where:

- a. existing policies are to be merely renamed or consolidated into a new policy, or

- b. a new procedure, guideline or local instruction is developed to support a rule or policy.

## Approval authorities

(21) [Delegation Schedule A - Governance and Legal](#) of the [Delegations and Authorisations Policy](#) sets the approval authorities for the types and classes of policy text.

## Changes to policy texts

(22) Changes to policy texts will be determined as one of the following:

- a. Editorial – a change to any policy text that does not change the substantive meaning of the policy text's provisions, and may be used to:
  - i. correct a stylistic or formatting error or clarify wording
  - ii. update terms, unit names, titles or links, or
  - iii. add, remove or update links to new/rescinded texts.
- b. Minor – a change to a rule, policy or procedure, that does not otherwise change the requirements of stakeholders, made to:
  - i. reflect changes in the University's organisational structure or systems
  - ii. reflect changes to external regulatory or legislative documents
  - iii. resolve inconsistency of a text lower in the policy hierarchy with a text higher in the policy hierarchy, or
  - iv. a specific provision or part of the text, that is agreed to or requested by the relevant stakeholders and has no negative impact on the scope, intent or application of the rule, policy or procedure for students or staff.
- c. Major – a change that alters the requirements of stakeholders and/or is not an editorial or minor change. A major change will require a full or partial review of the policy text, except where approved under clause 24.

(23) The University Secretary will determine whether a proposed change to a policy text is major, minor or editorial, and advise the policy owner on the appropriate consultation and approval process.

## Urgent approvals

(24) The Vice-Chancellor may approve a new (or a major change to an existing) policy or procedure where there has been a change in funding requirements, regulatory requirements, legislation or other circumstances where urgent action is needed to mitigate significant risk to the University. This clause may also apply to rules that are approved under the Vice-Chancellor's delegated authority to approve rules.

(25) Following such approvals, the policy owner will conduct a full review of the new/amended rule, policy or procedure as soon as practicable, and normally within one year of the urgent approval.

## Developing policy texts

(26) The [Policy Development and Review Procedure](#) sets out the requirements for policy owners or their nominees in developing or reviewing a rule or policy and its supporting procedures.

## Publishing policy texts

(27) Rules, policies, procedures and guidelines must be published in the University [policy library](#).

(28) Local instructions may be linked to the relevant policy or procedure.

(29) Rules, policies, procedures and guidelines take effect when published unless the approval authority has approved

other take-effect dates or transition arrangements, in which case the publication must state when the provisions take effect.

(30) Transitional provisions must be stated in a new or reviewed policy text if elements of a previous or expired policy text will apply to certain staff or students for a period of time.

## **Review**

(31) Review dates are calculated from the take effect date of the policy text following development or the last full review:

- a. Rules will be fully reviewed at least once every five years.
- b. Policies and procedures will be fully reviewed at least once every five years. If there is a legislative, regulatory or other risk-based requirement, or a substantial business change necessitating more frequent reviews an earlier review date will be set.
- c. Guidelines and local instructions may be reviewed as required, but at least once every three years is recommended.

(32) Changes to a rule, policy or procedure without full review do not change the review date.

(33) The University Secretary can approve extensions to the review date for a rule, policy or procedure on the recommendation of the Manager, Policy and Records where there are justifiable business reasons for an extension.

(34) A policy owner or approval authority may initiate a full review of a policy text earlier than its review date.

(35) The University Secretary will report:

- a. as needed to the Executive Leadership Team on progress with policy reviews and, in particular, on rules, policies and/or procedures that are overdue for review
- b. annually to the University Council on progress with reviews of rules and policies that Council approves, and
- c. annually to the Academic Senate on progress with reviews of rules and policies that Academic Senate approves.

(36) Rules, policies and procedures will continue in force until they are replaced or rescinded.

## **Section 3 - Procedure**

(37) The [Policy Development and Review Procedure](#) supports this policy by stating detailed requirements for policy owners, Policy Developers and core stakeholders in developing and reviewing rules, policies and procedures.

## **Section 4 - Guidelines**

(38) Nil.

## **Section 5 - Glossary**

(39) In this policy, the following terms are defined:

- a. Policy – see ‘Definitions of types of text’ in this policy. ‘Policy’ is also used as an adjective in this document in place of ‘rule, policy, procedure, guideline or local instruction’: for example ‘policy text’ will inclusively mean any or all of those types of text and the ‘policy framework’ or ‘policy suite’ applies to all of these texts.

- b. Policy Developer – the person who leads development or review, and drafting of a policy text on behalf of the policy owner and whose name will appear in the [policy library](#) status and details tab as the ‘author’.
- c. Policy framework – the policy framework defines requirements for development and review of all University policies that set mandatory requirements for staff or students, and the other policy texts that support them.
- d. [Policy library](#) – the University's online repository of policy texts.
- e. Policy owner – the position identified as responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of a policy text and reviewing it, and whose name will appear in the [policy library](#) status and details tab as the ‘unit head’.
- f. Policy suite – the full set of rules, policies, procedures, guidelines, local instructions and committee terms of reference of the University.
- g. Rule – see ‘Definitions of types of text’ in this policy. ‘Rule’ is also used in this policy in its common sense, to mean a specific requirement stated by a rule, policy or procedure.
- h. Transitional provision – means a clause or statement that will modify the requirements of a policy text after it takes effect under a particular circumstance, normally to allow the requirements of a previous policy text to apply for a period of time and/or to a specific cohort of students or staff.

## Section 6 - Document Context

|                     |                                                      |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Compliance drivers  | N/A                                                  |
| Review requirements | As per the <a href="#">Policy Framework Policy</a> . |
| Document class      | Governance                                           |

## Status and Details

|                           |                                                                     |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Status</b>             | Current                                                             |
| <b>Effective Date</b>     | 22nd February 2024                                                  |
| <b>Review Date</b>        | 22nd February 2029                                                  |
| <b>Approval Authority</b> | University Council                                                  |
| <b>Approval Date</b>      | 22nd February 2024                                                  |
| <b>Expiry Date</b>        | Not Applicable                                                      |
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