

## University Policy Framework

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this framework is to establish a consistent approach to the development of policies. Well-developed and clear policies, readily available to members of the university community and other users, are fundamental to an efficient, transparent, diverse and inclusive organisation.

The framework defines a university policy, and conversely provides a definition for procedures and guidelines/codes of practice, which do not constitute a formal university policy. The steps for developing, approving, implementing and revising university policies are also outlined in the framework.

The aim of the framework is to ensure that the university formally approves, implements, and maintains all of its policies using a consistent process and format. Individuals responsible for developing and maintaining policies must follow the requirements outlined in this document for developing, approving, implementing and revising university policies.

### 2. Definitions

#### University Policy

Policies provide a top-level basis for decision-making and are binding on the University community. They support the implementation of University strategies, reflect Warwick's values and ensure compliance with external legislation and regulations. Policies assign responsibilities and identify an owner who is accountable for implementation. They may be supported by Procedures, Guidelines and Codes of Practice, but not vice versa.

#### Procedure

Procedures articulate the official method by which a university policy is carried out and must be followed. Procedures must be linked to and support a Policy, but not vice versa.

#### Guidelines and Codes of Practice

Guidelines or Codes of Practice are advisory documents which indicate a course of action that will usually be followed unless there is an exceptional reason for not doing so. They provide protocols, best practice and guidance to ensure staff and others can comply with specific policies and procedures.

Guidelines or Codes of Practice can be introduced within a local area/department. This can include adaption to suit local circumstances provided that the link with the relevant policy or procedure is retained and the University's regulatory framework is not compromised.

If you require assistance in confirming the classification of the document you are developing, please contact [policyoversightgroup@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:policyoversightgroup@warwick.ac.uk)

### 3. Policy Development, Approval, Implementation and Revision Process:

Policies are approved in accordance with [Section 2 of the University's Scheme of Delegation](#).

The Policy Oversight Group has strategic oversight, on behalf of the University Executive Board, over all of the University's policies. The Policy Oversight Group will ensure that each policy conforms to the University's Policy Framework, complies with internal regulations and external legislation, and fulfils relevant compliance training and monitoring.

Policies that have significant financial, legal or reputational risks may be recommended to the University Executive Board or another relevant committee for approval. For example, Finance and General Purposes Committee are required to approve any policy or proposed course of action that will have a significant impact on the financial or budgetary position of the University.

New policies or changes to existing policies are developed by policy owners or their nominees who have responsibility for the relevant policy area in accordance with this Policy Framework. Each policy is required to have a

designated policy owner who has responsibility for the development, implementation and review of the policy. More than one policy owner may be designated for an individual policy, particularly when the scope of the policy includes multiple groups of stakeholders.

The requirement for a specific policy could be determined by the Council, Senate or senior management, or in response to changes in legislation or the University's regulatory environment. Directors and Heads of Departments have responsibilities to ensure that the University operates in accordance with this regulatory environment and should alert the Policy Oversight Group (via [policyoversightgroup@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:policyoversightgroup@warwick.ac.uk)) to any gaps that are identified in the policy framework. If a new policy is required, the Secretary to Council will determine the appropriate individual or department responsible for the policy's development.

Prior to submitting a draft policy to the Policy Oversight Group, the policy owner must consider the wider implications and consult with relevant stakeholders. The Secretary to the Policy Oversight Group ([policyoversightgroup@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:policyoversightgroup@warwick.ac.uk)) can advise on this process and help determine whether there are already policies in place that might address the specific issue or concern, or that might reasonably be amended to do so. Some factors to consider are as follows:

- Directors or Heads of Departments should be made aware of any implications for their area(s) of responsibility.
- Consideration should be given to how the policy aligns with the University's strategic objectives and priorities. A discussion with the appropriate Executive-lead could be beneficial in this regard.
- Consultation with HR could help to ensure that the policy does not infringe employment law or the University's contracts of employment.
- Where new policies will have an impact on students (including UKVI matters) consultation with the relevant student-facing department will ensure that a policy is appropriately student focused.
- Legal, compliance and data protection elements need to be taken into account, with advice sought from relevant departments (Legal & Compliance Services, Health & Safety, Information & Digital Group) as appropriate.
- Any resource requirements and impacts, both upfront and ongoing, should be considered in consultation with the Finance Team.
- It is important to ensure that a policy is consistent with the principles underpinning the University's Climate Emergency Declaration and sustainability aims.
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion considerations will be picked up as part of the required Equality Screening Form process (outlined below).

A common format for all policies is required to ensure consistency and transparency. Policies should be written in plain English, and concise, accessible, gender-neutral language should be adopted. The [policy coversheet template](#) should be used when creating a new policy or amending an existing policy.

Each policy must clearly outline:

- the policy owner
- the 'issue date (i.e. date of implementation)
- the purpose (i.e. what issues/strategic priorities/legal or regularity requirements it will address)
- the scope (i.e. to which members of the university community does it apply)
- the key definitions
- the roles and responsibilities
- how it will be implemented (i.e. who will be responsible for implementing the policy, monitoring compliance and reviewing its effectiveness)
- any Equality, Diversity and Inclusion implications

All policies should be submitted to the Policy Oversight Group via [policyoversightgroup@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:policyoversightgroup@warwick.ac.uk) for approval at an upcoming meeting or by circulation if necessary. The group will ensure that each policy conforms to the University's Policy Framework, complies with internal regulations and external legislation, and fulfils relevant compliance training and monitoring.

To evaluate whether a policy may disproportionately impact or discriminate against individuals with a protected characteristic, the policy owner is required to complete a [Equality Screening Form](#) before submitting a policy for approval. If a negative impact is identified, a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) must be conducted. Evidence of the outcome of this assessment should be attached to the policy coversheet. Further information about EIA's can be found here [https://warwick.ac.uk/services/equalops/findsupport/impact\\_assessment](https://warwick.ac.uk/services/equalops/findsupport/impact_assessment).

A University policy becomes operational and enforceable upon approval by the relevant committee or when added to the [Policy Zone](#) by the Governance Team.

It is the responsibility of the policy owner to develop procedures for the implementation of the university policies within their purview and for the organisation of appropriate communication of such policies through the relevant channels to the wider university community. It is also their responsibility to monitor compliance with the policy and manage any instances of non-compliance.

The Governance team may make editorial changes to a policy, provided that such changes do not substantially affect the policy and provided that such changes are approved by the policy owner or key contact prior to submission for approval.

The Governance team will maintain the University's [Policy Zone](#) and carry out an annual review of the policy tracker, contacting policy owners annually or when a policy is due for renewal to ensure policies are kept up to date. Policies shall be reviewed at least every three years. Continued publication of a policy beyond its documents review date shall not invalidate the policy.

Version Control			
<b>Current Version Number</b>	2		
<b>Date of Last review</b>	December 2021		
<b>Date of Next review</b>	September 2022		
Amendment History			
<i>Ensure links are updated online following amendments.</i>			
Version No.	Date	Summary of amendments (if no change, write NA)	Author
1	24 September 2020	Establishment of Policy Framework	Becky Purnell / Emma Tew
2	9 December 2021	Updated to reflect comments of POG members (made at the POG meeting on 9 March 2021) and to reflect that it is the responsibility of the policy owner to consider the wider implications of a policy during development and consult with key stakeholders prior to submission.	Emma Tew