# PURPOSE

This guide intends to provide broad guidance on how to propose the creation, rescission, or review and amendment of University policies. It is based on a prior document – the Policy Formatting Guide – and accordingly will initially focus on how to use the University Policy and Procedures templates. Over time it will be expanded to include information on how to run a policy development project, the role of the Policy Developer, and how to approach complex University policy requirements.

# GENERAL GUIDANCE TO DEVELOPING POLICY

If you are proposing to (i) develop an entirely new policy, (ii) rescind an existing policy, or (iii) review an existing policy, it is important to discuss the proposal with the Senior Policy Advisor ([policy@ecu.edu.au](mailto:policy@ecu.edu.au)) at the earliest instance.

Templates, tools and guidance information can also be found on the [SGSC Policy Tools and Templates webpage](https://intranet.ecu.edu.au/staff/centres/strategic-and-governance-services/our-services/legislation-and-policy/policy-tools-and-templates).

# UNIVERSITY POLICY AND PROCEDURES TEMPLATES

### GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT TEMPLATES

## REQUIREMENT TO USE TEMPLATES

* All university policies and procedures will conform to the Policy Template and Procedures Template, available [here](https://intranet.ecu.edu.au/staff/centres/strategic-and-governance-services/our-services/legislation-and-policy/policy-tools-and-templates).
* All new policies and procedures will use the current templates, and existing policies and procedures will generally be brought into alignment with the templates as they are reviewed. It is the Policy Developer’s responsibility to ensure that draft policies are formatted in line with the University’s Policy Formatting Guide.
* Properly formatted policy documents:
  + makes it easier for staff, students and other parties to read and understand the often-complex information in policies.
  + signals to third parties (including regulators, potential strategic and contract partners, prospective students and staff, and the public) that the University has quality processes, and is profession and credible; and
  + improves accessibility, particularly for screen readers.

## TRACKED CHANGES

* To assist in reviewing and quality assurance, all proposed amendments to policies are to be tracked.
* This requirement can be waived where the policy is new or has been substantively rewritten.
* If the document is not in the new ECU branding, do not attempt to bring it into the new branding; per the explanatory note this will be done prior to publication.

## HEADINGS

* University policies use standard headings that are not to be changed.
* If there is a need to add a heading, discuss with the Senior Policy Advisor.

## FONT

* Normal body text is 11-point Aptos.

## ALIGNMENTS & INDENTATIONS

* Alignments and indentations are preformatted on the documents.

### POLICY/PROCEDURES DETAILS BLOCK

## TITLE

* The policy name should clear, descriptive, and align with the policy matter being addressed.
* Where possible, avoid using pre-emptive phrases like “Management of <policy matter>”.
* Avoid using ‘ECU’ and only use ‘University’ where strictly necessary to distinguish between university matters and other matters.

## POLICY OWNER

* The Policy Owner should only be changed in consultation with the Senior Policy Advisor.

## KEYWORDS

* Keywords are 2-5 words or phrases intended to help users find the document.
* Do not use words already present in the policy title.
* Generally use lower-case and separate each keyword with a comma.

## REFERENCE

* Use only the PL### code and do not add prior codes.
* If the policy is new, a PL code will be assigned at publication.

## HYPERLINKED CONTENTS LIST

* The beginning of the policy document has a contents list with hyperlinks that redirect to relevant sections within the document. You do not need to alter this.

### POLICY SECTIONS

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| --- |
| **Note:** While the information in the ‘Policy Sections’ advice is specific to University’s policies the information will be broadly similar for University procedures. Specific advice on procedures will be added over time. |

## SECTION 1: INTENT

* The intent section should clearly and concisely (1-3 sentences) explain why the policy is required and the desired outcome.
* Recall that policies are “a statement of mandatory principles that inform decisions and actions on matters of important to the University,” (Policy Governance Policy) and as such should be high-level principles, not step-by-step processes. If you need assistance, please discuss further with the Senior Policy Advisor.
* The intent generally begins with, “The purpose of this policy is to”.
  + *Note: for procedures, the intent may reference the support or operationalisation of the policy that it supports (e.g., “The purpose of this procedure is to support and operationalise the XYZ Policy.”)*

## SECTION 2: ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

* The organisational scope defines who is required to comply with the policy.
* The scope generally begins with, “This policy applies to”.
* Consider whether the policy applies to the University’s global operations (including ECU Sri Lanka), how this will be accommodated, and what consultation might be required.
* Further guidance will be added on Scope in future versions of this guide.

## SECTION 3: DEFINITIONS

* Definitions should only be added where strictly necessary or beneficial. Do not add a defined term where:
  + the dictionary definition will suffice; and
  + the term is already in the [University Glossary](https://edithcowanuni.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/SGS-CorpKB/EQ3-eRb52i1OuSCFDZ5vH50BwBks0VstyQkfoMWm4dNjtw?e=pm7K8g) (unless a meaning specific to the policy is required).
* If there are no defined terms, delete the table and add “Nil.”
* Terms:
  + use [title case / headline case](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Title_case).
  + set alignment as left aligned.
* Definitions:
  + short, clear definitions are best.
  + start each definition with the description and do not use “Means”.
  + use sentence case (standard case), meaning only capitalise words in the definition that would normally be capitalised (e.g., Edith Cowan University, *Privacy Act*).
  + avoid using third-party definitions (e.g., from ISO standards, legislation), but where used, add “Has the meaning per <source> as amended from time-to-time. At the date of last approval this is: <definition>.”
    - These definitions will need to be reviewed each time the policy is amended.
  + set alignment as justified.
* Once a term is added to the definitions list, every use of the term in the policy should be in title case / headline case.
* Roles and their assignments should generally be in the policy content section and not the definitions section (e.g., the description and assignment of the Privacy Champion is established in the policy content section of the Privacy Policy and not the definitions section).
* Before submitting the policy for review or providing for consultation, confirm that each defined term is used in the policy and remove any that are not.

## SECTION 4: POLICY CONTENT

* The policy content section, comprised of numbered sub-sections, sets out the University’s policy position on the matter.
* Policy and procedural statements are generally trying to achieve one or more of the following:
  1. signalling to third parties (including regulators, potential strategic and contract partners, prospective students and staff, and the public) what the University’s position is on an important matter.
  2. providing clarity to students on the University’s position and processes such that the University can be held to account.
  3. providing clear and contextualised direction and coordination on how the University and its staff will meet its legislative, regulatory and contractual obligations.
  4. coordinating important processes within the University, including establishing authorities for decisions, criteria or matters for consideration in decisions, and operational responsibilities.
  5. providing direction to staff or other engaged parties on how to behave or act, with the potential for performance management or disciplinary action for non-conformance.
* Policy and procedural statements should be principle-based, comprehensive and long-standing, and readily understood by readers.
* Use the sub-headings in the template to help the reader understand how sub-sections work are related.
* Sub-clause lists:
  + are indented, alphabetic lists that follow from a sub-section (i.e., is read in conjunction with the sub-section). If the list item is a full sentence or statement in its own right, it likely should be its own sub-section rather than part of a list.
  + in policy writing, each list item should terminate with a semi-colon, except for the final item which should terminate with a full stop.
  + each list should clearly identify if the list items are connected with an ‘and’ or an ‘or’ by adding this after the semi-colon on the penultimate list item (look at other policies for guidance).
* Sub-headings and sub-sections are to be separated by a line space.

## SECTION 5: ACCOUNTABILITIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

* The policy template has standard wording for this section that must be used.
* Further accountabilities or responsibilities can be added to this section but ideally should instead be stated in section 4 (Policy Content).

## SECTION 6: RELATED DOCUMENTS

* The purpose of this section is to provide references to documents that relate to the policy content and which readers may wish to be aware of or consult.
* This section has a number of headings for related documents: add only those documents that are referenced in the policy or are clearly related to the policy content, and delete any headings that have no documents listed.
* In short, legislation should follow this format: *Crimes Act 1958* (Cth). For further guidance on how to reference legislation in this and other sections, see Appendix 1. Referencing legislation.
* The University’s statutes, rules and by-laws should be italicised, while policies, procedures and other documents should not be italicised.
* Corporate Governance Documents are those documents as such on the [Legislation, Policy and Governance Documents Directory](https://policysearch.ecu.edu.au/).
* Unless unfeasible, all documents should be hyperlinked.

## SECTION 7: CONTACT INFORMATION

* The All Enquiries Contact is the individual who is to be contacted for queries and advice in relation to the procedure.
* The Policy Owner is a defined role under the Policy Governance Policy and changes to the Policy Owner are to made in consultation with the Senior Policy Advisor.

## SECTION 8: APPROVAL HISTORY

* Per the Policy Governance Policy, policies are approved only by the Vice-Chancellor or Council. The Senior Policy Advisor can advise on the appropriate approval authority.
* The ‘Date policy first approved’ is set when the policy is first approved and thereafter does not change.
* The ‘Date last modified’ will be set when amendments to a policy are approved. For draft documents this may be replaced with “<date to be added post-approval>”.
* The revision history is reflects approvals to the policy and provides a brief summary of the approved changes. For proposed amendments, this should be amended with a new entry summarising the new changes:

“<date to be added post-approval>:” <add here a summary of changes>

* The ‘Next revision due’ date is set by default at 5 years for policies and 3 years for procedures, but may be shortened by request of the Policy Owner or where SGSC has particular concerns.
  + Note: ‘Minor changes’ per the Policy Change Guide do not result in a change to the review date.

# Change log

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| --- | --- |
| **Date amended** | **Amendment** |
| 25 Sep 2025 | Fully reviewed, substantially amended, and transitioned from Policy Formatting Guide to Policy Development Guide. |
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# Appendix 1. Referencing legislation

**Principle**: legislation should always be named in full (e.g, *Crimes Act 1958* (Cth)) and hyperlinked to the Related Docs section.

* The legislation should always be named in full, in the following format:
  + <*Title*> <*Year*> (<Jurisdiction abbreviated>)
  + e.g., *Crimes Act 1958* (Cth)
* Both title and year are to be italicised, and the jurisdiction abbreviated without punctuation (e.g., Cth, WA, Vic)
* Where multiple Acts have the same title but contain different numbers in their short titles given by Parliament (e.g., ‘(No 1)’ and ‘(No 2)’), the number should be included and appear in parentheses.
  + e.g., *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Consequential Related Measures) Act (No 1) 1999* (Cth)
* Generally references will be to the principal Act and not an amendment Act, but there may be cases where it makes sense to refer to the latter.
  + e.g., a policy developer may wish to reference the 2018 amendment Act that introduced new offences related to espionage and foreign interference (*National Security Legislation Amendment (Espionage and Foreign Interference) 2018* (Cth)) rather than the more general principal Act being amended (*Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth)).
* For further guidance on referencing legislation and other legal materials, refer to the *Australian Guide to Legal Citation.[[1]](#footnote-2)*

1. Melbourne University Law Review Association (2018). *Australian Guide to Legal Citation*. Fourth ed. Melbourne: Melbourne University Law Review Association In Collaboration With Melbourne Journal Of International Law) (available online [here](https://law.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/3181325/AGLC4-with-Bookmarks-1.pdf)). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)