Instructions for Writing a University Procedure

These instructions must be followed when developing new and revising existing procedure and should be read in conjunction with the Policy and Procedure Manual and Policy and Procedure Style Guide. An Annotated Procedure Template is also available to assist and provides the required format.

There are separate Instructions for Writing a Procedure.

Style

Policy and procedures must be written in clear, concise, grammatical plain English. Aim to capture the essential features of procedures as succinctly as possible.

Use:

- everyday words
- the same word for the same concept throughout
- terms that are unlikely to change or become outdated (e.g. use position titles rather than the names of individual staff members)
- refer to 'the University' rather than 'USQ'
- short sentences
- short paragraphs of no more than 4-5 lines of text
- 'must' or 'will', not 'should', in procedures
- active rather than passive voice
- gender-inclusive language (or make gender-specific pronouns plural or reword; avoid the use of 'he/she')
- the third person in preference to the second person (e.g. 'they' rather than 'you')
- the format DD/MM/YYYY for dates (e.g. 21/10/2006).

Avoid:

- wordiness and long chunks of text
- jargon
- the use of double negatives
- calendar due dates – instead use generic dates e.g. 'on the first Monday after the release of final results'
- acronyms and abbreviations except where necessary - use the full term on the first occasion with the acronym immediately after in brackets:- e.g. 'Chief Financial Officer (CFO)', then use the acronym in the remainder of the document.

Images/graphics

Any images or graphics included in procedure must be inserted as a picture only; ie jpeg, png, bmp ('SmartArt' will not display on the web). Alternative text must be added to assist readers with a disability. To add, right click over the image, select 'format picture', 'alt text' and insert a short title and description of the image.

Common terms and definitions

Definitions of defined terms are contained in policy and procedure and are contained in the Definitions Dictionary. All occurrences of a definition must be capitalised. Definitions are normally developed in conjunction with the relevant policy or procedure. If you wish to recommend inclusion of additional terms in the Definitions Dictionary, please contact Policy Services.

Tables and figures

Number and label tables and figures and refer to them by number. Insert a table title before the table and figure title after the figure, using the following convention:

Table 1: <insert title> (bold text, before table)
Figure 1: <insert title> (bold text, after figure)

Hyperlinks

Minimise the use of hyperlinks in the body of the procedure and insert these in the relevant section of the metadata table at the end of the procedure. This will aid usibility, minimise the number of broken links in procedure and ensure ease of update.

Template Fields

A procedure is directive in style. That is, the procedure is always written as if it has been approved. Words such as 'will' and 'is' (not 'should') are appropriate.

Procedure Title
The title of the procedure must not start with the words 'The', 'USQ', 'University' or 'Procedure', or contain an abbreviation. Procedures will be listed alphabetically within policy and procedure categories, and the first word of the procedure should be informative to facilitate recognition when scanning the list. 'Procedure' must be the last word of the title (e.g. *Enrolment Procedure*, rather than *Procedure on Enrolment*).

The title of the procedure must use key descriptors that reflect accurately the procedure scope. Where there are multiple descriptors, the title should begin with the broadest descriptor and then be refined with narrower terms following a colon; for example, *Assessment: Alternative Arrangements Procedure* rather than *Alternative Arrangements for Assessment*.

1. Purpose

Describe briefly the rationale for the procedure; i.e. why the procedure is needed. Where applicable, this must be based on the relevant Policy Deployment Plan. Begin the sentence with 'To', followed by a verb.

Example – Enrolment Procedure

To set out the processes for enrolling Students.

2. Scope

Identify who the procedure applies to (e.g. separate areas or groups within the University or the whole University). Identify groups with reference to the Definitions Dictionary and identify any exclusions. Where no exceptions are identified, the scope may be described as follows: 'This procedure applies across the University'.

Indicate, as appropriate:

- the members of the University community to whom the procedure applies (all Employees and Students; academic Employees; postgraduate research Students, etc.), with particular reference to the following key definitions:
    - Employee
    - Student
    - Research Worker
    - University Members;
- the functions and/or situations to which the procedure applies;
- the type of course, program or activity to which the procedure applies (undergraduate courses; research programs, etc.); and
- if necessary, the boundaries separating the scope of this procedure from that of related University Procedures.

Example – Enrolment Procedure

This procedure applies to Enrolment at all locations in all programs and Courses at the University.

3. Procedure Overview

This provides a concise summary of the content of the procedures and will be no longer than two paragraphs in length. Start the sentence with 'This procedure', followed by a verb.

Example – Enrolment Procedure

This procedure outlines the processes for enrolling Students.

4. Procedures

This is the formal statement of the mandatory process or steps to be followed. The procedures set out the actions that must be undertaken in order to deal with a particular situation consistent with policy. They do not include information such as calendar due dates, or processes which may vary from year to year; this information should be provided in manuals, business rules, or web pages published by the local organisational area, and cross-referenced to the procedures in the Policy and Procedure Library. Procedures may, however, include generic dates, for example, 'on the first Monday after the release of final results'.

When drafting the instructions, break the procedures up into a series of distinct actions or steps that need to be completed and set them out in the order that they should be completed. Number each separate step or action sequentially. Short paragraphs are preferable. It is preferable to map actions out in advance (for example, as a flowchart) and to test actions with users to check that no step is missing and that they are in the correct order.

For each item, state who is responsible for carrying out this step of the procedures. Use position titles, not the names of individual staff members. In order to minimise the need to update content to reflect changes in organisational structure, where possible refer to the 'Accountable Officer' of a named policy or procedure.

If there are consequences related to not following a procedure, these should be included.

Example – Excerpt from Enrolment Procedure

4.3 Commonwealth Support Places

Students who are in a Commonwealth Supported Place are required to submit a Request for Commonwealth Support and a HECS-HELP form prior to Census Date at the commencement of each program.

Failure to submit a Request for Commonwealth Support and HECS-HELP forms by the Census Date for the Semester will result in cancellation of Enrolment.

Students who are in a Commonwealth Supported Place and who are required to make an up-front payment of their Student Contribution Amount must pay in full by the published due date for the Semester.

Students who are eligible to defer their Student Contribution Charge to a HECS-HELP loan must supply their tax file number by the Census Date for that Semester.

Failure to supply a tax file number (or alternatively make full payment of the up-front Student Contribution Charge) by the Census Date for the Semester will result in cancellation of Enrolment.

Students who are in a Commonwealth Supported Place and who are eligible to defer their Student Amenities Fee should submit a request for SA-HELP form prior to the Census date at the commencement of each program.

5. References

Using the APA referencing style, insert references to publications referenced in the development of the procedure. If specific sections of legislation are referred to in the content of the procedure, also add that piece of legislation as a reference.

6. Schedules

The following standard statement is included in all templates:

> *This procedure must be read in conjunction with its subordinate schedules as provided in the table below.*

Refer to the following section for more information regarding schedules.

7. Procedure Information

Subordinate Schedules
Schedules contain content that is subordinate to the procedure and are too long to include in the procedure document. Inclusion of detail in a separate Schedule aids readability and usability as they are published separately and can be referenced directly.

Accountable Officer
The Accountable Officer will be determined by the procedure type and must be referred to by position title (refer Table 1 below).

Procedure Type
Insert the words 'University Procedure' (this is only University-wide procedure type provided in the Policy and Procedure Framework).

Table 1: Procedure type and approval authority

Type	Examples of Policy Subject Matter	Accountable Officer	Approval Authority
University Procedure related to Governance Policy	Delegations, privacy, fraud and corruption control, intellectual property, codes of conduct, risk, public interest disclosures and anti-discrimination	Member of Vice-Chancellor's Committee	Vice-Chancellor
University Procedure related to Academic Quality Policy	Admission, academic courses and programs, appeals, assessment, learning and teaching, academic standing, academic misconduct, research	Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor Or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students and Communities) Or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Services and Chief Information Officer)	Vice-Chancellor
University Procedure related to Executive Policy	Student administration and support, external engagement, marketing and communication, human resources, financial management, records and information management, campus facilities and environment, work health and safety, crisis management, planning	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students and Communities) Or Executive Director (Finance and People Capability) Or Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Or	Vice-Chancellor

	and quality	Executive Director (Campus Services) Or Executive Director (SBMI) Or Executive Director (ICT)	
Regulated Policy and Procedure **Note**: at the date of writing this category was no longer in use			

Date Approved
This is the date the procedure was approved by the relevant Approval Authority.

Effective Date
Unless otherwise determined by the Approval Authority, the procedure will become effective from the date it is approved.

Review Date
All new procedures, or major amendments to procedures, are to be reviewed three years from the date the procedure comes into effect. The default review period thereafter is three years from the date of last review unless an earlier or later date is approved by the Approval Authority.

Definitions
Alphabetically list definitions for terms referred to in the procedure that are not commonly used. Definitions must be statements that give the meaning of the term being defined. Be careful not to provide definitions which are inconsistent with ordinary dictionary definitions. There is no need to define commonly-understood terms, however definitions can be used to define terms that change frequently; e.g. the name of government departments that are referenced through procedure.

Acronyms should not be included here but may be included in the body of the document, with the first use cited in full, followed by the acronym in brackets. On separate lines, state each key term followed by a colon, followed by the definition.

Terms should always be capitalised and defined consistently across all Policy and Procedure Library content. Existing definitions provided in the Definitions Dictionary must be used wherever possible and should be listed exactly as they appear in the Definitions Dictionary and on separate lines. Upon publication of the policy/procedure they will be automatically hyperlinked to the relevant definition in the Definitions Dictionary.

Related Legislation
Use exact titles of Regulatory Compliance Instruments and hyperlink with reference to the Compliance Register. Italicise the full titles of legislation and regulations.

Related Policies
Use exact titles of directly related policies, as approved and recorded in the Policy and Procedure Library.

Related Procedures
Use exact titles of directly related procedures, as approved and recorded in the Policy and Procedure Library.

Related Forms, Publications and Websites
List any related documents, other than legislation, policies or procedures. Any documents referred to in the body of the procedure must be listed in alphabetical order and hyperlinked and may include forms, publications, websites etc.

Keywords
Users can search for policies and procedures in the Policy and Procedure Library by keyword. It is not necessary to list any word in the title or body of a policy or procedure as a keyword, as these are automatically included in keyword searches. List any other obvious words that users may possibly enter to search for this document. Provide in a single line, in lower case, with each entry separated by a comma.