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 Instrument Procedure](#).

Once the Policy and Procedure Development Proposal has been approved, a new container will be set up in Content Manager which will include a procedure template that you will be able to edit. An [Annotated Procedure Template](#) is available to assist with formatting but is not intended to act as a template for drafting purposes. Please note that in many cases these instructions build on and provide greater detail than the [Annotated Procedure Template.](#)

There are separate [Instructions for Writing a Policy](#).

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- terms that are unlikely to change or become outdated (e.g. use position titles rather than the names of individual staff members)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

- caution when using terms such as 'must/will/normally' as these terms can create compliance obligations (if used casually/inappropriately, the University could find itself in a situation where there is audit risk due to a compliance breach of a self-imposed obligation)

- 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.

1 Images/graphics

Any images or graphics included in procedure must be inserted as a picture only; i.e. 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.

2 Common terms and definitions

Definitions of defined terms contained in policy and procedure 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. Please also refer to the Instructions for Writing a Definition.

3 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)

4 Hyperlinks

It is very easy for hyperlinks to become broken when they are contained in the body of a policy or procedure. To increase usability, minimise the number of broken links in procedure and ensure ease of update, insert hyperlinks in the relevant section of the metadata table at the end of the procedure.

5 Template Fields

Procedures should be written as though they are already approved. The language used should reflect that.

6 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*.

6.1 Purpose

Describe why the procedure is needed. Begin the sentence with 'To', followed by a verb.

Example – Enrolment Procedure

To set out the processes for enrolling Students.

6.2 Scope

Identify who the procedure applies 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.

6.3 Procedure Overview

This concise (two paragraphs) summary explains the content of the procedures. Start the sentence with 'This procedure', followed by a verb.

Example – Enrolment Procedure

This procedure outlines the processes for enrolling Students.

6.4 Procedures

This section is intended to capture the mandatory process or steps to be followed in order to deal with a particular situation consistent with the policy. There may be one procedure or several, each of which may be broken into a series of distinct actions or steps that need to be completed. Number each separate step or action sequentially.

The steps in a procedure should be set out in the order that they should be completed. Try to keep the paragraphs short and the explanations simple.

For new procedures, it is strongly recommended to map actions out prior to listing them in the procedure (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.

Do not include information such as calendar due dates or processes that may vary from year to year. This information should be provided in manuals, business rules, or web pages and cross-referenced to the procedures in the Policy and Procedure Library. Do (if needed) include generic dates, for example, 'on the first Monday after the release of final results'.

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

Apply caution when using terms such as 'must/will/normally' as these terms can create compliance obligations. If used casually/inappropriately, the University could find itself in a situation where there is audit risk due to a compliance breach of a self-imposed obligation.

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.

6.5 References

Use the APA referencing style to insert any references to publications used 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.

6.6 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

7.1 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.

7.2 Accountable Officer

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

7.3 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	Commonly a Member of Vice-Chancellor's Executive (VCE)	Vice-Chancellor or Vice-Chancellor's nominated officer
University Procedure related to Academic Quality Policy	Admission, academic courses and programs, appeals, assessment, learning and teaching, academic standing, academic misconduct, research	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation), Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic),Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education), Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Services	Vice-Chancellor or Vice-Chancellor's nominated officer (Requires endorsement by Academic Board)
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 and quality	Commonly, any of above and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Enterprise Services) or Executive Director within Enterprise Services Division	Vice-Chancellor or Vice-Chancellor's nominated officer
Regulated Policy and Procedure	**Note**: *at the date of writing this category was no longer in use*		

7.4 Date Approved

This is the date the procedure was approved by the relevant Approval Authority. No text needs to be entered in this field as it will be updated during the publication process.

7.5 Effective Date

Unless otherwise determined by the Approval Authority, the procedure will become effective from the date it is approved. No text needs to be entered in this field as it will be updated during the publication process.

7.6 Review Date

All new procedures, or major amendments to procedures, are to be reviewed three years from the date the procedure comes into effect unless an earlier or later date is approved by the Approval Authority. No text needs to be entered in this field as it will be updated during the publication process.

7.7 Definitions

There are three types of definitions used in policy and procedure. To develop a new definition, refer to the Instructions for Writing a Definition.

Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary have a common meaning across the University. When these terms are used in a policy or procedure they should be capitalised in the body of the policy or procedure and listed in the metadata table with (Approved) written next to the definition.

If the development of the policy or procedure identifies new terms proposed for inclusion in the Definitions Dictionary, they should also be capitalised and captured in the metadata table, with (For Approval) written next to the definition.

Finally, terms that require explanation but are not likely to have a common relevance across the University should be captured in the metadata table as 'Definitions that relate to this procedure only'.

Definitions should be listed alphabetically and should not be 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.

7.8 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.

7.9 Related Policies

Use exact titles of directly related policies, as approved and recorded in the Policy and Procedure Library. Indirectly related policies should not be listed.

7.10 Related Procedures

Use exact titles of directly related procedures, as approved and recorded in the Policy and Procedure Library. Indirectly related procedures should not be listed.

7.11 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.

7.12 Keywords

Users can search for policies and procedures in the Policy and Procedure Library by keyword. Any word in the title or body of a policy or procedure as a keyword is automatically included in keyword searches and should not be listed here. Instead, list any other words that users may enter to search for this document. Provide in a single line, in lower case, with each entry separated by a comma.