Policy Library Style Guide

Policy document formatting guidelines for drafters.

Style Guide Procedure

University of **Southern Queensland**

Purpose

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

- To set out the requirements for Policy Instrument drafting.

1 Scope

Identify **who** the procedure applies to and identify any exclusions. Keep it short and sweet!

- This procedure applies to all Policy Instrument drafters.

2 Procedure Overview

This concise (two paragraphs) summary provides an **overview** of the content of the procedures.

This procedure outlines the essential guidelines and best practices for Policy Instrument drafting to ensure consistency across the Policy library and to ensure the effectiveness and enforceability of Policy Instruments.

This Procedure aligns with:

Mapping to legislation
We map all relevant Policy Instruments to two legislative instruments: the Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) and the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (National Code).

- *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021* (HESF)*:* 6.2 Corporate Monitoring and Accountability.

Italicise the full titles of acts and legislative instruments within the text of the Policy Instrument. Italics should also be used for the titles of books, periodicals and other published documents. Shortened titles may be used for publications, provided that the full title has already appeared in the text and the other words are not changed.

3 Procedures

Maintaining consistent formatting and typography across the University Policy Library is key to making the content easy to read and visually organised. It is essential to adhere to the designated font styles, sizes, and formatting within the Policy Instrument templates. This ensures a cohesive appearance while also facilitating ease of reference and comprehension for users.

Headings and subheadings
Policy instruments templates come with mandatory pre-set main headings. These headings cannot be modified however drafters have the flexibility to include subheadings under the pre-set headings to further organise content. Using the designated Microsoft Word document styles in policy instrument templates is essential for system publication. Styles in Word help format and organise documents consistently and efficiently and provide formatting settings that can be applied to text or paragraphs with a single click.

4.1 Consistency

Consistency in style and formatting ensures that all the policies and documents produced by the organisation share a unified and recognisable appearance. This uniformity not only reinforces the organisation's branding and professionalism but also helps employees and stakeholders quickly identify and navigate through internal documentation. It reduces confusion and streamlines document creation and revision.

4.2 Accessibility

Accessibility is a critical aspect of style guide adherence as it encompasses guidelines and practices that ensure documents are more inclusive and user-friendly for individuals. By incorporating accessibility features and following the recommended

An '**Accessibility** Checker' tool is available in Word documents under the "Review" tab and will provide options to make the content easier for people with disabilities to read and edit.

When using an **abbreviation**, spell out the full term when first referenced, followed by the abbreviation in brackets. The abbreviation can then be used going forward. If the term is only used once in the Policy Instrument, the full term should be used and the abbreviation is not included.

Hyperlinks
The Policy library currently has limited capacity for large-scale hyperlinking within the body of the document itself. Please include any links in the metadata table in the 'related forms/ websites' section.
You can contact the Policy team if you have any specific hyperlinking requirements.

Punctuation
Use commas appropriately, especially when separating items in a list or elements within a sentence but avoid their overuse. Follow the standard rules for punctuation within quotations, use semicolons to separate related independent clauses, and hyphenate compound adjectives. Parentheses should be used sparingly and not disrupt the main sentence's grammatical structure. Proper usage of dashes, slashes, ampersands and italics should be observed.

guidelines, organisations can enhance the reach and usability of their policies and documents.

4.3 Compliance

The HESF necessitates providers to adhere to their institutional academic governance policy framework to ensure their effectiveness in maintaining the quality of higher education. Section 5.6 of the University's Policy Framework requires a consistent Policy Instrument structure in alignment with the organisation's style guide. This is not merely a recommendation, but a requirement aimed at ensuring that the University operates within the bounds of its legal and regulatory compliance obligations. It also facilitates transparency and consistency and assists readability and effective implementation.

4.4 Use non-discriminatory language

Drafters should consider the impact of the policy on diverse audiences and ensure that language is inclusive and respectful, avoiding any discriminatory or biased language.

Please follow the Australian Government's 'Style Manual for authors, editors and printers' for further details on the use of inclusive language.

4.5 Lists

In the Policy Library, a list can be either bulleted or numbered. Bulleted lists can be ordered (the order is important) or unordered (the order is not critical). Numbered lists are always ordered.

In bulleted lists, closed bullets are used for the first level of indentation and open bullets are used for the second level.

- Text
  - Subtext

In numbered lists, the two levels are provided as follows:

1. Text
   a. Subtext

Lists may consist of either incomplete (fragment) sentences or complete sentences.

Fragment lists:

- have a lead-in phrase followed by a colon

- use lower case for the first letter of each list item, unless it is a proper noun

- add a full stop to the last list item only

- make sure each fragment can complete the lead-in phrase; and

When **referencing** a particular section of an **internal Policy** Instrument, the word 'section' is capitalised and is followed by the section number.

You can refer to the 'How To' guides for information on drafting specific Policy Instruments! The below tools are all linked on the policy tools and resources site:

- How to write a Policy
- How to write a Procedure
- How to write a Schedule

Use of "and" in the list emphasises that a fragment list must include ALL of these characteristics.

- do not include "and" or "or" after each list item unless it is critical to the meaning of the list in which case the "and" or "or" is included after the second last list item.

Rules for sentence lists:

- Follow normal sentence structure in each list item.
- Start each list item with a capital letter and end it with a full stop.
- Use a heading for the list without a colon or full stop, or a phrase lead-in ending with a colon.

Please note that nesting bullets within numbered lists or vice versa is not possible in the Policy and Procedure Library website.

4.6 Metadata table

Capitals
Unless it is a formal title or proper noun, only the first word should be capitalised in the sub-headings.

Follow the guidelines for capitalising proper nouns and official titles. General terms and concepts should be lowercase unless defined in the Definitions Dictionary or as part of a formal title.

The metadata table, located at the end of every Policy Instrument, serves as a valuable reference guide, enhancing the accessibility and understanding of the document. This comprehensive table provides essential information regarding policy responsibilities, review cycle timelines and related Policy Instruments and definitions and provides access to additional details when needed.

4.6.1 Approval date

The approval date is the date the Policy Instrument 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.

Sub-subheadings can be added to expand on particular topics or processes covered under a particular subheading. The UniSQ Policy Library generally does not go below sub-sub-sub headings.

4.6.2 Effective date

Unless otherwise determined by the Approval Authority, the Policy Instrument 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.

4.6.3 Review Date

Policy Instruments are reviewed Five years from the date they came into effect or underwent a major change unless an earlier or later date is specified by the Approval Authority. No text needs to be entered in this field as it will be updated during the publication process.

4.7 Numbers

Normally, numbers from one to nine are written in words and numbers from 10 and above are written as numerals. Where there is a need to emphasise numbers between one (1) and nine (9), the numeral in brackets may be included after the word.

Tables should be properly labelled and referred to by number. When including a table, insert the title above the table and use the following convention for title formatting:
Table 1: <Insert title> (bold text)

4.8 Measurements

When referring to quantities, distances etc. in general text, use the full name of the unit of measurement rather than the symbol. Symbols may be used in tables or in documents that have many references to measurements.
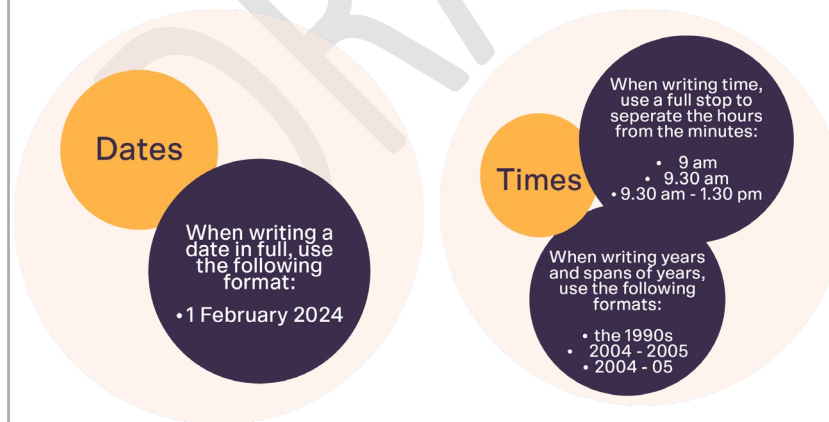
Table 1: Examples of acceptable symbol use

Unit name	Symbol*
8 percent	8%
10 litres	10 L
5 kilograms	5 kg
10 metres	10 m

When a number is accompanied by symbols or units of measurement, used in tables or when consistency is necessary within a sentence or paragraph, they may be written as numerals.

A * can be used if further information needs to be added outside of the table/text for clarification

* Note: Symbols such as kg, km and L are internationally recognised representations of units of measurement, not abbreviations. They are not written with full stops nor do they have an "s" on the end to indicate plural. Insert a space between the number and the symbol, except for symbols such as % and $.

4.9 Date and Times

Follow the formats for writing dates and time as set out below. Use full stops to separate hours from minutes when indicating time.

Dates
When writing a date in full, use the following format:
• 1 February 2024

Times
When writing time, use a full stop to seperate the hours from the minutes:
• 9 am
• 9.30 am
• 9.30 am - 1.30 pm

When writing years and spans of years, use the following formats:
• the 1990s
• 2004 - 2005
• 2004 - 05

Figures should be properly labelled and referred to by number. When including a figure, insert the name below the figure. Use the following convention for name formatting:
Figure 1: <Insert title> (bold text)
All graphics should be tagged with 'alternate text' to ensure accessibility by the vision impaired.

Figure 1: Dates and times

Tip

You can contact the Policy team for advice and assistance with figures or images that you require in your Policy Instrument!

References

Australian Public Service Commission (2023) *Australian Government Style Manual.* Australian Government Style Manual Website, Editors and Printers, *6*(1), 55–62.

5   No appendices

Policy Instruments do not include appendices. This ensures that Policy Instruments remain concise, focused and self-contained, and that they stay within the system's publishing capabilities.

6

Procedure Information

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When a Policy Instrument includes information from other sources, it is important to provide proper references. The University Policy and Procedure Library adheres to the APA Referencing style. The University Library provides an APA Referencing Guide and you can access the bibliographic software program, EndNote, from the University Library website. If you need assistance, you can also reach out to the UniSQ Library.

Accountable Officer	By position title
Responsible Officer	By position title
Policy Type	Governance/Academic Quality/Executive (based on head policy)
Policy Suite	Based on head policy
Subordinate Policy Instruments	If applicable
Approved Date	Populated by Policy team
Effective Date	Populated by Policy team
Review Date	Populated by Policy team
Relevant Legislation	If applicable
Policy Exceptions	Populated by Policy team
Related Policies	If applicable – populated by drafter (no link required)
Related Procedures and Schedule	If applicable – populated by drafter (no link required)
Related forms, publications and websites	If applicable – populated by drafter (please provide link)
Definitions	**Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary**
	Populated by Policy team
	Definitions that relate to this procedure only