

Instructions for Writing a Definition

This writing instruction details the process by which the University ensures consistency of terminology across the Policy and Procedure Library by maintaining a single, consistent and authoritative source of defined terms used in published Policy Instruments.

It is to be read in conjunction with the [Policy and Procedure Framework](#) (Framework) and provides the process for defining and publishing key terms used in all Policy Instruments, as required by [Section 5.3](#) of the Framework and published in the [Definitions Dictionary](#) (Dictionary).

Exclusions:

Definitions specific to a Policy Instrument only will remain in that instrument and are not included in the Dictionary.

Glossaries that exist outside the Policy and Procedure Library will include the following disclaimer:

This glossary provides a general definition of terms commonly used at the University and is intended as a guide only. Defined terms used in University Policy and Procedure are published in the [Definitions Dictionary](#).

1 Definition features

Definitions are key terms that:

- are unique or unfamiliar;
- give meaning to a word or expression;
- assist a reader's understanding of Policy Instruments ;
- provide clarity and reduce the potential for confusion amongst Library users;
- limit or extend the meaning of a word or expression.

2 Definition application

Definitions are developed and reviewed in the context of Policy Instruments only and are:

- terms used frequently throughout the Library;
- relevant to the majority of Library users;
- reflective of common language used across the higher education sector;

- consistent with Regulatory Compliance Instruments (if not, the Definition in the relevant instrument will prevail);
- developed to avoid ambiguity and legal challenge, thus will not contain the word 'normally';
- used to avoid duplication throughout Policy Instruments;
- capitalised throughout the Library;
- provided in the information table of the relevant Policy Instrument in the following form:

Term (new for approval/revised for approval, as appropriate)

Description

Source: xxxx (APA style).

3 Development and change

3.1 Analysis

When a potential need for a new Definition has been identified, Drafters will initially review the Dictionary to identify if the term is already defined. If the Definition is defined and appropriate, it is to be included in the list of defined terms in the Policy Instrument information table.

In order to contain the number of defined terms, Drafters are encouraged to use suitable alternative terms already defined in the Dictionary.

For further information and advice contact policy@usq.edu.au.

3.2 Amendment

If a defined term is in the Dictionary but the Drafter and/or stakeholders believe it requires modification, the Drafter should:

- Identify all other Policies and Procedures using this term by requesting the relevant report from Policy Services.
- Consult with the Accountable Officer/Drafter for the policies/procedures identified to:
 - ascertain if the proposed change adversely impacts the intent of the identified policies/procedures;
 - confirm that the proposed change is supported (record outcome of this consultation in the relevant Consultation Record).
- If the proposed change is supported, and to ensure it is included in consultation, endorsement and approval, add the term, Definition and source to the Policy Instrument information table at the end of the instrument template.

3.3 Development

When a key term has not been published in the Dictionary, but has been identified for development, the Drafter will add the key term and Definition to the Policy Instrument template. This Definition will then be included in the consultation, endorsement and approval process for the Policy Instrument and, when approved, added to the Dictionary.

Drafters should note that similar to other Policy Instrument content, Definitions require consultation and benchmarking.

3.4 Removal

If the Accountable Officer has confirmed that a Definition included in the Definitions Dictionary is no longer relevant the Drafter will:

- Identify all other policies/procedures using this term by requesting the relevant report from Policy Services.
- Consult with the Accountable Officer/Drafter for the policies/procedures identified to:
 - ascertain if removal of the Definition will adversely impact the intent of the identified policies/procedures;
 - confirm that the proposed removal is supported (record outcome of this consultation in the relevant Consultation Record).
- If the proposed removal is supported seek approval through the regular consultation, endorsement and approval process by editing the Definition as follows:

~~Term (proposed deletion, for approval)~~

~~Description~~

~~Source: xxxx~~

3.5 Approval

New or amended Definitions and Definition removal is to be approved by the approval authority of the Policy Instrument within which it has been developed, revised or proposed for removal. Provision of relevant approval evidence to Policy Services will prompt publication to the Dictionary.

3.6 Version control and publication

Version control and publication of Definitions is managed by Policy Services within Records Manager using the same conventions as applied to the remainder of the Library.

3.7 Definitions specific to a Policy Instrument

Definitions specific to a particular Policy Instrument will not be included in the Dictionary and must be fully defined within the relevant Policy Instrument in the provided area in the information table.

4 Definition drafting

4.1 Styles

Style conventions outlined in the Policy and Procedure Style Guide will be applied to Definitions.

4.2 Use of multiple Definitions

Where the description of a Definition includes reference to another defined term/s these terms should be capitalised, as reflected in the example below where the terms 'Student' and 'Course' are also used:

Assessment

The process of evaluating the extent to which Students have achieved the objectives of a Course.

4.3 Use of verbs

In Definitions the words commonly used to allocate meaning are:

- 'means' – indicating that the provision is exhaustive;
- 'is' – indicating that the provision is exhaustive;
- 'includes' - indicating that a Definition is not exhaustive or is being used to enlarge the ordinary meaning of a word and should not be used in conjunction with 'means' or 'is'.

If a Definition contains a series of paragraphs the following practice will be used:

1. Use '**or**' between each paragraph if the verb allocating meaning in the Definition is '**means**' (i.e. an exhaustive list).

Example: 'Authorised Delegate means:

- (a) X; or
- (b) Y; or
- (c) Z.

2. Use '**and**' between each paragraph if the verb allocating meaning is '**includes**' (i.e. a list that is not exhaustive).

Example: 'Authorised Delegate includes:

- (a) X; and
- (b) Y; and

(c) Z.

Do not use **'and'** or **'or'** if the general words before the list uses **'following'** to introduce the paragraphs.

Example: 'Authorised Delegate means any of the following:

- (a) X;
- (b) Y;

For further information and advice email: policy@usq.edu.au.

5 References

Macquarie Glossary Procedure

<http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/glossary/procedure.htm>

Murdoch Policy on Policies

<http://www.murdoch.edu.au/index/policies/index?Filter=Procedure>.