



**UNIVERSITY OF  
LIMERICK**  
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

# **POLICY APPROVAL PROCESS**

## **Document Control**

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# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The University of Limerick is subject to the Universities Act 1997 (as amended) and its Governing Authority is obliged to satisfy itself that appropriate systems, procedures and practices are in place:
- a) to achieve the objects of the University
  - b) for the internal performance management and accountability of the University in respect of:
    - (i) the performance of its functions, and
    - (ii) the achievement of its aims under its strategic plan and
    - (iii) in order to implement, and report on compliance with, the policies (whether set out in codes, guidelines or other documents, or any combination thereof) of the Government or a Minister of the Government to the extent that those policies may affect or relate to the functions of the University.
- 1.2 The University's Policy Approvals Process is the means by which legal, regulatory and internal governance requirements are, when necessary, transposed into policy.
- 1.3 All University policies, once approved, are placed on the Policy Hub which is the University's central and authoritative policies repository.

## 2 Functions of a Policy

- 2.1 The functions of a policy are to:
- a) define, articulate and communicate expectations;
  - b) support a culture of compliance with the University's legal, regulatory and governance obligations;
  - c) guide desired conduct in a variety of situations;
  - d) protect the organisation and its staff;
  - e) enable the achievement of the University's objectives; and
  - f) codify governance and accountability structures.

## 3 Is a New Policy Required? Key Considerations

- Is the policy required by law, regulation, contract, on foot of an audit recommendation, or any other obligation?
- Do the University's operations, functions, size, workforce justify having such a policy?
- Will the policy enhance the University's academic and/or operational performance, improve productivity, effectiveness, or efficiency?
- Is there a possibility that the introduction of the policy could impose a needless additional layer of bureaucracy?
- Is the University discharging its obligations satisfactorily in this particular area without having a policy in place?
- Can an existing policy be updated to address the issue under consideration without the need to write an entirely new policy?
- Is the time and costs required to administer/implement the policy reasonable having regard to the expected benefits that will accrue to the University?

## 4 General Principles

- 4.1 A policy should only be created when it is necessary to achieve a particular objective (e.g., to achieve legal, regulatory or operational compliance).
- 4.2 The persons/bodies having policy initiative<sup>1</sup> in the University are as follows:
- a) The Governing Authority;
  - b) The Academic Council;
  - c) The President, (consulting as he or she considers appropriate with the Executive Committee).
- 4.3 The Governing Authority may direct the President and/or the Academic Council to prepare a policy for its consideration and approval on any matter.
- 4.4 It is a reserved function of the Governing Authority to review, consider and approve the University's policies.
- 4.5 Where a policy is in the nature of a Human Resources policy, engagement with the trade unions, in advance of approval by Governing Authority will be the norm.

## 5 Process

- 5.1 A draft policy is prepared by the President (or his/her nominee) or by the Academic Council as the case may be.
- 5.1.1 Draft HR and EDI related policies will be forwarded as required to a Working Group comprising members of Human Resources and representatives of UNITE for consultation/information/negotiation.
- 5.1.2 The Working Group will complete this process within three months of the date on which the draft policy is circulated to the Group.
- 5.2 When preparing a draft policy, it is expected that the President (or his/her nominee) or the Academic Council will consult with senior management and other interested parties, including where applicable, the relevant Governing Authority Committee.
- 5.3 The agreed draft policy is then submitted to the relevant Governing Authority Committee for consideration and submission to Governing Authority for final approval.

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<sup>1</sup> "Policy Initiative" refers to the rights of persons or bodies within the University to introduce for the consideration of the Governing Authority a proposal for a new policy, and/or a proposal to amend an existing policy.