La Trobe University Policy on Policies

Section 1 - Background and Purpose

(1) To establish a framework for developing, approving, reviewing, implementing, compliance monitoring and managing La Trobe University policy.

Section 2 - Scope/ Application

(2) Applies to:

    a. All campuses
    b. All activities
    c. All staff and students

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(3) University policy should reflect and promote qualities that are consistent with La Trobe University's core values.

(4) University policies shall be approved by University Council (Council) or by a body delegated by Council to do so (e.g. Academic Board, Vice-Chancellor through Senior Executive Group (SEG) or a Council Committee).

(5) Any member of the University community may initiate policy development, but sponsorship from the appropriate Principal Officer must be obtained before the approval process is commenced.

(6) Policies should address a perceived problem, legislative requirement or gap and must include strategies for implementation and monitoring compliance.

(7) Policies must be reviewed at least every three years and this should be overseen by the responsible officer with the support of the policy contact.

Section 4 - Procedures

Identifying the need for a policy review or new policy

(8) While the need for a new policy or policy review may be identified by anyone in the University, a principal officer of the University, in their capacity as Policy Custodian, must provide written support for its creation or review from the outset.

(9) Once the decision has been made by the Policy Custodian, the Responsible Policy Officer will be appointed to take responsibility for the development and implementation of the Policy and Procedures.

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Starting Points for Policy

    a. Identification of existing risk, shortfall or gap in current business or academic process of the University;

    b. Request by a University body for clarity

    c. Initiative of a staff member supported by his or her department or division head

    d. Revision of legislation or standards, either University or external

(10) The above list is not exhaustive, but outlines the usual starting points.

Quality Control

(11) Policy development will include:

    a. consultation with relevant stakeholders during the development and research stages of policy preparation (This includes referral to College Committees, the Compliance Office and Governance Services as appropriate)

    b. benchmarking against similar policies or procedures provided by other Universities or relevant organisations

    c. review of appropriate legislation (University, State and Commonwealth)

    d. research into best practice in the area

Language

(12) La Trobe University policies will:

    a. be concise

    b. readable

    c. easily applied and interpreted

    d. follow the University style guide

Type of Policy

(13) Does the policy affect course development, admissions, teaching, learning or research activity? This is an academic policy.

(14) Does the policy relate to administrative activities that enable the primary activities of the University (i.e. teaching, learning and research)? This is an administrative policy.

(15) Is the policy in response to legislation – eg Equity and Access legislation? This could be an academic or administrative policy, as defined above.

(16) Is the policy related to facilities, finances, staff etc? This is an administrative policy, as all of these administrative activities enable the primary activities of the University.

Approval

(17) All policies will be presented to a central governance or management committee using the requisite coversheet.

    a. Administrative policies must be referred to a central management standing committee of the Senior Executive Group or the SEG by the Policy Custodian. The Vice-Chancellor will approve the policy on the advice of the Senior Executive Group

    b. Academic policies must be referred to a major policy committee of Academic Board by the Policy Custodian. The Academic Board will approve a policy on the advice of its policy committee.

(18) The Vice-Chancellor, Academic Board or a Council committee will refer policies to University Council for approval at their discretion and in accordance with University legislation. Council may choose to delegate powers of approval of policies to another body, including Council committees, the Academic Board or the Vice-Chancellor.

Referral to Council

(19) Matters of governance and compliance that cannot be delegated must be referred to Council. These include policies with significant strategic, financial or reputation risk attached.

Difference between College-specific Rule, Campus-specific Rule and University-wide Policy

(20) Policies may be specific to a campus, a division or a college. If so, they are referred to as rules.

(21) An academic policy or procedure must be approved by Academic Board if it affects more than one college or division. A rule may be approved by a College Board.

(22) An administrative policy or procedure must be approved by the Vice-Chancellor through Senior Executive Group) if it affects more than one college, campus or division. A rule may be approved by the college, division or campus head.

Documentation Required

(23) The following documentation is required:

  a. Committee Policy Cover Sheet
  b. Policy document completed according to the Policy Template
  c. Procedural document/s completed according to Procedure Template
  d. Committee coversheet of the approving body to request approval of the policy. An analysis of risks, financial implications, the consultation process, other options considered and rejected should be briefly outlined, with the reason/s for their rejection.

Compliance Measures

(24) Central committees receiving policies and procedures for referral to the approval body will appraise the cover-sheets, policy and procedures to ensure consistency with:

  a. relevant internal and external legislation
  b. delegations and governance arrangements
  c. existing policies and procedures
  d. the stated policy outcome/s and the compliance measures outlined in the procedures.

Implementation Process

(25) The Cover Sheet will include a brief implementation plan which should be overseen by the Responsible Policy Officer once the relevant body has approved the policy and procedures.

(26) The word copy of the Policy and Procedures should be forwarded to Governance Services where they will be added to the University's database of policies and procedures and to the La Trobe University website.

(27) Rules may also be referred to Governance Services to review whether a whole-of-university policy should be developed.

Monitoring and Review

(28) The Responsible Policy Officer, with the support of the Policy Contact, will report on a regular basis (annually or biennially) to the appropriate management standing committee or academic policy committee and the Policy Custodian. This should be a report of actions taken under the policy and its complementary procedures, exceptions, failures of implementation (if any), evaluation of levels of compliance and any other issues arising from its implementation.

Section 5 - Definitions

(29) For the purpose of this Policy and Procedure:

a. Academic policy/procedure: a policy or procedure directly related to the University's academic activities of teaching, research and research training.
b. Administrative policy/procedure: a policy or procedure relating to administrative activities or academic support.
c. Compliance: adhering to the requirements of legislation, external and internal standards, policy principles and procedures.
d. Core values: responsibility; relevance; critical inquiry; integrity; participation, and excellence.
e. Policy: a statement of intent or principle that explains the University's official position on an issue or matter.
f. Principal Officer: member of the University's Senior Executive and includes, Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Vice-Presidents and Pro Vice-Chancellors.
g. Procedures: a document that outlines the steps entailed in implementing and monitoring a policy and includes the allocation of tasks and responsibilities and compliance reporting.

Section 6 - Stakeholders

Responsibility for implementation – Council, Academic Board and Vice-Chancellor (through the Senior Executive Group).

Responsibility for monitoring implementation and compliance – Vice-President (Administration).

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