Report on the University Policy Benchmarking Project: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

April, 2010
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Report on the University Policy Benchmarking Project: Implications for the University of Tasmania presents the findings of the University Policy Benchmarking Project and examines the implications for the University of Tasmania within the context of the current review of the Operational Policy Development and Review Policy, and associated Procedure, Manual and support resources (i.e. Policy Repository, Policy Website and Policy Toolkit).

2. For the purposes of this exercise, University policy is defined as a statement of intent or principle governing University teaching, learning, research, corporate and community operations and obligations. University policy governs University operations, and defines legal and ethical parameters for practice and strategic direction.

3. The University Policy Benchmarking Project was a collaborative initiative undertaken by Brigid Freeman (Manager, Policy and Delegations, University of Tasmania) and Dr Kai Jensen (Monash University).

4. The University Policy Benchmarking Project aimed to examine the state of policy and policy development in Australasian universities; identify good practice exemplars and quality resources supporting the university policy development cycle; and establish models for university policy management.

5. The methodology involved an examination of 16 Australian and New Zealand university policy systems. Based on information available from university websites, the research involved comparative analysis of:

   – University Policy Frameworks / Policy on Policy statements;
   – University Policy Repositories;
   – University Policy Websites (including resources and Policy Toolkits);

and comprehensive benchmarking of a ‘core sample’ of four university policies (Plagiarism Policy, Environment Policy, Leave Without Pay Policy and Credit Policy). The project also involved the development of ‘model’ University Policy Frameworks and skeleton University Policy Websites.

6. The project found that a comprehensive University Policy Framework: defines university policy; establishes the range of policy instruments and their respective approval authorities and application; and identifies policy development cycle stages. These details are generally derived from provisions of university founding legislation (in Australia), delegations of authority arrangements and Policy on Policy provisions. The Wollongong University Standard on UOW Policy and associated Procedure for the Development and Management of UOW Policy provide a good practice model.

7. The project revealed that Universities use a wide variety of terms for governance and policy instruments. Nomenclature for policy instruments varied considerably, however the terms Policy, Procedure and Guideline were most prevalent.

8. The project revealed that University’s policy approval authorities varied somewhat, though primarily tended to include the University governing body (Council), Council and/or Vice-Chancellor, or Council, Vice-Chancellor and/or a member of the Senior Executive.

9. The place of **local policy** for selected Universities examined was somewhat unclear, despite the fact that approximately half of the universities reviewed recognised local policy. Approval authorities for local policy were not clearly defined in the majority of University Policy Frameworks, however a number of documents available are clearly local policies. In some instances, such local policy appears to sit outside the University’s Policy Framework.

10. University Policy Frameworks located from selected universities explicitly identify distinct **policy development cycle stages** which broadly fell into three different approaches, or models (ranging from relatively simplistic to sophisticated). The full range of policy development cycle stages identified includes: the identification of policy requirements, nomination of responsible officers, drafting, benchmarking, consultation, revision, quality control, endorsement, approval, promulgation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review. More mature University Policy Frameworks explicitly require more cycle stages, particularly including quality-related stages such as benchmarking, quality control, policy implementation monitoring and evaluation.

11. Almost all Universities targeted had one central **Policy Website**. This central Policy Website generally functioned as: the online interface with the University Policy Repository; or a portal for information regarding the University Policy Framework; or a portal to provide resources supporting the university policy development cycle. Good practice examples identified include the ‘ANU Policies Website’, University of Adelaide ‘University Policy and Procedures’ website, and University of Wollongong ‘Policy Directory’ website.

12. Almost all Universities targeted had a **University Policy Repository**. Good repositories provide the authoritative source for (generally) university-wide policy; provide good search functionality; present policy documents by thematic category for ease of searching (and alphabetical listing) and provide the principal point of access for staff and students to university policy.

13. The research suggests that a ‘good practice’ **skeleton University Policy Website** would include headings with links to information on: the University Policy Framework, University Policy on Policy, University Policy Repository, Policy Toolkit, Policy News, Records Management, Legislation, Governance and Legal Unit, Delegations Register, Codes of Conduct, University Plans and peak University Committees, Industrial Agreements and Policy Contacts.

14. The research identified a number of well-developed **Policy Toolkits**. A Policy Toolkit includes practical information, resources and advice to support the development of quality policy. A **model Policy Toolkit** would include resources and links to: the Policy on Policy (and associated Procedure); Policy Development Guidelines; University policy development cycle flowchart; Policy Templates (i.e. Policy, Procedure, Guideline, Standard, Work Instruction); Policy Submission Coversheets; Policy Review Submission Coversheets (i.e. no/minor/major amendment); Policy Dictionary/Glossary of Policy Terms and Acronyms; University Style Guides; Policy Implementation Feedback / Issues Log; Policy Workshops/Training Programs; Policy Evaluation and Review Guide; Frequently Asked Questions; University Calendar; and Risk Management Policy.

15. The project also involved an examination of **four discrete university policy statements**. This aspect of the research demonstrated how University Policy on Policy translated to university
policy text, illustrated various policy drivers in action, and informed the identification of good practice features and models.

16. The research suggests that **a quality approach to the management of university policy** involve the following key features:

- Articulation of the University Policy Framework (in a Policy on Policy);
- Clarity regarding policy approval pathways;
- Ensuring that nominated policy approval authorities are consistent with university foundation legislation, Delegations of Authority arrangements and Policy on Policy;
- Clarification regarding the policy development process or cycle and incorporation of quality assurance stages (e.g. benchmarking);
- Provision of policy development tools and resources (e.g. Policy Toolkit);
- Maintenance of a searchable, central University Policy Repository;
- Requirement for genuine consultation and broad communication mechanisms to promote transparency and facilitate implementation;
- Appreciation of change management requirements;
- Ensuring ongoing monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation; and
- Establishment of transparent policy review mechanisms in accordance with review schedules.

17. **A comparison of the** findings of the University Policy Benchmarking Project with University of Tasmania policy and practice indicates that the **University noticeably trails most other Australian and New Zealand universities sampled** in relation to:

- progress transferring policy documentation across to the University Policy Framework (following approval of the *Operational Policy Development and Review Policy* in April, 2006);
- substance of the current (approved) *Operational Policy Development and Review Policy*, and associated *Procedure and Manual*;
- the current Policy Website;
- the current University Policy Repository;
- specific policy statements, the majority of which do not meet the requirements of the University Policy Framework, for example:
  - the University of Tasmania does not have a Plagiarism Policy;
  - the University of Tasmania does not have a university-wide Credit Policy, but relies on Faculty/School-based (local) Policy, which is not recognised under the current University Policy Framework;
  - the University of Tasmania has a Governance Level Principle that provides brief, overarching principles regarding the Built Environment, but does not have a comprehensive Environment Policy. It is noted, however, that the University does have a *Sustainable Built Environment Designs Policy* which is currently due for review; and
  - the University of Tasmania *Special Leave With or Without Pay Policy* is comparatively poor, and currently sits outside the University Policy Framework.

18. The research revealed the range of nomenclature for university governance instruments. The University’s use of the terms **Ordinances** and **Governance Level Principles** was not found in any other institution sampled. Whilst Ordinances are enshrined in the *University of Tasmania Act 1992*, Governance Level Principles (GLPs) represent a Council Resolution (under *Ordinance 1 – Role of Council*), articulated in *GLP 1 – University Governance*, which
establishes that there will be a range of Governance Level Principles. It may well be that as more policy is transferred across to the University Policy Framework that the need for such documents diminishes.

19. Recommendations arising from the University Policy Benchmarking Project for the University of Tasmania include:

- Significant enhancement to the current (online) Policy Website;
- Significant enhancement of the current University Policy Repository;
- Review of the current (approved) Sustainable Built Environment Designs Policy and development of a University of Tasmania Environment Policy (or redevelopment of Governance Level Principle 9 – Environmental Management);
- Review of the current (old format) Leave Without Pay Policy and transfer of same to the University Policy Framework;
- Development of a University of Tasmania Credit Policy;
- Development of a University of Tasmania Plagiarism Policy; and
- Review of the role of Governance Level Principles for the University of Tasmania.

20. As the University Policy Benchmarking Project was undertaken concurrently with other review activities, a number of these recommendations have been actioned, with progress including:

- Final drafting of the University of Tasmania Policy Development and Review Policy, Procedure and Guideline articulating the University Policy Framework (and policy development cycle);
- Concurrent redevelopment of the University Policy Website;
- Concurrent development of additional resources for inclusion in the Policy Toolkit; and
- Concurrent review of the University Policy Repository;
- Recommendation to Policy Delegates regarding University of Tasmania Environment, Credit, Leave Without Pay and Plagiarism Policy requirements.

21. Findings of the University Policy Benchmarking Project will be presented at The National University Administration Policy Development Intensive (April 2010).
INTRODUCTION

The University Policy Benchmarking Project was a collaborative initiative undertaken by Brigid Freeman (Manager, Policy and Delegations, University of Tasmania) and Dr Kai Jensen (Monash University; foundation member of the Association for Tertiary Education Management (ATEM) Policy Development Network).

This project was undertaken to:

- Examine the state of policy and policy development in Australasian universities as reflected through university websites;
- Identify good practice exemplars and features;
- Identify quality resources supporting the university policy development cycle; and
- Establish models for university policy management.

University policy development is a current and topical issue, and the research clearly revealed significant activity in this area amongst selected Australasian universities.

The project’s findings contributed to the formal review of the University of Tasmania Operational Policy Development and Review Policy.

RESEARCH METHOD

The University Policy Benchmarking Project involved an examination of 16 Australian and New Zealand university policy systems over the period February to April, 2010.

Research Sample

The sample included:

- 13 universities spanning all Australian States and Territories (except Tasmania);
- 3 universities from New Zealand (north and south island);
- Both ‘sandstone’ and ‘red-brick’ universities;
- Research-intensive universities, including five Group of Eight (Go8) universities;
- Single (higher education) and dual-sector (higher education / vocational education) universities;
- Metropolitan and regional universities; and
- One private university (Bond University).

Research Approach

Based on information available from university websites, the research involved:

- Comparative analysis of University Policy Frameworks and Policy on Policy statements;
- Comparative analysis of presentation methods and accessibility of University Policy Repositories and University Policy Websites (which in some cases are the same thing);

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2 University of Queensland, Charles Darwin University, Bond University, University of New South Wales, University of Technology Sydney, Charles Sturt University, University of Wollongong, Australian National University, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University, Swinburne University of Technology, University of Adelaide, University of Western Australia and Edith Cowan University.

3 Auckland University of Technology, Otago University and Victoria University of Wellington.
An examination of resources available to support the university policy development cycle (for example, through Policy Toolkits);

Comprehensive benchmarking of a ‘core sample’ of four university policies (Plagiarism Policy, Environmental Sustainability Policy, Leave Without Pay Policy and Credit Policy), spanning corporate and academic operations and traditional versus emerging university-sector focuses;

The development of ‘model’ University Policy Frameworks and Policy on Policy statements;

The development of skeleton University Policy Websites; and

Identification of ‘good practice’ core sample policies.

Limitations and Subjectivity

The research method involved consideration of policy documentation and information accessible through the 16 selected university’s websites. Limitations to this approach include the following:

- Sample size – the project targeted 12 of the 39 Australian universities\(^4\) and three of the eight New Zealand universities;
- Currency of University web-based information, given that online information may lag practice;
- The volume of information, which added complexity (and depth) to the project; and
- Accessibility of University web-based information, as a small number of Universities targeted restricted some policy documentation to internal users. However, in most cases considered, such information is held in the public domain.

Overall, the research located a wealth of data from a comprehensive sample with significant variation and provided a solid basis for comparative analysis and identification of good practice models and resources. While good practice models identified reflect information available in the public domain through university websites, it is anticipated that additional examples of good practice are in place both at the universities examined and other Australian and New Zealand universities outside the scope of this research.

UNIVERSITY POLICY FRAMEWORKS

The research involved the location and consideration of University Policy Frameworks, which may be articulated in a stand-alone document or reflected in a Policy on Policy statement. 11 of the 16 targeted Universities had stand-alone Policy on Policy documents or statements regarding their University Policy Framework\(^5\). For the purposes of this exercise, the terms University Policy Framework and Policy on Policy may be used interchangeably.

\(^4\) Universities not included in the sample were: Australian Catholic University, Central Queensland University, Curtin University of Technology, Deakin University, Flinders University, Griffith University, James Cook University, La Trobe University, Macquarie University, Monash University, Murdoch University, Queensland University of Technology, Southern Cross University, University of Ballarat, University of Canberra, University of Melbourne, University of New England, University of Newcastle, The University of Notre Dame Australia, University of South Australia, University of Southern Queensland, University of Sydney, University of Tasmania, University of the Sunshine Coast, University of Western Sydney and Victoria University (Australian universities) and Lincoln University, Massey University, University of Auckland, University of Canterbury and University of Waikato (New Zealand universities).

The research found a considerable degree of variation in this area. Some universities sought primarily to establish clarity and consistency in policy documentation presentation (supported by standard policy instrument templates), whereas others had broader objectives.

The University of Wollongong’s Standard on UOW Policy aims to:

“establish a defined, clear, identifiable, consistent and enforceable system for the development, approval, implementation and review of policies … (and) provide a mechanism to ensure that policies are compliant with the strategic direction of the University and with relevant legislation”⁶.

Features of a Comprehensive University Policy Framework

A comprehensive University Policy Framework:

- defines university policy;
- establishes the range of policy instruments (e.g. Policy, Procedure, Guideline);
- specifies approval authorities for all policy instruments (e.g. Council, Vice-Chancellor, Senior Executive, local heads);
- identifies policy development cycle stages; and
- defines the application of policy instruments (i.e. university-wide and/or section-specific or local).

These details are generally derived from provisions of university founding legislation (in Australia), delegations of authority arrangements and Policy on Policy provisions.

The research clearly indicated, however, that having an effective policy framework is one of many ingredients for having effective policy.

Defining ‘Policy’

The research found that universities variously describe policy as some combination of the following:

- Mandatory or non-discretionary ...
- Statements of intent or principle ...
- Guiding or establishing ...
- Conduct, practice, strategic direction, action, operations, obligations and/or decision-making.

The term ‘policy’ is used to refer to:

- all levels of text in a University Policy Framework, including that specifically termed ‘policy’;
- decisions taken by committees which are only recorded in minutes;
- in Human Resources and Finance sections in particular, Operating Manual Chapters written as work instructions or process documents;
- in relation to teaching and research academic policy, high-level governance instruments such as Statutes, Rules or Regulations, with supporting Procedures, Guidelines and Checklists.

The term ‘policy’ is also used to refer to practice, strategic directions and plans, whether or not such things are framed in formal policy documents. Accordingly, this project adopted a very broad

⁶ University of Wollongong, Standard on UOW Policy, p3.
definition of university ‘policy’, particularly when considering the core sample of policy statements where ‘clusters’ or linked texts were examined.

**Governance Instruments - Nomenclature**

Policy instruments are subordinate to governance instruments. The research identified a range of terms for university governance instruments, including: university legislation (Australian universities only), University By-Laws, Statutes, Rules, Regulations, Orders and Ordinances. Overall, University legislation, and the terms By-laws, Statutes and Rules were most prevalent.

The research suggests that the closer the governance instrument to legislation the more likely it is to be phrased using legal terminology. This is particularly the case for governance instruments (and policy provisions embedded in governance instruments) focusing on misconduct and disciplinary matters.

**Policy Instruments - Nomenclature**

More variation was recorded in relation to terms used for policy instruments identified in University Policy Frameworks or Policy on Policy statements. This included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Instrument</th>
<th>Variety of Terms Used in University Policy Frameworks / Policy on Policy Statements</th>
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<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Policy, Council Policy, Governance Policy, Operational Policy, Academic Policy and Management Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures</td>
<td>Procedures, Operating Procedures, Protocols and Processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines</td>
<td>Guidelines, Standards and Manuals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local policy and other documents</td>
<td>Policy, Local Policy, Faculty Governance Documents, Unit Rules, Directions, Instructions and Procedures, Operational Directives, Standard Operating Principles and Procedures, Resolutions, Work Instructions</td>
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However, the most commonly used terms for policy instruments were:

- Policy (for university-wide and local policy)
- Procedure and
- Guideline.

**Approval Authorities**

Policy approval authorities were primarily the:

- Council; or
- Council and/or Vice-Chancellor; or
- Council and/or Vice-Chancellor and/or Senior Executive (member or committee); or
- In a small number of instances Academic Board/Senate.

**Hierarchy of Instruments, Approval Authorities and Application**

University Policy Framework components may be contextualised by governance instruments and considered in terms of a hierarchy of approval authorities and sources.
This table represents the hierarchical relationships between governance and policy instruments, their respective approval authorities and sources of authority. As instruments progress from high level governance and policy principles to local processes, so too do approval authorities range from high level government and university bodies to various local authorities. Approval authority is derived from a hierarchy of sources descending from the Australian constitution, through university legislation, delegations of authority statements and Policy on Policy statements to local practice. High level documents generally apply university-wide whereas local statements apply only on the local level.

**Local Policy**

The place of local policy within most University Policy Frameworks examined was unclear. Approval authorities for local policy were not clearly defined in the majority of University Policy Frameworks examined. However, a number of documents available through university websites (including in some instances University Policy Repositories) are clearly local policies. In some instances, such local policy appears to sit outside the University’s Policy Framework.

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT CYCLE**

University Policy Frameworks explicitly identify distinct policy development cycle stages, and these generally fall within one of the following three approaches. In the majority of instances examined – represented as Model 1 - University Policy Frameworks identify the stages of drafting, consultation, approval, promulgation and review.

**Table 3: University Policy Development Cycle Stages: Models 1,2 and 3**

<table>
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<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Majority</th>
<th>Most of: Drafting, consultation, approval, promulgation and review</th>
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<td>Model 2</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Most stages from Model 1, and one or more of: identification of policy requirements, nomination of responsible officers, endorsement, implementation, records management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model 3</td>
<td>Few</td>
<td>Most stages from Models 1 and 2, and one or more of: benchmarking, revision, quality control, monitoring, evaluation</td>
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Some universities identify both ‘Model 1’ stages and additional ones. This may be represented as Model 2 – involving one or more of the following: identification of policy requirements, nomination of responsible officers, endorsement, implementation and records management. It could be expected that most university policy development cycles involve these stages whether or not they are articulated in the University Policy Framework.

In a few instances – as represented by Model 3 - University Policy Frameworks identify other policy cycle stages which clearly add a quality dimension to the process. This is a mature model which includes one or more of the following: benchmarking, revision, quality control, monitoring and evaluation. University Policy Frameworks articulating such quality-related cycle stages could be expected to produce high quality policy.

Whilst a small number of universities selected specifically identify, or require, the stages identified in Model 3, the University of Wollongong is reasonably unique in requiring policy implementation evaluation and supporting such activity with a number of Policy Toolkit resources. As University Policy Frameworks mature, more universities may well focus on such value-adding policy cycle stages.

The research identified only a small number of instances where the university clearly articulated the:

- range and application of policy instruments under the University Policy Framework;
- approval and review processes and authorities; and
- requisite policy development cycle stages.

The University of Wollongong’s Standard on UOW Policy and associated Procedure for the Development and Management of UOW Policy represent a good practice approach. Quality features are also represented in the Victoria University of Wellington’s Policy Documentation Development Information statement, Swinburne University of Technology’s suite of documents, including the Policy Framework and Policy and Procedure Development and Management statement; and University of Adelaide’s University Policy Framework.

POLICY WEBSITES AND POLICY REPOSITORY

Almost all Universities targeted had one central Policy Website. This central Policy Website generally functioned as:

- the online interface with the University Policy Repository; or
- a portal to provide information regarding the University Policy Framework; or
- a portal to provide resources supporting the university policy development cycle.

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7 The University of Wollongong Policy Toolkit provides the following resources to support evaluation and review: Policy Review Schedule; Policy Issues Log; Training on Policy Development; Policy Development Stages Checklist - A Guide for Users; Good Policy Checklist; Introductory Guide to Plain English; Consultation Tips; Policy Project Schedule; Consultation – Summary of Feedback Template.
9 http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy/default.aspx
12 Charles Sturt University maintained two Policy Websites reflecting their approach to policy presentation (i.e. an Academic Manual and Administrative Manual), both of which represented authoritative policy sources. Bond University did not appear to have a central Policy Website.
University website search functionality varied considerably. For the purposes of this project searches were conducted, using numerous keyword variations, to locate the university:

- Policy Repository;
- Policy Framework;
- Policy on Policy;
- Plagiarism Policy;
- Environment Policy;
- Leave Without Pay Policy; and
- Credit Policy

from the university homepage, University Policy Repository, Governance Unit/Section webpage and various other avenues to locate source documents. Success varied considerably such that web navigability became a focus of the research.

Universities in the process of implementing a new University Policy Framework have a transitional period which impacts on the accessibility of policy documents and navigability of Policy Websites. For example, the University of Adelaide Policy Website explicitly advises that:

“The University has adopted a new policy framework and all policies are being progressively reviewed in the context of the new framework. Entries marked ‘unrevised’ are current, but are in the process of being reviewed under the new policy framework”.

Transitional advice such as this is particularly important where current policy instruments or individual documents sit outside a revised University Policy Framework.

**University Policy Repository**

Well-developed University Policy Repositories provided the authoritative source for (generally) university-wide policy. In most instances, relevant university-wide policy was also made available through other websites (e.g. Teaching and Learning, Research, corporate areas such as Occupational Health and Safety, Human Resources).

Where the integrity of the University Policy Repository is maintained, duplication of policy documentation in this manner increases accessibility and facilitates policy implementation. However, in some instances it was not clear which policy documentation represented the authoritative source, or whether some ‘local’ policy statements only available through local work/organisational unit websites complied with the University Policy Framework. Indeed in some instances it appeared that such local policy statements did not conform to University Policy Framework (or Policy on Policy) requirements.

The online presentation of policy documents, for example under policy themes or along organisational lines (e.g. teaching and learning, research, corporate sections) provides a useful overview for users and may lead to the coalescence of comprehensive suites of university policy.

**Good Practice Policy Website Features**

A ‘good practice’ skeleton University Policy Website would include the following:

- Policy Framework
- Policy on Policy
- Policy Repository
- Policy Toolkit
- Policy News
- Records Management
- Legislation
- Governance
- Delegations of Authority
- Codes of Conduct and Charters
- University Plans and University Committees
- Agreements
- Contact

Details regarding these items are provided below.

**University Policy Framework** - within information provided about:
- Components (e.g. Policy, Procedure, Guideline, Standard, Unit/Work Instruction);
- Approval authorities;
- University policy development cycle.

**University Policy on Policy** - within links to:
- Policy on Policy and associated Procedure;
- Policy Development Guideline.

**University Policy Repository** – with the following:
- Confirmation that the University Policy Repository is the authoritative source of policy;
- Good search functionality (e.g. the ANU Policy Repository is searchable by topic, title, type, audience, alphabetical list);
- Capacity to search the Policy Repository by policy category/theme (e.g. corporate, teaching and learning, research, community), which may reflect organisational structure to some extent;
- An interface between the Policy Repository and individual policy documents (e.g. the Edith Cowan University Policy Summary page lists: policy code, title, keywords, summary, revision date, file number, Policy Owner, txt and pdf versions, direct URL and category information);
- Consideration of the policy file format for ease of reading (e.g. html, pdf, txt, other; including screen readers for vision impaired).
Policy Toolkit – with links to:
- Policy on Policy (and associated Procedure);
- Policy Development Guidelines;
- University policy development cycle flowchart;
- Policy Templates (i.e. Policy, Procedure, Guideline, Standard, Work Instruction);
- Policy Submission Coversheets;
- Policy Review Submission Coversheets (i.e. no/minor/major amendment);
- Policy Dictionary/Glossary of Policy Terms and Acronyms;
- University Style Guides;
- Policy Implementation Feedback / Issues Log;
- Policy Workshops/Training Programs;
- Policy Evaluation and Review Guide;
- Frequently Asked Questions;
- University Calendar;
- Risk Management Policy.

Policy News – with:
- A list of policies under development;
- Links to drafts policies for comment;
- A policy review schedule (e.g. University of Wollongong Policy Review Schedule).

Records Management – with:
- Information about the university records management systems and links to relevant webpages;
- Information about policy versioning;
- Access to previous versions of policies in case of complaint/dispute;
- Reference to university information / knowledge management.

Legislation – with links to:
- The foundation University Act;
- Relevant Commonwealth and State Government legislation (e.g. through Legal Unit webpage)

University Governance – with links to the:
- University’s Governance Unit and Council webpage;
- Governance instruments (e.g. By-laws, Statutes, Ordinances, Rules, Regulations).

Delegations of Authority – with links to the:
- Delegations of Authority Policy or Register (where established).

UNSW provides a good Policy Toolkit which includes: UNSW Policy Development Process (pamphlet); Policy Template (i/ headings only; ii/ explanatory detail); Procedure Template; Guideline Template; Protocol Template; Policy Cover Sheet Template; Procedure Cover Sheet Template; Guideline Cover Sheet Template; Implementation Plan Template; and Helpful Hints – Research and Policy Analysis. The University of Wollongong Policy Toolkit is also a good model, and this provides: UOW Policy Template; UOW Procedure Template; Policy Implementation and Communication Plan; New Policy Proposal Form; Web Content Check-in Form; Policy Development Stages Checklist; A Guide for Users; Good Policy Checklist; Training on Policy Development; Consultation Tips; Policy Project Schedule; and Consultation – Summary of Feedback Template. The RMIT Policy Toolkit provides: Policy Framework; Policy Development and Review Procedure; Policy Template (i/ with comments; ii/ without comments) (restricted); Procedure Template (i/ with comments; ii/ without comments) (restricted); Policy Development Consultation and Feedback Template; Submission Template; Proposal for New Policy Form (restricted); Implementation Plan; RMIT University Writing Style Guide ; and Document Control Guidelines.
Codes of Conduct and Charters – with links to the:
- University Codes of Conduct/Practice/Ethics (e.g. Teaching and Learning, Research, Graduate Research)
- University Charter (where established).

University Plans – with links to the:
- University strategic plan;
- Thematic plans (e.g. Teaching and Learning, Research);
- Local plans.

University Committees – with links to:
- University governing body/council;
- Peak decision-making committees.

Agreements – with links to:
- Industrial agreements;
- Relevant high level Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs).

University Calendar / Important Dates

Policies by Category
- For example, the University of Queensland Policy Website presents policies under the following themes: University Organisation and Governance, Occupational Health and Safety, Teaching and Learning, Research and Postgraduate Studies, Financial Management Practice Manual, Human Resources, Information Technology, Physical Facilities and Services, Community and Development Activities.

The ‘ANU Policies Website’\(^{14}\) provided a very good example of a Policy Website, particularly in relation to ease of locating and searching the Policy Repository and linking to university governance instruments. In addition, the University of Adelaide ‘University Policy and Procedures’ website\(^ {15}\) had a notably good looking front page (entitled ‘Policy Repository and Policy Framework’), policy versioning and list of policies under review. The University of Wollongong ‘Policy Directory’ website\(^ {16}\) provided content searchable policy documents, a useful policy review schedule and comprehensive Policy Toolkit.

INDIVIDUAL POLICY STATEMENTS

The University Policy Benchmarking Project also involved an examination of four discrete university policy statements to appreciate how University Policy Frameworks, Policy on Policy and policy development tools translated to university policy.

The policies identified included two academic and two corporate policies, including the:
- Plagiarism Policy (as an assessment-related, high risk academic policy);
- Environment Policy (as a corporate policy of topical interest);
- Leave Without Pay Policy (as a corporate, human resources policy); and
- Credit Policy (as a core ‘gatekeeper’ academic policy).

\(^{14}\) [http://policies.anu.edu.au/](http://policies.anu.edu.au/)
PLAGIARISM POLICY

The web-based search located Plagiarism Policy documentation for all but two of the selected universities. This included:

- stand-alone Plagiarism, Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct Policies, Procedures and Guidelines;
- governance instruments such as Statutes and Regulations which dealt with academic misconduct in the form of plagiarism;
- policy provisions embedded in Codes of Conduct or Student Charters, and
- policy statements reflected in information resources.

As such, university policy regarding this matter is both mature and widely dispersed across a range of instruments; indeed more widely than any other discrete policy examined. The research also found a much closer relationship between plagiarism statements and high level university governance instruments, in this instance dealing with misconduct, than other policies examined. Plagiarism policies were also closely aligned with assessment and examinations policy, the institution’s privacy policy, student grievance procedures and rules for responsible practice in research (for graduate research students).

As we have seen the higher the governance or policy instrument the more likely the document is to be framed in ‘legalist’ language. In relation to Plagiarism Policy statements, with a few exceptions, the language is more legalistic where policy provisions are embedded in governance instruments such as Statutes and Regulations, and where policy provisions are directly related to student misconduct and appeal procedures. The extent to which language is legalistic also depends on the extent to which university practice (as embodied in policy) emphasises punitive or educative approaches to plagiarism.

The research found a significant point of differentiation in this regard, with some universities adopting a progressive, educative approach, whereas others – generally those which continued to rely primarily on student misconduct Statutes and Regulations – framed in punitive terms. The University of Adelaide Plagiarism Policy specifically notes that:

“University rules, policies and guidelines tend to focus on the punitive aspects of procedures rather than the educative and often fail to articulate to students why the conventions of citing and referencing are an integral part of developing scholarly writing skills, and why plagiarism is considered a serious offence in the academic environment” (p7).

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17 Auckland University of Technology where no documentation was found (noting that much is staff restricted); and Edith Cowan University, where references to plagiarism were found in the Assessment Policy and Academic Misconduct Rules, but no discrete policy statement was located.

18 For example, the Australian National University Policy: Code of Practice for Student Academic Integrity, Procedure: Code of Practice for Student Academic Integrity; University of Technology Sydney Student Charter; University of New South Wales Student Code of Conduct; and Otago University ‘Code of Student Conduct’ in their Discipline Regulations.

19 For example, refer to the University of Western Australia Plagiarism Statement, Guidelines on Plagiarism Detection Software: Minimum Essentials, Notes on Preventing Plagiarism, Recognising Plagiarism Checklist, A Brief Guide to Searching Online for Sources of Plagiarism and Plagiarism and Referencing: Guidelines and Penalties, which support their comprehensive Academic Conduct: Guidelines for Faculties and Other Teaching and Supervision Sections at UWA: Ethical Scholarship, Academic Literacy and Academic Misconduct.

The University of Queensland’s Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy\(^{21}\) is both non-legalistic and educative, and states, for example, that:

“... learning rests on and builds on the work and ideas of others. However, it is important that students in their learning acknowledge, through appropriate referencing, earlier work and research from which they have drawn conclusions or interpretations or might advance new ideas. This is fundamental to the concept of academic integrity in the western tradition” (p2).

A progressive, comprehensive Plagiarism Policy would:

- Be framed in educative, non-legalistic terms;
- Clearly define plagiarism, differentiating between poor academic practice (i.e. ‘careless’ plagiarism) and intentional plagiarism (i.e. academic misconduct);
- Encompass undergraduate, postgraduate coursework and research students\(^{22}\);
- Outline academic staff responsibilities (e.g. educate students about good academic practice and adopt good practice assessment design);
- Outline student responsibilities, including responsibility to maintain standards of integrity;
- Clearly establish procedures for informing and educating students about good academic practice and academic integrity;
- Clearly identify, as the University of Queensland does, “procedures for investigating and assessing suspected cases of misconduct [including plagiarism], the jurisdiction and penalty powers of decision-makers, and the consequent penalties for misconduct”\(^{23}\);
- Ensure procedures are fair, consistent, transparent, confidential, equitable, and provide for appropriate representation and support;
- Establish differential responses to:
  - naïve plagiarism or poor academic practice and intentional plagiarism;
  - suspected plagiarism within formative and summative assessment exercises;
  - consequent approaches may include providing resources and advice regarding good scholarship and giving penalties for academic misconduct in the form of plagiarism;
- Identify whether differential penalties will be applied at ‘breakpoints’ based on the proportion of material plagiarised, where both quantitative and qualitative assessments contribute to an overall determination (e.g. quantitative - >10% minor; 10-25% moderate; <25% major; qualitative – contextual factors or mitigating circumstances\(^{24}\));
- Refer to student appeal and grievance procedures;
- Maintain a central academic misconduct register or database for management and monitoring purposes;
- Establish a position on the use of plagiarism detection software (e.g. Turnitin, MOSS, SafeAssign) for both educative and plagiarism detection purposes as one component of the institution’s approach to fostering good academic practice\(^{25}\);

\(^{21}\) http://www.uq.edu.au/hupp/?page=25128

\(^{22}\) The RMIT Management of Plagiarism in Research Programs Procedure (http://www.rmit.com/browse;ID=v0al8mumzqe41) deals with graduate research students in particular.


\(^{24}\) University of Western Australia Guidelines on Plagiarism Detection Software: Minimum Essentials, pp3-4.

\(^{25}\) The University of Western Australia examined practical, legal and ethical issues associated with the introduction of plagiarism detection software in their Guidelines on Plagiarism Detection Software: Minimum Essentials, http://www.teachingandlearning.uwa.edu.au/staffnet/policies/conduct/plagiarism, 2007. Swinburne University of Technology’s Plagiarism Policy specifically “outlines the use of plagiarism detection tools, and details how these tools should be used primarily for educative purposes and as only one element of the overall strategy aimed at encouraging academic integrity, honest and ethical scholarly practice” (http://policies.swinburne.edu.au/pponline/default.aspx?mode=glossary&word=Plagiarism, p2).
Where adopted, advise students through a range of avenues that such software will be used and copies of works may be held in software databases (e.g. assignment coversheets, unit outlines, assessment guides, introductory lectures, university website etc);

Procedural templates, including flowcharts and notification letters and reporting pro formas;

For New Zealand universities, resolution processes in keeping with commitments under the Treaty of Waitangi. For example, the Victoria University of Wellington’s Student Conduct Statute states that “The University is committed to acknowledging the Treaty of Waitangi by working in partnership with Maori. The spirit of tikanga is to seek resolutions to disputes and complaints in a manner that encourages a facilitated open exchange of views with a view to seeking consensus and acceptance from all parties as to the resolution”26 (p6).

The best Plagiarism Policy located was the University of Queensland Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy and Procedures for Dealing with Student Discipline and Misconduct Matters27 which incorporates many of these points and adopts an educative, non-legalistic approach. In addition, the University of Adelaide’s Plagiarism Policy28 and University of Western Australia’s Guidelines for Faculties and Other Teaching and Supervision Sections at UWA: Ethical Scholarship, Academic Literacy and Academic Misconduct29 both provide good practice models.

ENVIRONMENT POLICY

The web-based search located 10 Environment or Environmental Sustainability Policy statements30. An examination of these policy statements suggests that environment policy development is an emerging priority for Australian universities, whereas the Victorian University of Wellington’s approach suggests that either the Victorian University itself, or the New Zealand higher education sector more generally, is well progressed in this field.

Most Australian university environment policies examined included minimalist information regarding the organisation’s position on the environment, or environmental sustainability. Indeed most environment policies foreshadowed limited activity prior to the establishment of Environment Committees and/or Environmental Management Plans. It may well be that Environment Policy development has been undertaken to fulfil legislative, regulatory or audit requirements before the organisations themselves have established their positions or developed expertise in this area.

The ‘minimalist approach’ results in Environment Policy provisions which:

- Confirm the university’s commitment to meeting environmental obligations, locally and globally;
- Commit the university to the implementation of ‘best practice’ environmental management (without stipulating detail);
- Confirm the university’s commitment to complying with relevant legislative and regulatory requirements;
- Assert that the Environment Policy will comply with related university policy and meet ethical environmental obligations;
- Commit the university to implementing generally non-specified environmental sustainability-related initiatives;

27 http://www.uq.edu.au/hupp/?page=251
29 http://www.teachingandlearning.uwa.edu.au/staffnet/policies/conduct
30 Charles Sturt University has a Campus Environmental Committees Structure and Terms of Reference statement; however this does not articulate university policy. Policy statements were not located for: University of Adelaide, University of Western Australia, Otago University or the Auckland University of Technology.
– Promote broad ‘green’ principles (e.g. ‘avoid, reduce, re-use, recycle’); and
– Commit to undertake best practice environmental sustainability focussed teaching and research.

As Environment Policy sophistication increases, additional policy provisions are found where the university commits to:

– Introduce a range of continuous performance monitoring, improvement and reporting processes (e.g. through the establishment of an Environmental Management System);
– Develop an Environmental Management Plan detailing principles, targets and initiatives;
– Establish an Environment Committee with responsibility for overseeing university environmental sustainability-related initiatives, monitoring and reporting systems;
– Promote environmental awareness and community outreach; and
– Minimise environmental risk(s).

A comprehensive Environment Policy may articulate how a University will:

- Sustainably manage the University’s natural environment (i.e. natural and physical resources; and promote the concept of a ‘harmonious campus’);
- Sustainably manage the University’s developed environment (i.e. infrastructure; transportation options including the University vehicle fleet; sustainable procurement; footprint reduction strategies);
- Sustainably manage the University’s use of natural resources (i.e. minimise consumption of water, energy and materials; reduce greenhouse gas emissions; sustainable waste management, infrastructure design and engineering solutions);
- Undertake quality teaching and research with an environmental sustainability focus;
- Establish environmental emergency procedures (e.g. to cater for pollution);
- Recognise the interdependence of the physical and cultural environments; and
- For New Zealand universities, implementation consistent with the Treaty of Waitangi (e.g. consideration of Maori perspectives and the exercise of environment guardianship and stewardship).

The best Environment Policy located was the Victorian University of Wellington’s Environment Policy and Environmentally Sustainable Procurement Guidelines31. Indeed the research suggests that New Zealand universities have much to teach their Australian counterparts in policy development for somewhat ‘tricky’ issues such as the environment and equity (e.g. indigenous peoples, gender and disability).

**LEAVE WITHOUT PAY POLICY**

Leave Without Pay Policy was chosen as a practical Human Resources Policy in contrast with the academic and ‘new’ (environmental) policy areas examined.

The web-based search did not readily locate Leave Without Pay Policies for ¼ of the sample32. Where the search did locate such policies (12), over half33 had discrete Leave Without Pay Policies,
and the remainder\textsuperscript{34} had broad Leave Policies with sub-sections focussed on various forms of leave (including Leave Without Pay in all but one instance).

Discrete Leave Without Pay Policies examined tended to better articulate institutional principles regarding Leave Without Pay than consolidated Leave Policies or Leave Manual chapters. However, where consolidated policies are established, it should be feasible to make comprehensive provisions for the various forms of leave.

Some categories of policy, primarily human resources and finance, are packaged and presented as manuals. This may reflect:

\begin{itemize}
  \item legislative requirements (e.g. Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977 [Qld] requires universities to maintain a Financial Management Practice Manual) or
  \item industry practice (e.g. provision of operating instructions for systems).
\end{itemize}

Where manuals are in place, there is a noticeable difference between policy provisions packaged as ‘manual’ sections and formal university policy statements. Indeed those policy areas which tended to adopt this approach – namely Human Resources, Finance and some facilities policies – frequently included great detail (for example, to the Work Instruction level), and appeared sheltered from university policy framework presentation requirements. Given the variations in this approach, the research was not able to determine whether documents providing ‘practices and controls’ are also able to clearly articulate institutional principles as the two tend to serve different purposes.

Analysis of Leave Without Pay Policy statements suggests that human resources policy both reflects and shapes university culture. Language is powerful; for example, whilst some university’s leave without pay eligibility criteria:

\begin{itemize}
  \item restrict such leave to circumstances advantaging the employing university\textsuperscript{35}; or
  \item provide no guarantee that general staff substantive positions will be held open\textsuperscript{36}
\end{itemize}

the UNSW policy states that:

\textit{“The University recognises that the abilities of its ... staff should be made available for the benefit of the community ... (where there will be) no serious impediment to the proper discharge of the University’s corporate responsibilities”}.

A number of universities explicitly support leave without pay for activities considered to be in the national interest (e.g. employment with a government or public body\textsuperscript{37}; or appointment under an international assistance scheme such as the UNESCO\textsuperscript{38}). In almost all instances, universities explicitly make provision for leave without pay on the basis of compassionate grounds.

Benchmarking both discrete and consolidated Leave Without Pay Policies suggests that a ‘good practice’ policy may articulate university principles in relation to the following ‘ingredients’:

\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{34} Charles Darwin University, Charles Sturt University, Australian National University, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Swinburne University of Technology
\textsuperscript{35} University of Queensland, Leave Without Pay Policy and Procedure
\textsuperscript{36} University of Queensland, Leave Without Pay Policy and Procedure
\textsuperscript{37} University of New South Wales, Leave Without Pay and Secondment Policy
\textsuperscript{38} University of Western Australia, University Policy on: Leave Without Pay
Compliance (Industrial Instruments and Legislation)
- Awards;
- Industrial Agreements; and
- Legislation (e.g. NZ Holidays Act 2003).

Purposes
- Personal reasons (e.g. compassionate grounds – illness, family, cultural, or carer responsibilities; supplement to parental leave; or for recreational, sporting or vacation purposes);
- Mutually beneficial to University and applicant (e.g. education; professional development; secondment; alternative short-term employment; consultancy; research); and
- In the national interest (e.g. employment with a government or public body; appointment under an international assistance scheme; or contesting Federal or State Parliament elections).

Eligibility and Assessment Criteria
- Category of staff (e.g. continuing and fixed-term staff; probationary staff; casual staff excluded);
- Paid leave balance (i.e. balance must be exhausted, other than for applications for carer responsibilities, secondment, or appointment under international assistance scheme);
- Operational needs of relevant work or organisational unit;
- Likelihood of return to work following completion of leave without pay;
- Capacity to keep the applicant’s position open during the period of leave without pay;
- Consideration of alternatives (e.g. secondment or staff exchange); and
- Exceptions at the discretion of the Approval Authority.

Minimum / Maximum Time Limits
- Minimum: 1 hour/1 day/12 hour security shift;
- Maximum: 1/2/3 years;
- Maximum time limits may differ depending on the stated purpose for leave without pay;
- Leave without pay may be taken on a part/full-time basis; and
- Extensions at the discretion of the Approval Authority.

Approval Authority
- Approval Authorities clearly stated; and
- Differentiation based on leave without pay application length.

Impact on Other Entitlements (e.g. LWOP over 20 days)
- Calculation of continuity of service;
- Accrual of annual leave, sick leave and long service leave;
- Eligibility for parental leave, study assistance and the special studies program;
- Granting of salary increment(s);
- Workers Compensation;
- Probation;
- Payment for public holidays; and
- Exceptions at the discretion of the Approval Authority.

Superannuation Arrangements

Responsibilities
- Manager/Supervisor; and
- Applicant (e.g. re-arrange salary deductions; Superannuation; remain informed of university activities).
Application Procedure

- Complete Application Form;
- Applicant agreement to exhaust accrued/accruing paid prior to taking leave without pay;
- Approval process; and
- Return to work notification provisions.

Advice

The University document which best reflects this ‘good practice’ skeleton is the University of Technology Sydney Leave Without Pay Guidelines.

CREDIT POLICY

Credit, Credit Transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning Policies were located for most Australian and all New Zealand Universities. As a ‘gatekeeper’ academic policy, credit policies may be presented in Credit Regulations or Rules, and mirror implied or explicit statements regarding academic quality, integrity and institutional standing.

Credit Policies, whilst mature and well developed across the sector, vary from conservative through progressive. For example, some university Credit Policy statements embrace recognition of prior informal learning and cross-sectoral articulation, whereas others limit credit to like higher education credit transfer.

In many cases Credit Policy provisions are directly related to university Admissions, Enrolment and Assessment Policy. Credit Policy is also shaped by higher education legislation, including:

- the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 which regulates provision to international students and associated VISA requirements; and
- Higher Education Support Act 2003 which prohibits the imposition of certain student fees.

It is anticipated that the impending release of the AQF National Policy and Guidelines on Credit Arrangements will motivate the revision of Australian university Credit Policies.

To a much greater extent than any other ‘core sample’ policy examined, university-wide Credit Policy is frequently supported by Faculty or local policy as Faculties generally administer credit application, assessment and approval processes.

University Credit Policies examined suggest that Credit Policy development has been influenced by a body of work from Commonwealth, State and non-government organisations and developments including:

- Universities Australia (and formerly Australian Vice-Chancellor’s Committee) credit transfer documents;
- Codes of Practice.

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40 Charles Darwin University did not have a Credit Policy however the Students Policy made minor reference to credit. Searches did not locate the ANU Credit Policy or Bond University Credit Policy.
Vocational Education and Training (VET) developments, including the:
- emergence of Registered Training Organisations (RTO);
- establishment of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF);
- establishment of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF)\(^{43}\); and
- National and international qualification recognition services\(^{44}\).

This research identified some consistent themes in comprehensive Credit Policy statements including:

- Qualification portability and articulation (VET ↔ HE);
- Inter-sectoral linkages and collaboration\(^{45}\):
  - between universities (e.g. Go8, Australian Technology Network of Universities);
  - across sectors (e.g. Registered Training Organisations ↔ TAFE ↔ Higher Education); and
  - within dual-sector institutions;
- Developments regarding the recognition of various modes of formal and informal learning;
- Efficiencies in the education and training system;
- The role of credit and RPL approval in maintaining qualification and institutional integrity; and
- The capacity of RPL, in particular, as an equity mechanism.

Swinburne’s policy confirms their legislative mandate under the “Swinburne University of Technology Act 1992 to provide a multi-level system of post-secondary programs with provision for the facilitation of movement between courses”\(^{46}\). Swinburne’s comprehensive suite of Credit Transfer and Exemptions Policy statements span their higher education and TAFE sectors\(^{47}\) and represent a good practice model. Edith Cowan University’s\(^{48}\) comprehensive Advanced Standing Policy, Course Assessment Guidelines and Appeal Guidelines also deserves recognition.

**QUALITY APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT OF UNIVERSITY POLICY**

The research suggests that a quality approach to the management of university policy may involve the following key features:

- Articulation of the University Policy Framework (in a Policy on Policy);
- Clarity regarding policy approval pathways;
- Ensuring that nominated policy approval authorities are consistent with university foundation legislation, Delegations of Authority and Policy on Policy;
- Clarification regarding the policy development process or cycle and incorporation of quality assurance stages (e.g. benchmarking);
- Provision of policy development tools and resources (e.g. Policy Toolkit);
- Maintenance of a searchable, central Policy Repository;

\(^{42}\) Some Credit Policies refer to the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students, 2007.


\(^{44}\) For example, the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) register of Higher Education providers, the National Tertiary Information System (NTIS) register of Registered Training Organisations (RTO) and National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR).

\(^{45}\) For example, agreements in place include the Group of Eight Credit Transfer Agreement (March 2007) and Australian Technology Network of Universities (ATN) Guidelines.

\(^{46}\) Swinburne University of Technology, Credit Transfer – TAFE Policy and Procedure, p3.

\(^{47}\) Credit Transfer Agreements – Approvals Policy, Credit Transfer and Exemptions – Higher Education, Credit Transfer and Exemptions – TAFE, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) – Higher Education, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) – TAFE, Swinburne Credit Transfer Database

\(^{48}\) Advanced Standing Policy, Guidelines for Assessing Courses of Other Institutions for Entry Into, and Advanced Standing for, ECU Courses; Advanced Standing Appeal Guidelines.
– Requirement for genuine consultation and broad communication mechanisms to promote transparency and facilitate implementation;
– Appreciation of change management requirements;
– Ensuring ongoing monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation; and
– Establishment of transparent policy review mechanisms in accordance with review schedules.

Learning from Benchmarked Examples

University websites – as a platform for university policy management – have provided a window to good policy practice.

Best practice models include:

– **University Policy Framework / Policy on Policy** – University of Wollongong
– **University Policy Website** – Australian National University
– **Plagiarism Policy** – University of Queensland
– **Environment Policy** – Victorian University of Wellington
– **Leave Without Pay Policy** – University of Technology Sydney
– **Credit Policy** – Swinburne University and Edith Cowan University

and these universities are deserving of recognition and modelling.

The project has exposed and recognised but a small number of good practices currently in place to support high quality university policy.

**INFORMING UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA INITIATIVES**

Findings of the University Policy Benchmarking Project have informed University of Tasmania initiatives undertaken by the Manager, Policy and Delegations. Key developments are outlined below.

**Understanding the University of Tasmania Hierarchy of Instruments**

As noted, the research revealed a range of terms for both governance and policy instruments. In relation to the selected universities, the University of Tasmania is:

– in line with other Australian universities in having foundation legislation and By-laws;
– in line with most other Australian and New Zealand universities in having high-level governance instruments referred to as Rules;
– unique (from the sample selected) in adopting the term ‘Ordinances’ for high level governance instruments, which are more generally referred to as Statutes; and
– unique (from the sample selected) in establishing ‘Governance Level Principles’.
Table 4: University of Tasmania Hierarchy of Instruments, Approval Authorities and Application

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTRUMENTS</th>
<th>APPROVAL AUTHORITY</th>
<th>AUTHORITY THROUGH</th>
<th>APPLICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Tasmania Act 1992</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Australian Constitution</td>
<td>University-wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University By-Laws 1993</td>
<td>University Council</td>
<td>University of Tasmania Act 1992</td>
<td>University-wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinances</td>
<td>University Council</td>
<td>University of Tasmania Act 1992</td>
<td>University-wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules</td>
<td>University Council or</td>
<td>University of Tasmania Act 1992 and Delegations Register</td>
<td>University-wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance Level Principles</td>
<td>University Council</td>
<td>Ordinance 1 – Role of Council and Council Resolution and GLP 1 – University Governance</td>
<td>University-wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Vice-Chancellor or</td>
<td>Policy Development and Review Policy and Delegations Register</td>
<td>University-wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures</td>
<td>Policy Maker</td>
<td>Policy Development and Review Policy</td>
<td>University-wide OR Local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines</td>
<td>Policy Maker</td>
<td>Policy Development and Review Policy</td>
<td>University-wide OR Local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards</td>
<td>Policy Maker</td>
<td>Policy Development and Review Policy</td>
<td>University-wide OR Local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty, School, Centre, Institute or Division, Section or Work Unit decisions / statements of principle to implement Plans, Principles and Policy</td>
<td>Dean, Head, Director / Principal or head of Division, Section or Work Unit</td>
<td>Delegations Register and Position Descriptions</td>
<td>Specific to Faculty, School, Centre, Institute or Division, Section or Work Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Instructions</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Specific to Faculty, School, Centre, Institute or Division, Section or Work Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forms and information</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>University-wide OR Local</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst authority to establish ‘Ordinances’ is enshrined in legislation, the decision to develop ‘Governance Level Principles’ (GLPs) is established through Council-approved Ordinance 1 – Role of Council (which states that Council has authority to develop policy) and GLP 1 – University Governance (which establishes that there will be GLP’s on a range of areas). It may well be that as more policy is transferred across to the University Policy Framework the need for ‘Governance Level Principles’ diminishes. In this instance, the University Governance Framework as articulated in GLP 1 – University Governance would rely on ‘principles’ embedded in policy statements rather than principles embedded in Governance Level Principle statements.

Review of the University of Tasmania Policy on Policy

The University Policy Benchmarking Project was timed so as to complement feedback received from Policy Stakeholders and inform the review of the University of Tasmania:

– Operational Policy Development and Review Policy;
– Operational Policy Development and Review Procedure; and

49 Governance Level Principle 1 – University Governance states that there will be a set of “integrated Principles, Policies and Procedures ... established by Council to apply across the University. They are statements of the principles under which the University will operate, covering: Academic Standards; Built Environment; Code of Conduct; Consultancies; Employment; Environmental Management; Intellectual Property; Investment; Occupational Health and Safety; Procurement and Contracts; Public Relations and Communications; Risk Management; and University Governance” (p4, [http://www.utas.edu.au/universitycouncil/policyframework/glps/index.html](http://www.utas.edu.au/universitycouncil/policyframework/glps/index.html)).

Fundamentally, this project confirms the need to establish, through the Policy Development and Review Policy, a comprehensive University Policy Framework which:

- defines University of Tasmania policy;
- establishes the range of policy instruments (i.e. Policy, Procedure, Guideline, Standards);
- specifies approval authorities for all policy instruments;
- identifies policy development cycle stages; and
- defines the application of policy instruments (i.e. university-wide and/or section-specific).

The Manager, Policy and Delegations has further refined the draft Policy, Procedure and Guideline documents to reflect both Policy Stakeholder contributions and University Policy Benchmarking Project outcomes.

In relation to local policy, whilst Draft 2 of the Policy on Development and Review Policy proposed recognising both university-wide and local (academic) policy, Draft 3 has been amended to omit local policy from the University Policy Framework as per instruction from the Director, Governance and Legal. The question remains as to what risk minimisation strategies will be implemented to enforce current policy which remains outside the revised University Policy Framework (i.e. policy yet to be transferred; and local policy particularly where no university-wide is in place). The Legal Office has been requested to draft transitional clauses to address this matter.

Redevelopment of the University Policy Website

The University Policy Benchmarking Project was undertaken concurrently with a Review of the University of Tasmania Policy Website.

The Manager, Policy and Delegations has recommended the Policy Website be redeveloped to incorporate the following features, and content has been drafted accordingly and forwarded to Web Services, Information Technology Resources:
Once Information Technology Resources redevelop the Policy Website it is recommended that the Manager, Policy and Delegations be given administrative and management carriage of the Policy Website.

**Enhancement of the Policy Toolkit**

The University Policy Benchmarking Project revealed a number of good practice Policy Toolkit resources, and developments of note include the following:

- A Policy Review Schedule has subsequently been developed, circulated to UTAS Policy Network members and Web Services, ITR for inclusion on the revised Policy Website;
- The master List of Policy Under Development has been updated, and will be simplified for uploading to the Policy Website;
- Further links (e.g. to the University Glossary under development, and University Calendar) will be progressively added; and
- Additional resources will be included in the Policy Toolkit as these are developed.

**Review of the University Policy Repository**

The Manager, Policy and Delegations completed a thorough review of the University Policy Repository (Alphabetical Listing) and recommended (February, 2010) key changes to:

- Provide a comprehensive alphabetical listing encompassing all University of Tasmania policy including:
  - approved Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Standards available online through the Governance and Legal listing of ‘Approved Policy’;
ii) university-wide policy documents available through other Section/Work Unit sites, primarily including statements currently awaiting transference to the University Policy Framework.

- Update currently incorrect details and inconsistencies in nomenclature and presentation;
- Provide information regarding ‘status’, as requested by large numbers of Policy Stakeholders; and
- Provide contact information, as requested by large numbers of Policy Stakeholders.

As documentation is progressively transferred to the University Policy Framework, the University Policy Repository will provide the authoritative source for all University policy.

**University Policy (Environment, Leave Without Pay, Credit, Plagiarism Policy)**

- The **University of Tasmania does not have an Environment Policy**, however there is a high level *Built Environment Governance Level Principle* not unlike most minimalist environment policies located, and a *Sustainable Built Environment Designs Policy* (approved under the University Policy Framework. The GLP is overdue for review, and the approved policy is currently scheduled for review.

  The Manager, Policy and Delegations has advised the Policy Delegate of outcomes of the University Policy Benchmarking Project to inform their policy review process. It may well be in cases such as this that once a comprehensive policy is developed, there is no longer a need for the initial Governance Level Principle.

- The **University of Tasmania has a discrete Special Leave With or Without Pay Policy**, however this is very poor and currently sits outside the University Policy Framework. This policy has yet to be transferred to the University Policy Framework, and provides extremely minimal information regarding the University’s position on this matter.

  The Manager, Policy and Delegations has advised the Human Resources policy officer of the outcomes of the University Policy Benchmarking Project to inform their policy development process.

- The **University of Tasmania does not have a university-wide Credit Policy**, although some Faculties/Schools do have *Faculty Credit Policies*. The *University Application for Credit Form* advises applicants specifically to refer to local Faculty Policy and Guidelines. Despite the fact that the University of Tasmania has limited Teaching and Learning Policy (and in relation to this issue, no Credit Policy), such local policies are not recognised under the current or now proposed University of Tasmania Policy on Policy and their status is questionable.

  The Manager, Policy and Delegations has advised the SEO, Office of the PVC(S&E) of the outcomes of the University Policy Benchmarking Project and highlighted the need to develop a University Credit Policy.

- The **University of Tasmania does not have a Plagiarism Policy**, however this has been flagged for development as a Teaching and Learning Policy by the Manager, Policy and Delegations with the SEO, Office of the PVC(S&E), and discussions will be commenced with the Co-Head, CALT.
RECOMMENDATIONS

That the University of Tasmania:


2. Support significant enhancement to the current (online) Policy Website, in line with the recommendations included in this report.

3. Support significant enhancement of the current University Policy Repository, in line with the review completed by the Manager, Policy and Delegations.

4. Review the current (approved) *Sustainable Built Environment Designs Policy* and develop a University of Tasmania Environment Policy (or redevelopment of Governance Level Principle 9 – Environmental Management).

5. Implement a review of the current (old format) *Leave Without Pay Policy* and transfer of same to the University Policy Framework.

6. Develop a University of Tasmania *Credit Policy*.

7. Develop a University of Tasmania *Plagiarism Policy*.

8. Review the role of Governance Level Principles for the University of Tasmania.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the *University Policy Benchmarking Project* revealed a wealth of information and good practice models for ready incorporation, where relevant and warranted, into the University of Tasmania approach to the management and development of university policy.

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April, 2010