

Policy Toolkit: Policy vs Procedure – Explanatory Note

What is a Policy?

Any committee decision or management directive, which sets out the official position of the University on any aspect of the institution's activities. A policy mandates key principles and provisions to enable decision making and is usually accompanied by a procedure explaining how the policy is implemented. Institutional policies are formally approved by University Management Team, Academic Council or Governing Authority, and have broad application across the University.

What is a Procedure?

Detailed mandatory direction on how the policy (principles) will actually be implemented in an operating environment. Normally a procedure exists to support policy on an operational level. In some cases, a procedure exists where there is no policy. Procedures can be developed subsequent to policy. Most procedures are developed and approved by the policy owner, some are approved at University-level together with the policy.

Table: Possible combinations of policy and procedure and appropriate approval for each

	University Policy	Procedure Approved at University-level	Procedure Approved by Owner	Explanation	Example
Case 1	YES	NO	YES	A university policy in the policy area exists. A procedure has been developed and approved by the policy owner (normally approved by Head/Director of Unit or a Senior Officer) to support policy on an operational level.	
Case 2	YES	YES	NO	A university policy in the policy area exists. A procedure has been developed and approved at university-level (AC/ACEC, UMT, GA) due to the nature of the procedure. Such policy and procedure are normally developed, reviewed and approved together and can be presented in a single document. The policy approval body has the final say in whether procedures should be approved at university or local level.	Fitness to Continue in Study Policy and Procedures
Case 3	NO	YES	NO	No university policy exists in the policy area due to the issue being operational or for historic reasons. In such cases a procedure that has application across the whole university is always approved at University-level.	Procedures for the Award of Honorary Degrees