

Policy Governance Framework Procedure

Policy code:	CG1978
Policy owner:	Team Leader, Governance
Approval authority:	Associate Director, Governance
Approval date:	27 July 2026
Next review date:	27 July 2029

Table of Contents

Purpose	1
Scope	2
Legislative context	2
Definitions	2
Overview of the University's governance framework	3
Responsibilities in relation to governance documents	3
Document approval	3
Approval Authority	4
Document Owner	4
Governance and Policy	4
Part 1 - Establishing a governance document	4
Activity 1: Identify the need for the new document	5
Activity 2: Obtain approval to proceed	5
Activity 3: Commence the development process	5
Activity 4: Consultation and approval	5
Activity 5: Publish the new document	6
Activity 6: Communication and implementation	6
Part 2 - Administration of governance documents	6
Administrative amendments	6
Minor amendments	7
Major amendments	7
Periodic review of governance documents	7
Rescinding a governance document	8
Part 3 - Design of governance documents	8
Part 4 - Administration	9
Supporting documents	9
Responsibility	9
Promulgation	9
Records management	9

Purpose

To set out the procedure for developing, reviewing, amending and rescinding documents which (together with University legislation) establish the University's policy governance framework.

Scope

This procedure applies to the development, review, amendment and rescission of university policies, procedures, codes, guidelines, manuals and work instructions. It does not apply to the making of university legislation, and it does not limit the powers, duties and functions of the University Council.

Legislative context

- Federation University Australia Act 2010 (Vic)
- Federation University Australia Statute 2021
- Federation University Australia (Academic) Regulations 2022
- Federation University Australia (Operations) Regulations 2022
- Federation University Australia (Students) Regulations 2022

Definitions

Term	Definition
Approval Authority	A person or body with absolute responsibility for approving a governance document (member of the Vice-Chancellor's Senior Team unless otherwise specified).
Document Owner	The person with responsibility as the proponent for establishment, maintenance, review or rescission of a governance document.
Governance document	A document which, together with University legislation, forms part of the University's governance framework. This includes policies, procedures, codes, guidelines, manuals and work instructions.
Governance Document Request Form (GDRF)	An online form to be completed prior to the development or rescission of a governance document. It can also be used to gain approval from Document Owners and Approval Authorities for amendments.
Periodic review	Review of a governance document in accordance with Part 2 of this Procedure.
Policy Library	A collective noun for approved governance documents. Federation's policy library is a centralised, authoritative digital repository that houses the University's active policies, procedures, guidelines, and governance documents.
Proposer/Document Author	A person proposing the addition or change to a governance document.
Subject Matter Expert (SME)	A person who possesses deep, specialised knowledge in a specific topic, business area, or technical field or topic. The SME may work with the Governance and Policy Team on behalf of the Document Owner.
University legislation	The <i>Federation University Australia Act 2010 (Vic)</i> , the Federation University Australia Statute 2021, the Federation University Australia (Academic) Regulations 2022, the Federation University Australia (Students) Regulations 2022 and the Federation University Australia (Operations) Regulations 2022.

Overview of the University's governance framework

University governance is arranged in a hierarchy, as follows:

1. **The Federation University Australia Act 2010** is an Act of the Victorian Parliament. The University's status, powers, functions and responsibilities are established by this Act.
2. **The Federation University Australia Statute 2021** was made by the Council, with the approval of the (Victorian) Minister. The statute makes high-level provision for the University's operation and provides a context for the University regulations.
3. **University regulations.** Three sets of regulations have been made, consistent with the Act and Statute:
 - Federation University (Academic) Regulations 2022: prescribe the processes in which overarching academic, research and education and training scrutiny informs decisions pertaining to the approval and quality of academic and vocational and training courses, as well as addressing specific academic issues.
 - Federation University (Students) Regulations 2022: prescribe on student-related matters such as student admission, enrolment, payment of fees, academic credit, assessments, academic progress, graduation, student misconduct and student appeals. It also prescribes establishment of a Student Senate, a Student Misconduct Committee and a Student Appeals Committee.
 - Federation University (Operations) Regulations 2022: prescribe on a diverse range of matters, including commercialisation of research, intellectual property, elections and the conduct of meetings.

The University's governance documents operate in support of University legislation and are categorised as one of the following:

1. **Codes of Conduct:** are authorised by the Vice-Chancellor and President may be applicable to students, staff, library users and other persons associated with the University. Codes of Conduct are referenced in University legislation so that failure to comply with a Code of Conduct may constitute misconduct.
2. **University policies and procedures and guidelines:** provide a framework for decision-making and support the consistent application of University operations. Policies set out the University's principles and requirements and are coordinated by the University Secretary on behalf of the Office of the Vice-Chancellor. Procedures and guidelines provide practical direction for applying policies and are coordinated by the relevant senior manager.
3. **Manuals and Frameworks:** are operational documents that may contain critical information and direct the reader to related procedures and work instructions. Manuals and frameworks may apply across specific functional areas of the University and are approved by the relevant senior manager.
4. **Work instructions:** describe specific tasks only applicable to a localised audience or team and often in support of a procedure or business process. Work instructions are approved and managed within each organisational unit.

As with any Australian legal entity, the University must comply with the laws of the Victorian and Commonwealth Parliaments. These impose responsibilities and accountabilities, either directly (such as freedom of information and data protection legislation) or indirectly (such as guidelines for Commonwealth and State registration authorities).

Responsibilities in relation to governance documents

Document approval

A governance document comes into effect when it is approved by the University (in accordance with the [Instrument and Register of Delegations](#)) or on a later date specified in the document. Approval can occur in one of two ways:

1. **by a person or body authorised to do so by university legislation.** These are identified in the legislation, and include:

- **the University Council:** The governing body of the University responsible for the general direction and superintendence of the University. It has power to approve, amend or rescind statutes (subject to Ministerial approval), regulations, policies, procedures, manuals and work instructions.
 - **the Vice-Chancellor and President:** the Vice-Chancellor and President is the Chief Executive Officer of the University generally is responsible for the conduct of the University's affairs in all matters. The Vice-Chancellor and President has standing delegated power to approve, amend or rescind regulations, policies, procedures, manuals and work instructions.
 - **persons and bodies identified in University legislation:** University legislation confers specific powers and functions on persons or bodies within the University.
2. **by a person or body with delegated powers.** Power to approve governance documents can be conferred by delegation. The Council and the Vice-Chancellor and President have delegation powers as outlined in the [Instrument and Register of Delegations](#).

Approval Authority

An Approval Authority is responsible for approving the final drafts of a governance document submitted by the Document Owner for publishing in the University Policy Library. They also hold responsibility to approve the rescission of any governance document delegated to their position when required.

An Approval Authority is assigned to the appropriate member of the Vice-Chancellor's Senior Team or in specific instances to a member of the Extended Leadership Team.

Document Owner

A Document Owner (assigned by position and not an individual) must be assigned to each governance document below the level of University legislation. The Document Owner is responsible for leading the establishment, consultation with stakeholders, maintenance, review and request to rescind of the assigned governance document.

Governance and Policy

The [Governance and Policy Team](#) are responsible for supporting Document Owners in facilitating the development, review, amendment and rescission of governance documents, including:

- administering University governance document review processes to ensure consistency across the University;
- monitoring the status of all policy governance documents to ensure that they remain relevant, useful and applicable to the current University regulatory environment including:
 - identifying policy gaps, overlaps and inconsistencies requiring rectification in collaboration with Document Owners;
 - coordinating the approval to rescind governance documents assessed as no longer required with the Approval Authority.
- provision of advice to Document Owners in relation to governance documents.

Part 1 - Establishing a governance document

In the event that a University staff member identifies the need for a new governance document, the following activities should occur.

Activity 1: Identify the need for the new document

A review of the existing governance library must be undertaken to identify where there is a gap in existing governance framework is present. This may occur as a direct result of:

- a change in legislation or government policy;
- a new strategic direction for the University;
- a change in business process;
- the need for transparency of process.

A University staff member may propose that a governance document be established to fill the gap. The proposer should seek advice from Governance and Policy to assess if the gap can be addressed within an existing governance document. The proposer should also consult with relevant Document Owners to confirm the need for action.

Activity 2: Obtain approval to proceed

Where a need is confirmed, the proposer must obtain agreement to proceed from the person who would be the Approval Authority. A new University policy will not be created without prior approval from the Vice-Chancellor.

Activity 3: Commence the development process

1. The proposer should submit a request through [Governance and Policy ServiceNow](#). A [Governance Document Request Form](#) must also be submitted requiring automated workflow dual approval by the proposed Document Owner and the Approval Authority.
2. Upon receipt of the approved request to Governance and Policy the application is filed within the approved University records management system with guidance of next steps provided to the document author.
3. The document author may then commence creating a draft document on the specified university template provisioned by Governance and Policy. At this point, the proposer is assigned as the Document Owner, unless otherwise delegated.
4. Once drafted to an acceptable standard, the document (in Word format) should be uploaded to the existing [ServiceNow](#) ticket for submission to Governance and Policy.

Activity 4: Consultation and approval

Upon receipt of the draft document via the existing [ServiceNow](#) ticket Governance and Policy will:

- upload the draft document into the University's approved policy management system and update the document status to 'Sent for Approval';
- a PDF version of the document, as it now appears in the policy management system, will be uploaded to the existing [ServiceNow](#) ticket requesting for the Document Owner to complete a final review prior to be published for consultation with relevant university stakeholders to provide opportunity for feedback.

Consultation with relevant university stakeholders at a minimum must occur. In addition the Document Owner, SME or Document Author may request the release of the document for university stakeholder consultation. If requested, Governance and Policy will:

- update the document's status in the Policy Administration System to "For Uni-Wide Comment;"
- in consultation with the Document Owner, SME or Document Author, prepare and release FedNews and FedEngage notifications to announce the consultation process, providing a timeline and guidance for stakeholders to submit feedback. The document should be available for comment for ten working days unless approval is obtained from the Document Owner for a shorter period;

- on receipt of feedback received, Governance and Policy will:
 - email an acknowledgment of receipt to the feedback contributor;
 - collate all feedback received and at the closure of the consultation period share with the Document Owner to review and revise the document content as appropriate.

If comments are received, the Document Owner, SME or Document Author must:

- acknowledge comments received and advise the person who provided it if/how their comments will be given effect;
- forward any subsequent amendments to Governance and Policy to update the master document stored in the policy administration system.

Following consultation (if required) approval to publish the document is required from the Document Owner and Approval Authority via the existing [ServiceNow](#) ticket.

Activity 5: Publish the new document

If the document is approved, the Document Owner should forward it to Governance and Policy who will:

- file the approved document in the records management system;
- record in the document the scheduled review date;
- publish the document through the policy management system and if appropriate (see below) on the University website;
- in consultation with the Document Owner, SME or Document Author, prepare a FedNews and FedEngage item to announce the publication.

Policies, procedures, guidelines, manuals and frameworks should be published on the University's Policy Central (publicly accessible on our website). Other documents may be published on the University website if this is considered appropriate by the Approval Authority. If a document is commercially sensitive consideration should be given to restricted publication, with access available only with staff login.

Note: The University is an “agency” for the purposes of the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic). Documents held by it are subject to disclosure requirements as set out in that Act.

Activity 6: Communication and implementation

The Document Owner must:

- ensure that any University staff and students who may be affected are advised of new document;
- monitor implementation and ensure that staff are provided with appropriate information and training.

Part 2 - Administration of governance documents

The University's governance documents are living (not static) instruments requiring monitoring and, when required, revised to remain factually correct and fit for purpose. New documents can be established if necessary and existing documents should be revised or revoked if no longer applicable.

Administrative amendments

Administrative amendments can include the following: revising position titles, spelling and/or formatting corrections, repairing broken links, updating legislation name changes, definitions and associated forms.

Administrative amendments can be actioned by Governance and Policy and do not require the approval of the Document Owner. Any University staff or student can request to have an administrative error corrected. Such requests should be submitted via the [Governance and Policy ServiceNow portal](#).

Minor amendments

A Document Owner may initiate a minor amendment to a governance document without the need to conduct a comprehensive review. Examples of minor amendments are:

- reassignment of a title or function, following a change in University terminology or responsibilities;
- aligning content with legislative or regulatory requirements where:
 - the University's business processes are specified in those requirements; or
 - changes to the University's business processes are required. It is expected that (in this case) consultation with key stakeholders would still occur before the requested amendment takes effect.
- amendments to align with business process changes already approved by the University Council, Academic Board, or Vice-Chancellor's Senior Team.

A minor amendment must be approved for publishing by the Document Owner.

Major amendments

Any amendments made outside the conditions prescribed above as an Administrative or Minor amendment is considered to be a Major amendment.

These require appropriate consultation with relevant stakeholders, determined by the Document Owner and/or Approval Authority. Requests for major amendments are undertaken with support of Governance and Policy utilising the [Governance Document Request Form](#) to ensure the appropriate approval to amend is given before publishing of major amendments to the document.

Note: Under the delegated authority of Council, the Vice-Chancellor and President has absolute authority to dictate any major amendments without the prior consultation with the Document Owner and/or Approval Authority if determined that the amendment is in alignment with the University's strategic objective/s.

Periodic review of governance documents

Governance documents should be reviewed as follows:

- **University codes and policies** should be reviewed at a maximum of every five years;
- **University procedures and guidelines** should be reviewed at a maximum of every three years;
- **Manuals, frameworks and work instructions** should be reviewed at a maximum of every two years for currency of information and as required for other issues.

Governance and Policy will notify the Document Owner three months prior to the periodic review date and will offer assistance with the review process.

Responsibilities of the Document Owner - document review

Where periodic review or early review is to occur, the Document Owner should:

- seek advice from Governance and Policy in relation to current legislative and regulatory requirements and the use of approved templates;

- identify the extent stakeholder's consultation to occur. This will vary according to the circumstances:
 - if it is proposed to only verify currency and accuracy of the described business processes, minimal consultation will be required;
 - for documents requiring significant revision (for example to meet legislative or regulatory requirements or the University's strategic direction), broader stakeholder consultation and/or distribution for university-wide consultation may be required.

When revising the document, the Document Owner should:

- check that the document is presented in the current Federation template (accessible via the [Governance and Policy SharePoint Intranet page](#)) to be completed prior to release for stakeholder consultation;
- ensure that all required changes are [tracked](#) within a Word document and submit to Governance and Policy in the template format if stakeholder consultation results in minimal revisions;
- inform Governance and Policy that the document has major changes and return a finalised Word version if stakeholder consultation indicates major amendments to be made.

Note: Document Owners should ensure appropriate structuring, writing and editing of the document to enhance readability and user-friendliness.

Rescinding a governance document

Responsibilities for rescinding a governance document are set out in the following table.

Activity	Responsibility	Steps
Rescinding a policy document	Document Owner Approval Authority Governance and Policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where a document has been identified for rescission, a Governance Document Request Form with a supporting rationale should be completed. This form requires dual approval of the Document Owner and the Approval Authority. 2. Following form submission, including dual approvals, Governance and Policy may then rescind the document and update records. <p>Note: If a new document is to replace the rescinded one, ensure that this is approved before the old one is rescinded.</p> <p>Note: The Vice-Chancellor and President has absolute authority to rescind if it is determined that the action is aligned with the University's strategic objective/s.</p>

Part 3 - Design of governance documents

A governance document should include the following components.

Heading	Content
Purpose	A description of content of the document in the context of the University's governance framework.
Policy statement	A description of the policy content of the document. The statement may include headings to direct readers to supporting documents.
Supporting documents	Documents which support the University community in implementing the policy, such as procedures, manuals, work instructions and forms. These should be identified.
Legislative context	Relevant Commonwealth and State legislation should be identified. Where relevant, regulations, guidelines, codes and similar documents made under that legislation should also be identified.
Records management	The mandated minimum retention period (as required by applicable legislation and regulatory bodies).

Part 4 - Administration

Supporting documents

- [Governance Document Request Form](#)
- [Policy feedback consultation table](#)
- [Operations Manual template](#)
- [Procedure template](#)
- [Work Instruction template](#)
- [Guideline template](#)

Responsibility

- Associate Director, Governance (as the Approval Authority) is responsible for monitoring the implementation, outcomes and scheduled review of this procedure.
- Team Leader, Governance (as the Document Owner) is responsible for the content of this procedure as delegated by the Approval Authority.

Promulgation

This procedure will be placed on the University website and will be available for download.

Information about governance documents will be communicated through the University by internal communication including FedNews, FedEngage, staff emails, staff inductions and documentation distribution.

Records management

Document title	Location	Responsible officer	Minimum retention period
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Governance Document Review Form	The University's approved electronic records management system	Policy Systems Administrator	Electronic record will be retained in the University's records management system
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