

Metapolicy (Policy on Policy)



Responsibility for policy: Manager Policy and Governance

Approving authority: Vice-Chancellor

Last reviewed: May 2025

Next review: May 2030

Application

1. This policy applies to all University of Waikato policies, guidelines, procedures, protocols and codes.

Scope

2. This policy does not apply to academic regulations and statutes governed by the Academic Board or its delegated authorities or to plans and strategies governed by the Council or its delegated authorities.

Purpose

3. The purpose of this policy is to establish an overarching framework and hierarchy for University of Waikato policies, guidelines, procedures, protocols and codes.

Definitions

4. In this policy:

approving authority with respect to policies and codes means:

- the Vice-Chancellor or delegated authority
- Council or a committee of Council, or
- Academic Board or a committee of the Academic Board

approving authority with respect to guidelines, procedures and protocols means:

- a Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor or equivalent or delegated authority
- Academic Board or a committee of the Academic Board, or
- a Divisional Board or equivalent.

code means a document that guides ethical and professional behaviour, typically a code of conduct

guideline means a University-wide or Divisional instructional document that provides context and informs practice; guidelines must be consistent with any policy that they relate to

policy means a University-wide instrument that governs administrative and operational functions of the University; policies must comply with all relevant legislation and be approved by an appropriate authority; policies may be supported by guidelines and/or procedures; policies must be complied with and may include sanctions or penalties for non-compliance

procedure means a University-wide or Divisional instructional document that sets out the processes that must be followed for the implementation of a task or activity; procedures must be consistent with any policy they relate to

protocol means a stand-alone University-wide instructional document that informs practice on how a task is to be undertaken

Principles

5. University of Waikato policies, guidelines, procedures, protocols and codes:
 - a. must be created only where there is a clear and justifiable need that requires long-term application to the University
 - b. must reflect good practice, be fit for purpose and up to date
 - c. must be readily available and easy to understand by members of the University community
 - d. must be developed, implemented, monitored and reviewed in an appropriate, regular and consistent manner, and
 - e. must align with University strategies, plans, objectives, priorities and relevant government legislation.

New policies, guidelines, procedures, protocols or codes

6. A new policy, guideline, procedure, protocol or code may be established where:
 - a. required to give effect to University strategies, plans, objectives and priorities
 - b. required by an external authority
 - c. there is a clear need to establish, manage or modify behaviour
 - d. the absence of a policy, guideline, procedure, protocol or code exposes the University to legitimate risk, or
 - e. government legislation needs to be interpreted for the University of Waikato context.

Disestablishment of policies, guidelines, procedures, protocols or codes

7. An existing policy, guideline, procedure, protocol or code will be disestablished where:
 - a. it has been substantively subsumed into another document, or
 - b. it is no longer considered by the approving authority to be relevant or useful.

Review of policies and codes

8. Policies and codes must be reviewed on a regular basis (typically between one to five years) and may also be reviewed on an ad hoc basis.
9. Inconsequential editorial amendments to policies and codes may be made at any time.
10. Policies and codes remain current until either replaced or disestablished.
11. A policy or code review includes consideration of:
 - a. changes to practice associated with the policy or code since it was last reviewed
 - b. changes to legislation and other documents associated with the policy or code since it was last reviewed
 - c. changes to organisational roles, delegations and structural frameworks (committees, strategic plans etc.) associated with the policy or code since it was last reviewed
 - d. reported breaches of the policy or code since it was last reviewed and matters taken account of when resolving them

- e. compliance issues identified or through application of the policy or code or in the most recent policy compliance survey
 - f. national and international best practice and future directions
 - g. the views of key stakeholders, and
 - h. comments, questions or concerns raised in relation to the policy or code since it was last reviewed.
12. A policy or code review must give attention to whether the policy or code is:
- a. up-to-date and reflects current practice
 - b. resulting in desired outcomes
 - c. resulting in unintended negative outcomes
 - d. meeting Treaty of Waitangi obligations
 - e. compliant with relevant legislation, strategy and delegations, and
 - f. meeting the needs of key stakeholders.
13. Consultation on new and revised policies or codes must be undertaken with staff, the staff unions, the Waikato Students' Union and/or relevant committees of the University as appropriate, prior to approval by the relevant approving authority.

Review of guidelines, procedures and protocols

14. Guidelines, procedures and protocols may be reviewed on an ad hoc basis.
15. Minor editorial amendments to guidelines, procedures and protocols may be made at any time.
16. Guidelines, procedures and protocols remain current until either replaced or disestablished.
17. A guideline, procedure or protocol review includes consideration of:
- a. changes to practice associated with the guideline, procedure or protocol since it was last reviewed
 - b. changes to associated policy since it was last reviewed
 - c. changes to organisational roles, delegations and structural frameworks (committees, strategic plans etc.) associated with the guideline, procedure or protocol since it was last reviewed
 - d. changes to organisational roles, delegations and structural frameworks (committees, strategic plans etc.) associated with any overarching policy or code since it was last reviewed
 - e. reported non-compliance with the guideline, procedure or protocol since it was last reviewed and matters taken account of when addressing them
 - f. the views of key stakeholders consulted in the review process, and
 - g. any other comments, questions or concerns raised in relation to the guideline, procedure or protocol since it was last reviewed.
18. A guideline, procedure or protocol review must give attention to whether the guideline, procedure or protocol is:
- a. up-to-date and reflects good practice
 - b. resulting in desired outcomes
 - c. resulting in unintended negative outcomes
 - d. meeting Treaty of Waitangi obligations
 - e. missing or not meeting any associated policy or code obligations
 - f. compliant with any relevant policy, and
 - g. meeting the needs of key stakeholders.

19. Consultation on new and revised guidelines, procedures or protocols must be undertaken with staff, the staff unions, the Waikato Students' Union and/or relevant committees of the University, as appropriate, prior to approval by the relevant approving authority.

Responsibilities

20. Designated document owners and relevant approving authorities are responsible for ensuring that the policies, guidelines, procedures, protocols and codes for which they have responsibility are maintained and complied with.
21. Line managers are responsible for ensuring that staff within their area of responsibility comply with this policy and are aware of and comply with all other policies, guidelines, procedures, protocols and codes relevant to their roles.
22. The Manager Policy and Governance is responsible for:
 - a. providing support, guidance and direction in the development and review of policies, protocols and codes
 - b. ensuring that policies, protocols and codes use consistent structure and terminology
 - c. ensuring that policies, protocols and codes are maintained on the University's website
 - d. ensuring that policies, protocols and codes are reviewed according to the review cycle or when needed
 - e. undertaking consultation with appropriate policy, protocol and code stakeholders, and
 - f. ensuring that appropriate approvals are obtained and recorded.
23. The Manager Policy and Governance may provide advice on the development and review of guidelines and procedures, particularly those associated with overarching policies or codes.

Responsibility for monitoring compliance

24. The Manager Policy and Governance is responsible for monitoring compliance with this policy and reporting any breaches to the Vice-Chancellor.
25. Breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action under the [Staff Code of Conduct](#).