Policy Governance Framework

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) To establish the official policy governance framework ('the Framework') for describing, developing, approving, reviewing and maintaining policy documents at RMIT.

Section 2 - Overview

(2) RMIT University is a public institution under Victorian law and stands on Aboriginal Country of the Kulin Nation. RMIT recognises and acknowledges the Bundjil Statement that helps all RMIT staff to respectfully work, live and study on Aboriginal Country.

(3) The Framework defines the hierarchy and types of policy documents that exist under the University legislation to support the good governance of the University.

Section 3 - Scope

(4) The Framework applies to all policy documents developed for and on behalf of the University, its controlled entities and strategic investment vehicles (known as the RMIT Group).

Section 4 - Policy

Principles

(5) The Framework is intended to fulfil the following objectives:

a. provide high quality, consistent and transparent policy documents for staff, students and affiliates of the RMIT Group
b. govern the control environment for effective compliance with legislation and other mandated requirements
c. enable the functioning of the University and its controlled entities to achieve enhanced efficiency in their operations
d. provide a structure for systematic development, communication, implementation and review of policy documents
e. provide a structure for incorporating reconciliation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination as a core RMIT value.

(6) To meet the objectives of the Framework, policy documents:

a. will not impinge or impair the freedoms related to academic freedom, freedom of expression and freedom of speech that are protected by the University and stated in the Intellectual Freedom Policy.
b. align to the Code of Conduct which captures the vision and values of the University and its people
c. align to University legislation, strategic goals and operating plans

d. are produced when there is a clear need or justifiable benefit

e. conform to the policy hierarchy with policies that are principles-based

f. are clearly written and presented, transparent in their purpose and application, readily available, and provide supporting information for implementation

g. are developed in consultation with key stakeholders and have regard to resource needs to give them effect

h. are reviewed, and revised as appropriate, to ensure their ongoing relevance and currency.

Hierarchy

(7) Policy documents exist within a broader regulatory framework under the [RMIT Act](#), University statutes and University regulations. The policy document hierarchy is:

a. [Intellectual Freedom Policy](#)

b. [Code of Conduct](#) and policies (group or divisional)

c. procedures

d. resources (including standards, guidelines, manuals, instructions, detailed scenarios).

(8) The hierarchy operates to:

a. resolve any inconsistencies arising in subordinate policy documents or operational rules that exist outside of the Framework

b. enable divisional policies to be linked to a headlining group policy and be distinguished by their scope of application

c. provide procedures to clarify how policies will be practically applied

d. enable procedures and resources to be binding where they are expressly referred to in a policy

e. provide for non-mandatory resources that are advisory in nature to support local application, academic or professional judgement.

Approval and Category

(9) Policy documents may be approved where they meet the objectives and principles of the Framework.

(10) The approval authority for policy documents is determined in accordance with:

a. University legislation

b. delegations of authority

c. the policy hierarchy and category.

(11) Policy documents are classified into categories and align to corporate and academic governance structures. These are:

a. Governance, approved by the RMIT University Council

b. Academic, approved by the Academic Board

c. Talent and Culture, approved by either RMIT University Council, the Vice-Chancellor's Executive or Academic Board

d. Operational Effectiveness, approved by the Vice-Chancellor's Executive.

(12) The categories operate to:

a. ensure policy documents consistently apply across the RMIT Group

b. enable divisional policies to exist under the Academic, Talent and Culture, and Operational Effectiveness categories to meet the specific needs of the University and any of its controlled entities.

(13) The relevant approval authority:

a. considers new policies or amendments for approval where they meet the objectives and principles of the Framework.
b. rescinds policies
c. delegates authority to review or amend approved policy documents.

(14) Minor amendments may be approved by the policy owner who must consult with and notify the Chair of the approval authority of the changes, including impacts on Indigenous business at RMIT.

(15) The roles and responsibilities for approval of policy documents across the hierarchy are set out in the Staff Policy Resources on the [Policy Register](#).

Ownership

(16) Policy owners will be clearly identified within each policy and a Register of policy owners will be maintained by the University Policy Manager.

(17) Policy owners:

a. have overarching responsibility for policy documents, and are accountable for the development, promulgation and implementation of approved policies
b. may assign operational responsibility to a direct report in a divisional area or business unit with subject matter expertise to oversee development, articulation and effective application of policy documents
c. may delegate procedures and resources under a policy to custodians.

(18) Where there is major organisational change such that the position or functions of the policy owner do not have a clear successor, the Vice-Chancellor determines the policy owner.

Communication and Implementation

(19) Communication and implementation of policy documents are managed by the policy author following approval by the approval authority.

(20) Communication and implementation plan must be executed prior to registration of policy documents.

Review

(21) Policy documents are periodically reviewed to ensure adherence to the principles and objective set out in this Framework.

(22) Review is conducted in accordance with the following criteria:

a. Policy documents are subject to a major review at least every five years from the date of first approval or last major review, or where changes to legislative or other requirements necessitate a review.
b. The policy owner ensures that the review identifies and consults with key internal and external stakeholders.
c. The University Policy Manager monitors the review cycle and manages changes to the Policy Register.
d. The University Policy Manager reports annually to Council via the Audit and Risk Management Committee on Framework assurance and reviews.

Registration

(23) The University maintains a Policy Register, in which all policy documents are recorded, and authorised versions of published policy documents are held.

(24) The University Policy Manager has oversight of the Policy Register.

(25) Registration must follow the process set out in the Policy Governance Manual.

Transition

(26) Policies and policy processes that are effective at the commencement of this Framework continue to be effective and binding until they are replaced or rescinded.

(27) Sunset clauses may be applied to policies to accommodate transition.

Section 5 - Procedures and Resources

(28) Refer to the following documents which are established in accordance with this policy:

a. Policy Governance Manual
   i. Policy Governance Procedure
   ii. Policy development toolkit
b. Policy Register

Section 6 - Definitions

(29) For the purposes of this Framework, the following definitions apply:

Academic (category)	all matters pertaining to intellectual freedom, learning, teaching and education services, programs and courses, student administration including enforcement of student regulations, research and research training, student life and student services. It includes human resource matters that relate to academic status (such as titles, promotions, academic misconduct).
Administrative Change	a correction to a policy document to update a title, name, formatting, web link, spelling or grammar, or references to law or other policy documents, or to clarify language.
Amendment	all changes made to a policy document other than a Minor Amendment.
Approval authority	the Council, Academic Board, Vice-Chancellor's Executive, or the policy owner with prescribed authority to approve a policy document.
Code of Conduct	includes the RMIT staff Code of Conduct and RMIT Student Charter
Delegation	delegation assigned to a person in accordance with the Delegations of Authority
Governance (category)	all matters in which the Council (and Committees of Council) has primary responsibility as the governing authority under the RMIT Act, including where it has not otherwise delegated those functions under the Delegations of Authority.
Minor amendment	a change made to a policy document that does not modify it in a way that changes the intent or significantly affects the content or application of the policy, e.g. to clarify existing policy details, align with legislative changes, or include additional processes for new systems, a new campus or controlled entity.

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Operational Effectiveness (category)	all matters pertaining to the sustainable management and operational success of the University and its controlled entities which do not fall within the definition of Governance, Talent and Culture, or Academic.
Talent and Culture (category)	all matters pertaining to human resources, dispute resolution of employees of the RMIT Group in accordance with relevant enterprise agreements and awards, safety and wellbeing, conduct, ethics and integrity, and sustainability.
Divisional policy	Functionally specific statements of the mandatory principles, including any legislative or contractual objectives, that determine the scope and operational relevance of the policy. This type of policy can only exist by exception under certain categories and must be consistent with a headlining Group Policy.
Group policy	Statements of the mandatory principles guiding the operations and significant decision-making of the RMIT Group. (They must support national and international legislation and/or Group objectives to enable Group-wide application.)
Policy author	A senior subject matter expert nominated by the policy owner. Policy authors are responsible for the accuracy and maintenance of the policy document life-cycle and any supporting resources. They will act as a key liaison for the University Policy Manager. The policy author may also be delegated the custodian of a procedure or resource by the policy owner.
Policy document	the collective term for all policies, procedures, associated resources. A schedule to a policy document forms part of the policy document.
Policy Register	the official repository for all current and expired policy documents of the University. It contains the operational details for policy documents.
Policy Governance Manual	the comprehensive document owned and provided by the University Policy Manager that sets out the Procedure and any Resources for Group-wide implementation of the Framework
Policy owner	the VCE Member with whom the policy matter most clearly resides, having regard to the organisational structure and the prescribed purpose and scope of the policy document.
Procedure	captures the 'how to' statements of mandatory prescribed processes, practices and/or actions to give effect to principles under a Policy.
Resource	the collective term describing supporting documents in various forms offering detail, context or recommendations which articulate and give effect to policies and procedures. Resources include: guidelines, manuals, work instructions, detailed scenarios.

Commitment Statement: a standardised statement through which the University can demonstrate its recognition of, and commitment to adopting good practice to promote the Code of Conduct or support policy principles and objectives. Guideline: advisory and explanatory statements offering detail for good practice to support policies, procedures or standards. User manual: describes a comprehensive document that sets out the procedure/s and detailed work instructions and processes. Its status is binding if referred to in Policy.

Instruction: details systems and workflow responsibilities for administering procedures.

Detailed scenarios: these include case studies, FAQs or other general guidance material such as a webpage that are 'live' documents managed by operational areas to support implementation of policy.

Standards: statements of mandatory prescribed specifications as to the qualities of a product, service, system, infrastructure or other resource that underpin a policy. They must be referred to in a Policy and are binding. |
| University Policy Manager | role with operational responsibility to manage the Policy Governance Framework and its implementation. |

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	7th March 2023
Review Date	18th June 2023
Approval Authority	Senior Policy Advisor
Approval Date	2nd September 2020
Expiry Date	31st December 2024
Policy Owner	Alec Cameron Vice-Chancellor
Policy Author	Briony Lewis Executive Director, Governance, Legal and Strategic Operations
Enquiries Contact	Central Policy

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"RMIT Group" - The University, its controlled entities and strategic investment vehicles (known as the RMIT Group).

"Controlled entity" - One that satisfies the test of control in section 50AA of the Corporations Act 2001 and includes: an entity which the University wholly owns ("wholly owned subsidiary"); or an entity in which the University holds an interest of any kind (including a shareholding interest or membership interest) and the University has control of the entity.