



**Ministry of Education, Heritage & Arts**  
**CORPORATE POLICY AND PROCEDURES**  
**POLICY ON POLICY DEVELOPMENT**  
**Version Control – Final Version 11 March 2019**

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 This policy establishes a framework for developing, implementing and reviewing effective policies and procedures within the MEHA.

## **2.0 Definition**

- 2.1 Effective Date is the date the policy comes into effect. This is the date the Permanent Secretary signs the policy.
- 2.2 Heads are the Heads of MEHA Units.
- 2.3 MEHA is the Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts.
- 2.4 NGOs are Non-Government Organisations.
- 2.5 Plain English Language is language that is clear and specific, without the use of technical terms. It is language that can be easily understood by personnel without knowledge of the MEHA organisation or experience with MEHA policies and procedures.
- 2.6 Policy drafters are the MEHA staff responsible for drafting and consulting on the policy. Policy drafters should be SMEs in the section or section that manages the function the policy is about e.g. HR policy should be written by the HR Unit. Where there is doubt as to who is responsible, the Policy Owners should agree who will lead the policy development. Should Heads be unable to agree they should seek the guidance of the Permanent Secretary.
- 2.7 Procedures are the steps used to follow a policy. They help Ministry staff understand their responsibilities to implement the policy.
- 2.8 Policy Owner is the Head of a MEHA unit ultimately responsible for drafting and reviewing the policy. The Head of the unit managing a function is responsible for ensuring policies are drafted for the function.
- 2.9 Review Date is the date by which the policy should be assessed for review. If changes are required, the policy should be reviewed and reissued. Further detail is provided in paragraph 4.1.1.6.
- 2.10 SME is a Subject Matter Expert. An SME is a person with knowledge of a particular role, process, organisation or technology.
- 2.11 Stakeholder is a person, group, or organisation involved in or affected by a course of action. A stakeholder can be internal to the Ministry or external to the Ministry.
- 2.11.1 *Internal stakeholders* include:

- 2.11.1.1 individuals with experience in the policy area

2.11.1.2 implementers of the policy

2.11.1.3 decision makers e.g. Permanent Secretary, Directors.

2.11.2 *External stakeholders* include:

2.11.2.1 NGOs

2.11.2.2 support groups

2.11.2.3 researchers

2.11.2.4 funding bodies

2.11.2.5 universities and higher education institutions

2.11.2.6 statutory Authorities

2.11.2.7 faith-based and community organisations

2.11.2.8 think tanks

2.11.2.9 unions and trade organisations

2.11.2.10 businesses and business bodies eg: chambers of commerce, professional licensing bodies

2.11.2.11 international bodies and development partners.

2.12 Strategic Guidance includes Fiji Government, MEHA and other organisational documents which provide direction on the issue being considered. Examples include the National Development Plan and MEHA Strategic and operational plans. Strategic guidance can also include documents from regional forums, aid organisations or research bodies which have been agreed to or supported by the Fiji government or institutions in which the Fiji Government participates in e.g. Pacific Islands Forum.

### **3.0 Policy Statements**

3.1 Policies provide MEHA staff with clear guidance to support decision making that is consistent with Strategic Guidance.

3.2 Policies must be written with the user of the policy in mind. Policy users include MEHA staff, the Honorable Minister, reviewers of MEHA decisions and MEHA clients.

3.3 To ensure users of MEHA policies are given the best advice possible, MEHA policies should:

- 3.3.1 clearly explain what strategic goals, legislation, or Government guideline the policy supports.
  - 3.3.2 include the input of stakeholders to ensure completeness and ensure implementation is possible.
  - 3.3.3 be easy to understand so all Ministry staff can implement the policy and procedures correctly.
  - 3.3.4 be complete. All relevant considerations and steps should be included.
- 3.4 Policies must be drafted in consultation with SMEs to ensure policy guidance is accurate and effective.
  - 3.5 All new policies must be approved by the Permanent Secretary and the Minister.
  - 3.6 Policies must be assessed regularly to ensure current best practice is being followed.
  - 3.7 All policies must include a review date by which policies will be assessed for review, and if necessary; reviewed and reissued. Policies will not lapse on their review date.
  - 3.8 Policies must be drafted in accordance with the procedures outlined below.

## **4.0 Procedures**

### **4.1 Policy Process**

- 4.1.1 The policy process includes three key steps – Plan, Do, Review:

- 4.1.1.1 ***Step 1 – Plan***

- 4.1.1.1.1 Consult Policy, Planning and Research Unit. The Policy Owner consults with the Policy, Planning and Research Unit for advice on the policy process.

- 4.1.1.1.2 Appoint policy drafters. The Policy Owner appoints SMEs to draft the policy.

- 4.1.1.1.3 Confirm Strategic intent with the Permanent Secretary. The Policy Owner seeks guidance from the Permanent Secretary regarding:

- 4.1.1.1.3.1 desired outcomes

- 4.1.1.1.3.2 underlying assumptions

- 4.1.1.1.3.3 relevant considerations and sensitivities, and

- 4.1.1.1.3.4 approach to stakeholder consultation.



- 4.1.1.1.4 Outline the policy activity. The Policy Owner provides guidance to the policy drafters regarding:
- 4.1.1.1.4.1 the aims of the policy. State the desired outcome of the policy.
  - 4.1.1.1.4.2 scope of the policy exercise. Note what issues are within the activity, and which are specifically excluded.
  - 4.1.1.1.4.3 relevant legislation or Government policy guidelines.
  - 4.1.1.1.4.4 timeframe. State when is the final policy required, and why.
  - 4.1.1.1.4.5 consultation. Note the stakeholders who will be consulted, and in what order. Generally, internal stakeholders are consulted prior to external stakeholders, particularly where sensitive issues are being considered.
  - 4.1.1.1.4.6 risks. Consider what may impede or prevent the policy's development and how those issues can be managed. Note any risks which require acceptance at a higher level. For more complex policy development activities, develop a risk plan to consider any risks that may arise during the process and consider how they will be addressed. Risk registers used by other education departments may also be useful, such as the Victorian Department of Education's Risk Register<sup>1</sup> and SWOT analysis matrix<sup>2</sup>.
  - 4.1.1.1.4.7 updates and meetings. Clarify how often the Policy Owner will meet policy drafters, and the frequency and format (verbal, email, written report) of regular progress updates.
  - 4.1.1.1.4.8 other duties. Note whether staff will work solely on the policy or balance with work with their regular duties.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/spag/governance/riskregblank.doc>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/spag/safety/swotmatrix.pdf>

This information should be captured in an email and sent to the policy drafters, to ensure all staff understand the proposed policy development process.

#### 4.1.1.2 **Step 2 – Do**

4.1.1.2.1 **Draft the policy** The policy includes the following essential components:

- 4.1.1.2.1.1 cover sheet formatted in the same manner as the cover sheet of this policy.
- 4.1.1.2.1.2 purpose. Explain what the policy does here.
- 4.1.1.2.1.3 definitions, so that terms used throughout the policy document are explained. The test for determining if a definition is needed should be 'would someone outside the Ministry understand what that term means?' If the answer is no, include a definition in the policy.
- 4.1.1.2.1.4 policy. Outline the policy principles.
- 4.1.1.2.1.5 procedures. Explain the specific steps required to implement the policy. Procedures should be easy to follow and include tools such as checklists and templates to assist MEHA staff implement the procedural requirements consistently. Sufficient detail should be included to ensure that Ministry decisions can withstand review by external bodies.
- 4.1.1.2.1.6 policy Owner. Note who is responsible for managing the policy.
- 4.1.1.2.1.7 key Search Words. Key search words form the basis of electronic searches in the MEHA document management system and on the MEHA internet page. Select words which are likely to be used when searching for guidance on the policy topic.
- 4.1.1.2.1.8 approved for implementation. Include the words 'Approved for Implementation', the Permanent Secretary's signature block and date of signature.

- 4.1.1.2.1.9 review arrangements. State when the policy is to be assessed for review. Further detail is provided in paragraph 4.1.1.6.
- 4.1.1.2.1.10 page numbers and paragraphs. All pages, except the cover page, include page numbers in the bottom right of each page. Paragraph numbering, including numbers for headings, follow the format in this policy.
- 4.1.1.2.1.11 footer. List the title of the Policy Owner here.
- 4.1.1.2.1.12 font and spacing. Policy must be written using Tahoma 11 point font, with 1.5 spacing.

#### 4.1.1.3 ***Implement the policy***

4.1.1.3.1 Develop an implementation plan summarising the key steps for implementing the policy and allocating roles and responsibilities. Follow up support is vital to the success of policy implementation, and should be appropriate for the size of the policy implementation. Large policy changes will require more support for a longer period of time than smaller policy changes, for example.

4.1.1.3.2 Implementation plans (example at Annex A) consider the following key issues:

4.1.1.3.2.1 what implementation tools are needed to help people implement the policy? Consult stakeholders to develop supporting business practices, procedures and tools to confirm availability of SMEs to support implementation.

4.1.1.3.2.2 risks to implementation. Consider what may impede or prevent the policy's implementation, how those issues can be managed, and note any issues which require acceptance at a higher level. For more complex policy development activities, develop a risk plan to consider any risks that may arise during the process and consider how they will be addressed. Risk registers used by other education departments may also be useful, such as the Victorian Department of Education's Risk Register and SWOT analysis matrix<sup>3</sup>.

4.1.1.3.2.3 communication about the new or revised policy. Consider

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/spag/governance/riskregblank.doc>  
Policy Owner: Head, Corporate Services



what communication methods will be used at each stage of the implementation. Allocate responsibility and time for drafting communication materials, obtaining relevant approvals and sending the materials once approval is received. For complicated or large-scale policy, multiple types of communication may be required for different stakeholders. For sensitive matters, communication may be required with senior stakeholders such as the Minister and Permanent Secretary prior to sending messages to MEHA staff or beyond the Ministry.

4.1.1.3.2.4 post-implementation support. Consider who will help MEHA staff with questions and practical issues. For complicated or large scale policy implementation, stakeholders from a range of sections in the Ministry may be required to support implementation initially, reducing to a smaller group of SMEs as the policy becomes embedded in organisational practice.

4.1.1.3.2.5 post-implementation issues management. Consider how issues will be tracked, monitored and escalated. Set clear guidelines for escalating issues depending on their level of complexity, as well as timeframes for resolving issues at each level. All staff involved in the implementation of the policy should be made aware of these expectations.

4.1.1.3.2.6 capturing lessons learned from the implementation. Queries and problems that arise during the implementation process provide valuable information for revising the policy.

4.1.1.3.2.7 policy assessment and review. Consider when the policy will be assessed for review, to incorporate lessons learned.

#### 4.1.1.4. **Approval**

4.1.1.4.1 Once the policy has been drafted, submit the policy to the Permanent Secretary for approval. All submissions must be drafted on templates provided by the Executive Support Unit. A template is included at Annex B.

#### 4.1.1.5 **Notification**

4.1.1.5.1 Develop a circular to notify staff that the policy has been created or updated. All circulars are drafted on templates



provided by the Executive Support Unit and approved by the Permanent Secretary. A template is included at Annex C.

4.1.1.5.2 Provide the approved policy to the Information and Technology Section for inclusion on the MEHA website.

#### 4.1.1.6 **Step 3 – Assess the Policy for Review**

4.1.1.6.1 Policies are assessed to ensure they are relevant and include all necessary information. This occurs when there are changes in legislation, Government Guidelines or MEHA strategic or operational plans. Other changes, such as discovering a gap current policy does not cover, can also prompt a policy update. At a minimum, policies are assessed annually to determine if revision is required.

4.1.1.6.2 When setting review dates, Policy Owners consider:

4.1.1.6.2.1 any expected changes to legislation or strategic guidance organisational restructures

4.1.1.6.2.2 any other matters which may affect the validity of the policy.

4.1.1.6.3 Sufficient time is allowed for the policy to become embedded into business practice before making changes, as changing a policy too quickly can have a negative impact on the long-term success of the policy. Key stakeholders involved in developing and implementing the policy are included in the review process.

4.1.1.6.4 A list of policy review dates is maintained by the Policy and Reporting Unit to facilitate timely assessment and review of policies before their review date. Policy Owners proactively manage assess and update of their policies well ahead of review dates. As a guide, Policy Owners assess their policies four months ahead of the review date, to allow sufficient time for stakeholder consultation and approval, if necessary. Where no review is required, the Policy Owner writes a submission to the Permanent Secretary advising that a review has been completed, and asking the Permanent Secretary to note that no review is required. A new review date is also agreed.

4.1.1.6.5 Reviews consider any issues that have arisen since implementation. Stakeholders involved in implementing the policy should be consulted to obtain feedback for this purpose. This can occur

electronically, for example by a short email or survey, or in a face-to-face workshop. A mix of these strategies may be appropriate where some stakeholders are located in regional areas and others are located in Suva.

4.1.1.6.6 Following the consultation process, a brief report outlining the key issues and proposed actions is drafted and provided to key stakeholders, and the Permanent Secretary.

## **5.0 Key Search Terms**

5.1 Policy, policy approval, policy development, policy drafter, policy drafting, policy effective date, policy guidance, policy review, policy writing.

## **6.0 Review Arrangements**

6.1 This policy will be reviewed one year after approval for implementation by the Permanent Secretary and endorsement by the Honourable Minister.

## **Annexes**

Annex A - Sample Policy Implementation Plan

Annex B - Draft Submission Template

Annex C - Sample Circular

## **Approved for implementation**



**Alison Burchell**  
**Permanent Secretary for Education,**  
**Heritage and Arts**

**Date:** 27/6/2019