Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

Complete Policy Title	Policy Number (if applicable):
McMaster University Policy Framework	
Approved by	Date of Most Recent Approval
Senate **Board of Governors**	**October 21, 2021 /** **October 28, 2021**
Date of Original Approval(s)	Supersedes/Amends Policy dated
October 21, 2021 / **October 28, 2021**	
Responsible Executive	Policy Specific Enquiries
University Secretary	**Policy (University Secretariat)**
	General Policy Enquiries
	Policy (University Secretariat)

DISCLAIMER: *If there is a Discrepancy between this electronic policy and the written copy held by the policy owner, the written copy prevails.*

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

1. McMaster University is an international leader recognized for exceptional research, innovation, and teaching and learning. In order to maintain the highest standards of quality, the University strives to develop and maintain policies that facilitate good governance, accountability, equity, and the effective achievement of its mission and vision.

2. The objective of McMaster's Policy Framework is to provide students, staff, and faculty with clear, transparent, and equitable processes for developing, revising, and reviewing policies approved by the Senate and Board of Governors. This document seeks to ensure that the University's policy environment operates based on principles of good governance, equity, and openness. Furthermore, it will provide definitions of key terminology and outline the primary processes for establishing, revising, and rescinding policy documents. It will also describe the responsibilities of senior leaders in the policy process.

3. Individuals and areas looking to establish, revise, or rescind Board and/or Senate policies are expected to comply with the provisions outlined in this Policy. To promote consistency and transparency, the University requires all policies submitted to governing bodies in a common format.

SECTION II: DEFINITIONS

4. **Policy**: a document providing guiding principles to facilitate the achievement of the University's mission and vision based on good governance, informed decision making, consultation, and high standards. A policy will articulate responsibilities, oversight, and compliance in its subject area, and outline the processes and standards that are a mandatory requirement for all individuals and groups operating on behalf of the University.

5. **Procedure**: a set of required processes to be used in conjunction with a policy or policies, to ensure consistency and fairness in achieving a policy objective(s).

6. **Guidelines**: documents created to provide members of the University community with guidance, including best practices, when applying or implementing policies. Guidelines are to be read in combination with Board and Senate policies and are considered advisory, as opposed to mandatory.

7. **Approver**: the governing body, either the Senate and/or Board of Governors, responsible for oversight and approval of a policy document.

8. **Responsible Executive**: the Senior Academic Officer or Senior Administrative Officer who has responsibility for the operation and implementation of the Policy.

9. **Policy Inquiry Contact:** the position responsible for addressing questions or operational matters related to a policy, as delegated by the Responsible Executive.

10. **Policy Review**: a voluntary or mandated review of an existing policy with the objective of ensuring it is meeting the current standards required at McMaster University.

SECTION III: JURISDICTION

11.   This Policy applies to campus-wide policies and procedures requiring approval at the Board of Governors and/or Senate. Policies specific to a Faculty, Department, or operational unit are outside the purview of McMaster's Policy Framework but can adopt it should they wish to do so.

12.   The procedure for revising or amending the *McMaster University Revised Policy And Regulations With Respect To Academic Appointment, Tenure And Promotion (Tenure and Promotion Policy),* including Supplementary Policy Statements, are outlined in the *Tenure and Promotion Policy*.

SECTION IV: PROCESS

13.   The establishment of new policies and the revision or rescinding of existing policies will comply with the standards articulated within this Policy and will receive approval from the Senate and/or Board of Governors. If a new policy supersedes an existing policy, a separate motion is required through governance to officially terminate the policy being replaced.

14.   All new and revised policies will be submitted to governance, following consultation with the University Secretariat**.**

15.   Responsible Executives will ensure that new policies are provided to key stakeholders for comment and consultation, as appropriate. Where a policy has a significant impact across campus, consultation should be sought from the University community.

16.   The University Secretariat should be contacted at the beginning of the process to provide advice on governance pathways for policy approvals, including proposals to revise or rescind policies. It is expected that all policies and procedures will be reviewed by the appropriate committee prior to submission to the Senate and/or Board of Governors.

17.   As an institution, McMaster is committed to promoting inclusive excellence through campus-wide equitable practices. Throughout all policy processes, including drafting, reviewing, and consultation, consideration should be given to equity, diversity, and inclusion. Policies should use inclusive language, seek to remove barriers to equity, promote accessibility and fairness, and wherever possible be reviewed by diverse members of the campus community, including members of communities who experience social inequities.

18.   When a proposal is being made to re-name a policy, it requires approval through the full governance process.

19.   Policies are effective upon final approval by either the Senate or Board of Governors unless the approved resolution stipulates a later date.

SECTION V: NON-SUBSTANTIVE REVISIONS

20. It is recognized that, from time to time, policies will require updates that are necessary, but non-substantive. At the request of the Responsible Executive, the University Secretariat may make the following non-substantive changes to policies: employee title changes, inclusion of gender-neutral language, name changes, and grammatical/editorial corrections. Such revisions do not require approval from the University's governing bodies but shall be reported for information to the Chair of either Senate or Board of Governors, as applicable.

SECTION VI: ACCOUNTABILITY

21. The Responsible Executive is accountable for:

    a) developing and maintaining policies within their area of oversight. In some instances, it may be appropriate to strike a cross-functional group or ad hoc committee to propose new policies or review existing policies. In these cases, the process will be overseen by the Responsible Executive (or delegate);

    b) ensuring an equity lens is applied to the Policy and appropriate consultation has taken place prior to submission to McMaster's governing bodies;

    c) communication and implementation of the policy following approval; and

    d) interpretation of the Policy.

22. The University Secretariat is responsible for:

    a) ensuring good governance throughout the policy approval process;

    b) managing and storing policy records;

    c) posting policies on its policy webpage;

    d) providing administrative assistance and policy coordination, in cooperation with Responsible Executives; and

    e) developing a policy review schedule of Board and Senate policies and working with Responsible Executives to meet review deadlines.

SECTION VII: POLICY REVIEW

23. It is expected that policies will be reviewed by the Responsible Executive within 5 years of the most recent approval. Reviews may be conducted earlier at the request of the Responsible Executive, Senate, or Board of Governors.

24. The Responsible Executive, in consultation with the University Secretary, will determine the scope and format of the review process. In specific cases it may be appropriate to consult with the policy owner on the review process required. For some policies it will be sufficient to undertake a smaller review focused on

ensuring it is up-to-date and in compliance with relevant standards, while others, due to institutional changes or complexity, will require a comprehensive review by a working group or ad hoc committee.

SECTION VII: RELATED DOCUMENTS

[Board of Governors By-Laws](#)

[Senate By-Laws](#)

[Accessibility Policy](#)

[Policy Statement on Inclusive Communications](#)

[Statement on Building an Inclusive Community with Shared Purpose](#)