Policy Cycle Tips Stage 3 Consultation

INTRODUCTION

Policy Cycle: Stage 1: Approval to Proceed
Stage 2: Drafting / Writing
Stage 3: Consultation
Stage 4: Document Approval
Stage 5: Publication
Stage 6: Implementation and Communication
Stage 7: Evaluation and Review

Consultation is a key to successful policy development. During consultation, content experts and frontline staff input their knowledge from an operational perspective, business systems experts can streamline the procedure and senior Executives can input their strategic overview. Inadequate consultation can result in poor policy that cannot be effectively implemented, or in deliberate or inadvertent non-compliance.

BENEFITS OF CONSULTATION

- Policy documents will be aligned as far as possible with strategic direction, legislative / regulatory requirements, operational practicalities and existing business systems
- Approval is likely to proceed more smoothly if the Policy Writer / Implementation Officer can demonstrate that there has been thorough consultation and that operational matters have been identified and addressed.
- Engagement with policy generally and respect for policy in the institution will be increased.

CONSULTATION ESSENTIALS

- a consultation strategy showing the degree of consultation that is appropriate and the intended outcome of the consultation, given that some policy issues require more consultation and engagement than others
- include a wide variety of key contacts, interest groups, student representatives, business system coordinators, content experts, senior executive and advisory committees, representatives from committees that have a role in approving them, policy communities
- provide a variety of methods to gather comments and concerns
- acknowledge the non-negotiables in the consultation process: be honest with participants about what they can and cannot influence
- do not let the consultation process be side-tracked or hijacked by personal agendas or irrelevant responses
- provide feedback to stakeholders on how their comments have been addressed
- distribute documents in advance to allow people to share information with colleagues and managers
- provide a reasonable period of consultation, generally of no less than 20 working days

- maintain good record management procedures to record input and responses and the decision-making processes
- report back to the delegated approval authority or committee on the consultation

CONSULTATION METHODS

- surveys, focus groups, special interest networks (eg students with disabilities, Policy Network)
- a dedicated web page or wiki
- through the committee processes
- videoconference, teleconference, skype
- the Academic Staff Implementation Committee (ASIC) and the Professional Staff Implementation Committee (PSIC) in relation to the development, establishment, variation, or revocation of any employment related policy, procedure, guideline, or code of the University whether or not referred to in the respective Enterprise Agreements.

NEXT STEPS

When the Policy Project Team has completed wide consultation on the drafted document and incorporated relevant feedback:

1. finalise the *Implementation and Communication* Plan ensuring that it:
   - Identifies all issues that need to be addressed for an effective implementation
   - identifies tasks and timelines to be completed to address each of those issues
   - assigns responsibility to position titles or groups for those tasks
   - identifies resources needed to implement the policy document

2. complete the *Document Approval* Checklist and submit it together with the drafted document(s) to Policy@mq.edu.au to ensure alignment with the Policy Framework Policy.