STANDARD ON DkIT ACADEMIC POLICY

Date approved:	10/10/2014	Date policy will take effect:	10/10/2014	Date of Next Review:	10/10/2017
Approving Authority:	Academic Quality Sub Committee				
Responsibility:	Academic Council, Registrar, Heads of School, Heads of Department, Programme Directors, Academic Staff				
Consultation undertaken:	Academic Quality Sub Committee				
Supporting documents, procedures & forms of this policy:	Procedure for the Development and Management of DkIT Policy DkIT Policy Template DKIT Procedure Template Policy Toolkit				
Reference(s)					
Audience:	Public – accessible to anyone				
Category:	Policy for Quality Assurance				

1   Version Control and Change History

Version Control	Date Effective	Approved By	Amendment(s)
1	10/10/2014	Academic Quality Sub Committee (Meeting No. 32)	Adopted

Contents

2 Purpose

1. The purpose of this Standard is to establish a consistent and enforceable system for the development, approval, implementation and review of academic quality policy documents at Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT).

3 Glossary

Word/Term	Definition
Academic Policy	A policy document with Institute-wide regulations in respect of teaching learning and research.
Academic Council	The Academic Council is a statutory academic body established under the Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992, whose functions are set out in Sections 10 (1) and (3) of the Act (as amended by section 11 of the Institutes of Technology Act 2006)
Administrative amendment	A change to a current policy document that is superficial or administrative in nature. Administrative amendments refer to changes in nomenclature, editorial changes, updates to names and position titles, changes to the review or expiry date and updates to references.
Approval Pathway	The pathway through which a policy document must move in order to be approved.
Code	A statement of rules and expectations which have been approved in some formal way but without the legal force of legislation or regulations. They focus on duties and responsibilities for particular circumstances, often outlining the required standard of practice or behaviour.
Delegated Authority	Delegated authority to make its own awards conferred on DkiT under the terms of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999 following agreement of quality assurance measures with the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC)
Governing Body	The governing authority of the Institute established under statute.
Guideline	An advisory document that provides guidance on how to implement policy or apply processes effectively.
Legislation	An Act of the state having the force of law
Minor amendment	A change to a current policy document that is of an insubstantial nature, not affecting the intent of the policy. Minor amendments may affect responsibilities or operational aspects of processes.
Major amendment	A change to a current policy document that is likely to impact upon the intent of the policy and/or have a significant impact on other related policy documents, stakeholders, aligned procedures or systems. Major

	amendments must be approved by Academic Council.
No Change Review	A situation where the cyclical review does not require any amendments to the current policy.
Policy	A statement that outlines non-discretionary governing principles and intentions in order to regulate Institute practice.
Policy Document	A DkIT Policy, Procedure, Guideline, Code, Rule or Standard
Policy Custodians	Those who have overarching responsibility for the policy implementation, monitoring and review.
Policy Framework	An overarching set of related policies, supporting procedures and guidelines around a central theme.
Policy Toolkit	A toolkit that includes templates, practical information and advice on the development and management of policy documents.
Procedure	A documented instruction that gives directions to carry out specified actions. For the purposes of procedures that support policy, they are mandated directions.
Rescission	The retraction or deletion of a policy document deemed to be obsolete following a policy review.
Regulation	An authoritative, prescribed direction for conduct at DkIT.
DkIT Policy Directory	The Institute's central web based repository for all DkIT policy documents.

4 Application and Scope

1. This Standard shall apply to any person, department, school or committee responsible for the development, maintenance and communication of policy documents within Dundalk Institute of Technology.

2. The provisions in this Standard apply to all policy documents, including this Standard.

3. This Standard's framework consists of DkIT Policy Template, Procedure for the Development and Management of DkIT Policy, Procedure Template, related forms, the Policy Toolkit and material related to training.

5 Principles

1. All DkIT Policies, Procedures, Regulations, Codes and Standards shall:

   1.1. Be consistent with all legislative requirements imposed on the Institute through statute and by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI).

   1.2. Support and be consistent with DkIT vision, mission and values.

   1.3. Assign responsibility and accountability to ensure due diligence in the operations of the Institute.

1.4. Comply with the requirements set out in this Standard.

1.5. Be relevant, transparent in their intention and meaning and developed in consultation with key stakeholders.

1.6. Be binding and applicable across the Institute.

6   Interpretation of DkIT Policy Documents

1. In interpreting DkIT policy documents, unless the contrary intention appears, the following apply:

1.1. A defined term shall have the meaning ascribed to it in the policy document.

1.2. If a policy document defines a word or expression, other grammatical forms of the word or expression have corresponding meanings.

1.3. A word or expression that indicates one particular gender shall be construed as every other gender.

1.4. A reference to a word or expression in the plural form includes a reference to the singular form and vice versa.

1.5. A schedule or appendix to a DkIT policy document constitutes part of the policy document.

1.6. The table containing operational matters and supporting documentation at the start of a DkIT policy document does not constitute part of the policy document.

1.7. The word 'may' when used to bestow a duty or power indicates that the action or decision may be enacted or not, at discretion.

1.8. The words 'shall', 'must' or 'will', if used to bestow a duty or power, indicate that the action or decision must be enacted.

1.9. Headings are inserted for convenient reference only and have no effect in limiting or extending the language of provisions to which they refer.

1.10. An uncertainty or ambiguity in the meaning of a provision will not be interpreted against the Institute just because the Institute drafted the provision.

1.11. Reference to any statute or other legislation (whether primary or subordinate) is to a statute or other legislation as amended from time to time.

1.12. A reference to the word 'including' in any form is not to be construed or interpreted as a word of limitation.

7   Requirements of DkIT Policy Documents

1. All academic quality policies shall be approved by the Academic Council. Provisions for approval of DkIT academic policies are stipulated in section 11.

2. All new DkIT policies may be developed by the Academic Council or its sub-committees or working groups; the Office of the Registrar or any other duly nominated individual or individuals who are members of the Institute Staff. As stipulated in section 11 of this Standard, the Registrar's Office will support policy development through the provision of advice and expertise in the policy development process and will oversee, on behalf of the Institute, the policy style and format and recommend the most appropriate approval pathway.

3. The policy custodians shall be responsible for ensuring that stakeholders are consulted during the development and implementation process. The policy custodians shall refer to the Procedure for the Development and Management of DkIT Policy for assistance with this process.

4. A Policy Implementation and Communication Plan shall be required to accompany the policy through its approval process. The Policy Implementation and Communication form is intended to ensure that the implementation and communication of new policy or major amendments to policy are fully considered. The Policy Implementation and Communication Plan shall be developed in consultation with the Office of the Registrar's Office.

5. Policy developers must use the *DkIT Policy Template* and *DkIT Procedure Template* from the policy toolkit to ensure consistency in documentation. In some cases modifications to the template may be required in order to meet requirements of the specific policy document. This should be done only in exceptional circumstances.

6. DkIT policy documents shall contain language that is in plain English and audience appropriate. The policy developers should not assume a prior knowledge of the subject area by the reader.

8   Stages in DkIT Policy Development

1. Policy development at DkIT shall follow a staged approach as set out below and provided for in detail in the Procedure for the Development and Management of DkIT Policy. The stages should include:
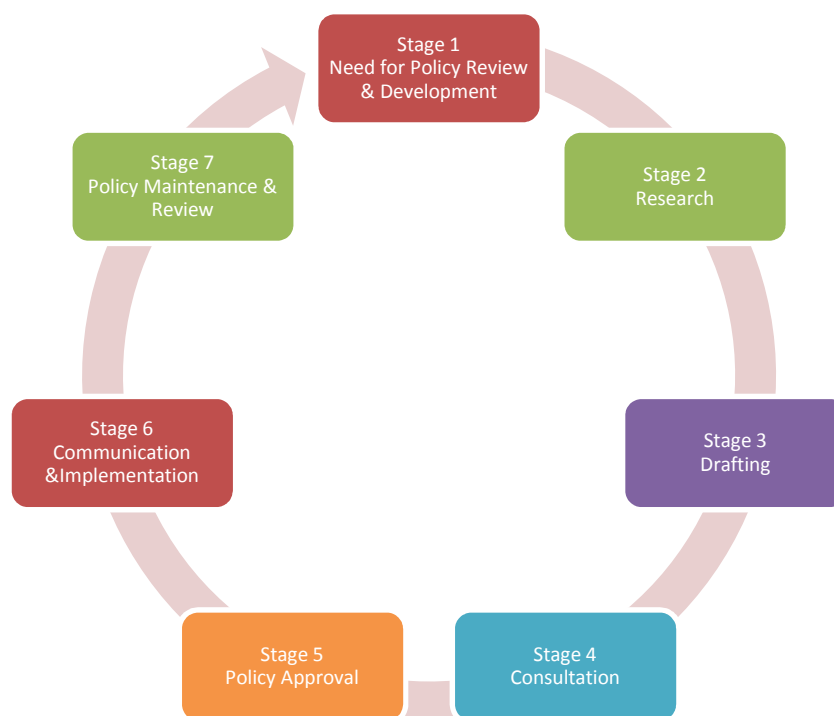
Stage 1: Need for Policy Review and Development

1.1. The developers must inform the Registrar's Office to register the need for a new policy or policy revision. Where the policy review is taking place as part of the Policy Review Schedule, the developers must contact the Registrar's Office to inform them that the review is being undertaken.

Stage 2: Research

1.2. The policy developers shall conduct relevant background research into good practice.

Stage 3: Drafting

1.3. The policy developers shall draft the policy document, taking the above research into consideration.

Stage 4: Consultation

1.4. The developers shall ensure that relevant critical stakeholders impacted by the policy document have been consulted, and where required, Institute-wide consultation has taken place.

Stage 5: Policy Approval

1.5. Approval shall follow the appropriate approval pathway (section 11). The Policy Implementation and Communication Plan shall be required to accompany the policy document through the approval process in order for the policy document to be approved, in the case of new policies and major amendments.

1.6. Policy documents shall become effective from the date they are approved by the Academic Council, unless a future date is specified in the resolution. No policy documents shall have retrospective effect.

Stage 6: Communication and Implementation

1.7. The policy custodians shall ensure that the Policy Implementation and Communication Plan is implemented.

Stage 7: Policy Maintenance and Review

1.8. The policy custodians shall ensure any issues arising from policy implementation and over the life of a policy are reported to the Registrar's Office. The Registrar or his/her nominee shall ensure that these issues are addressed at the time of the next review of the policy or if the policy custodians believes that identified issues are critical, an immediate review of the policy shall be undertaken with the agreement of the Academic Council.

9 **Review of DkIT Policy Documents**

1. The Registrar's Office working with the Academic Quality Sub-Committee of the Academic Council shall review approved DkIT policies by the date specified in each policy document, which must not be longer than 5 years after the previous review date. In some circumstances, such as a legislative change affecting the policy's implementation or content, policies will need to be reviewed prior to the scheduled review date.

2. Review of policies should follow the Procedure for the Development and Management of DkIT Policy and may result in minor or major amendments to the policy.

3. Following the review of a DkIT policy, the policy custodians may consider that no changes are required. In the case of a No Change Review, the policy custodians shall prepare a No Change Memorandum in consultation with the Registrar's Office. The

Registrar's Office shall submit the No Change Memorandum to the Academic Council for approval.

10 Rescission of a Policy Document

1. During the process of review, the policy custodians may conclude the policy document has no continuing use. In these circumstances, the policy custodians shall contact the Registrar's Office to determine the consultation and approval pathway required to rescind the policy.

2. Where a policy becomes void as a result of being superseded by a new policy document or additional provisions being made in an existing policy document, the policy custodians must contact the Registrar's Office to determine the consultation and approval pathway required to rescind the policy.

3. The rescission of any policy must be approved by the Academic Council.

11 Approval Pathway

1. All new policies, standards and codes must be approved by the Academic Council and must be accompanied by a Policy Implementation and Communication Plan.

2. The approval pathways for minor and major amendments to policies, standards and codes are given in sections 13 and 14 of this Standard.

3. Guidelines and Procedures, whether new or amended, must be approved by the Academic Council.

12 Administrative Amendment

1. Administrative amendments to policies, standards, codes and rules can occur outside of the policy review cycle.

2. Administrative amendments to a policy may be made in consultation with the Registrar's Office and the latest approved version of the policy shall be forwarded electronically to the Registrar's Office so that it can be placed in the Policy Directory.

13 Minor Amendment

1. Minor amendments to policies, standards and codes can occur outside of the policy review cycle.

2. Minor amendments to policies, standards and codes may be made with the approval of the Registrar. The policy custodians shall develop a Minor Amendment Memorandum in consultation with the Registrar's Office. The memorandum shall be submitted to the Registrar.

3. Upon approval by the Registrar, all minor amendments to policies, standards and codes shall become operational. The latest version of the policy document shall be placed in the Policy Directory by the Registrar's Office.

4. Minor amendments to operational policies, standards and codes shall be reported twice yearly to the Academic Council.

5. All minor amendments shall be documented in the Version Control and Change History of the policy document. The latest approved version of the policy document

shall be forwarded electronically to the Registrar's Office so that it can be placed in the Policy Directory.

14 Major Amendments

1. Major amendments to academic policies shall be submitted to Academic Council for approval.

2. All major amendments shall be documented in the Version Control and Change History of the policy. The latest approved version of the policy shall be forwarded electronically to the Registrar's Office so that it can be placed in the Policy Directory.

15 Records Management

1. DkIT policy documents shall be stored in the DkIT Policy Directory, which is accessible through the DkIT Website. Policies on the Directory shall be considered the authoritative source. Individual schools/departments shall always link to this source.

2. As stipulated in the DkIT Records' Management Policy, a full and accurate record of all business activities related to the creation and review of each policy document shall be developed and maintained by the Registrar's Office. This information shall be maintained as an issues log.

3. The Registrar's Office shall maintain a record of outcomes of the Policy Implementation and Communication Plan.

4. The Registrar's Office is responsible for ensuring that all previous and superseded versions of a policy document are correctly archived in line with the Records' Management Policy.

16 Responsibilities

1. It is the responsibility of Schools, Departments, and Committees to identify those issues that require a new policy document or an amendment to a current policy document.

2. It is the responsibility of the policy custodians to:

   2.1. Maintain and update an issues log for each policy document under their control.

   2.2. Consult the Registrar's Office when the need for a new policy or an amendment to a current policy has been identified.

   2.3. Use the templates provided in the policy toolkit.

3. It is the responsibility of policy developers to:

   3.1. Develop, write and review the policy in consultation with all relevant stakeholders.

   3.2. Ensure consistency between the policy and any related policies, procedures, systems, codes, guidelines, rules, systems and processes.

   3.3. Consult the Registrar's Office to determine the appropriate approval pathway.

   3.4. Consider how the changes or responsibilities contained in new or amended policies shall be communicated with appropriate stakeholders. The policy developers shall develop a Policy Implementation and Communication Plan in

consultation with the Registrar's Office for new policies, standards and codes or major amendments prior to seeking approval for the changes.

3.5. Develop and maintain full and accurate records of the policy document, as per section 15.2.

3.6. Review and update policies to comply with relevant legislation, as specified in the policy review schedule.

4. It is the responsibility of the Registrar's Office to:

4.1. Provide appropriate support and advice for the proposal, development and management of DkIT policy documents.

4.2. Liaise with policy developers to determine, advise and facilitate the appropriate approval pathway for a new or amended policies.

4.3. Oversee, on behalf of the Institute, the style and format of DkIT policy documents and ensure consistency between the policy document and any related policy documents and legislation.

4.4. Ensure the correct document control and approval mechanisms are in place.

4.5. Maintain the DkIT Policy Directory.

4.6. Ensure a policy review takes place in a timely manner in consultation with the policy custodian.