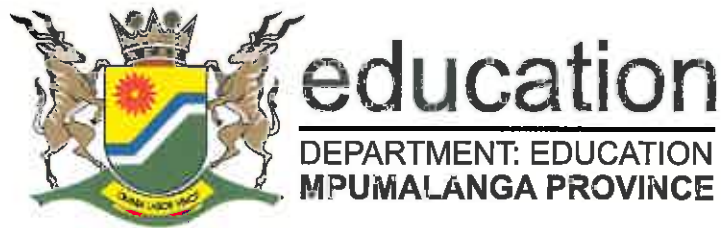


**RESEARCH (AND
POLICY)
SUB-DIRECTORATE.**



**GUIDELINES OF POLICY
MAKING PROCESS AND
COORDINATION.**

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1. INTRODUCTION.

The mandate of the Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Education is to provide quality education and all related services to the people of Mpumalanga Province within the broad legislative and legal framework. Over and above the legislative framework, the Department develops policies which provide specific guidelines in the management of specific issues per directorate and sub-directorate.

The purpose of this document is to provide a guideline of the policy making process so that all those involved in policy development in the directorates and sub-directorates should know what is expected from them.

There is no question that effective policy-making requires lots of processes. However, everyone has to bear in mind that effective policy making requires decisiveness too. While people in general, and interest groups, in this context, employees and other stakeholders value the opportunity to participate, they also expect efficiency in terms of analyzing issues and bringing them to resolution.

In the section below, the policy-making process is outlined and described. The main focus is to highlight practical tips and steps that can make everyone involved more effective in managing that process, participating in it, and influencing outcomes more effectively.

2. THE PROCESS.

2.1 AGENDA SETTING STAGE.

The agenda setting phase has three of sub-phases, namely; problem definition, analysis, and stakeholder analysis and is briefly described below.

2.1.1. Problem definition.

Any interested party may propose the formulation of a policy on a particular issue or may define a problem that needs to be addressed. Some people start by lobbying support from those who might have influence.

Techniques that could be used at this stage may include emails, submitting an agenda item, memos, telephones, meetings, etc.

NB: When one defines the problem, it is important, or useful to also define the needed change. The problem should also give a historical context as well as the current conditions.

Responsibility: Any member of management or union or official of the institution. However, the development of policy, if not initiated by senior managers or the senior manager in charge, may not begin until the HOD has given approval.

2.1.2. Analysis of policy options.

This is when management or the relevant managers define what they want to solve and the challenges and opportunities associated with it.

At this level, the relevant manager should gather data that will be used in drafting of the proposed policy. The analysis should identify options or alternatives, so that these are communicated to stakeholders as early as possible. It is important that the analysis contain alternative policy choices so that various actors can indicate their preferred positions early. In other words, the manager proposing policy should at least have sufficient information on how the problem may be resolved.

Who should be involved at this stage: It is important to ensure that those who will be either directly affected by or involved in the implementation of the policy are involved.

Responsibility: Relevant Senior Manager.

2.1.3. Stakeholder analysis.

It is important that the policy proposer indicates very early and in simple terms, who are the intended beneficiaries of the policy or who will be affected by the proposed policy and, if possible, to what extent will various stakeholders be affected.

2.2. POLICY FORMULATION.

This stage is also called policy creation or policy initiation and it consists of a number of steps;

2.2.1. Drafting.

The directorate or section or sub-directorate or Committee drafts a detailed policy proposal to address the issues identified by the analysis.

Techniques which could be used include: workshops; policy forums or consultant.

Responsibility: a person who has sufficient knowledge in that particular field or subject must do the drafting of policy. In cases where the expertise is not available in the directorate, in-house, assistance from research and policy unit may be sort.

NB: While it is advisable to look at similar policies in the field, drafters must avoid wholesale "borrowing" of a policy from one institution as the context might be different. It is advisable to do a mini-research of relevant policies so that you get your information from various sources.

2.2.2. Evaluation of draft policy.

Policy analysts in the research and policy unit determine whether the draft policy is addressing the problem and whether the policy fits the reality.

At this stage the reader, who is a policy analyst also ensures that the policy is reader-friendly; is not ambiguous and can be understood by those whom the policy is intended to address and implementers.

Most importantly, the analyst must ensure that the policy is coherent.

This means that there are no contradictions within the same policy (**internal coherence**) and that the policy is congruent with other policies in the institution as well as with relevant legislation, where this is applicable (**external coherence**).

The Policy Unit also has to make sure that policies are well written and enhance the image of the department.

Directorates or chairpersons of committees should:

Proof read and edit the draft policy before submission to the research and policy unit. This applies even to the first draft. A document with typographical errors detracts the readers from the substance and they end up commenting on the form.

Ensure that the numbering is correct,

Submit documents via the research and policy unit, who are also expected to satisfy themselves that the document complies with the minimum standards of any written text.

2.3 Policy Legitimation

Policy legitimacy deals with two issues; namely,

Substance of the policy; and

Process of adopting the policy

In the workplace, the policy adoption **process** is very important as it could determine the success or failure of the implementation process. In order to increase chances of success, this stage should include:

Stakeholders: Unions, gender focal point; members of senior management etc. Where the policy only affects a certain section of workers, such workers should be treated as an interest group.

The substance refers to whether the policy addresses the problem and whether it is seen to be fair to those affected by it. This part is addressed in (2.2.1) above.

Responsibility: Ensuring legitimacy is a collective responsibility since it includes substantive and process issues. The Research and Policy Unit is largely responsible for the process, while directorates and management are responsible for substance.

Techniques that could be used include: wide consultation in various formats; namely; emails, workshops, meetings, formal consultation documents, etc. The decision on what form consultation takes should be appropriate to the audience. It is important that all levels of employees should be made to feel that their contributions are valuable.

2.4. Policy Adoption and Approval.

Policies are adopted by the senior managers of the department and approved by the Head of the Department (HOD).

Responsibility: The Research and Policy Unit submits the final draft to the director who further present it to the senior managers for discussion and approval, after it has been edited and proof-read. Once the document is approved the relevant directorate should launch and implement it immediately.

2.5. Policy Launch and Implementation

Directorates begin the job of making the policy work by establishing implementation procedures and writing implementation guideline documents. Ideally, the procedures may be discussed simultaneously with the policy so that stakeholders are able to comment on both documents.

It is important to note that if you have not involved representative groups up until this point, they may oppose the policy.

3. MONITORING AND EVALUATION.

Beneficiaries and other role-players can be involved in evaluating how effective the policy is in practice and identifying any unintended consequences.

Since policy analysts would have determined whether the policy is addressing the problem earlier in the process (par 2.2.2), the focus at this stage would be to determine whether the implementation is proceeding well. All officials who are affected by the policy should implement the it without fail.

Analysts should document the impact of policy – **divided into direct and indirect impact and short and long-term impacts**. This should be done in collaboration with implementers.

They may recommend the review and revision of the formulation of policy or in its implementation.

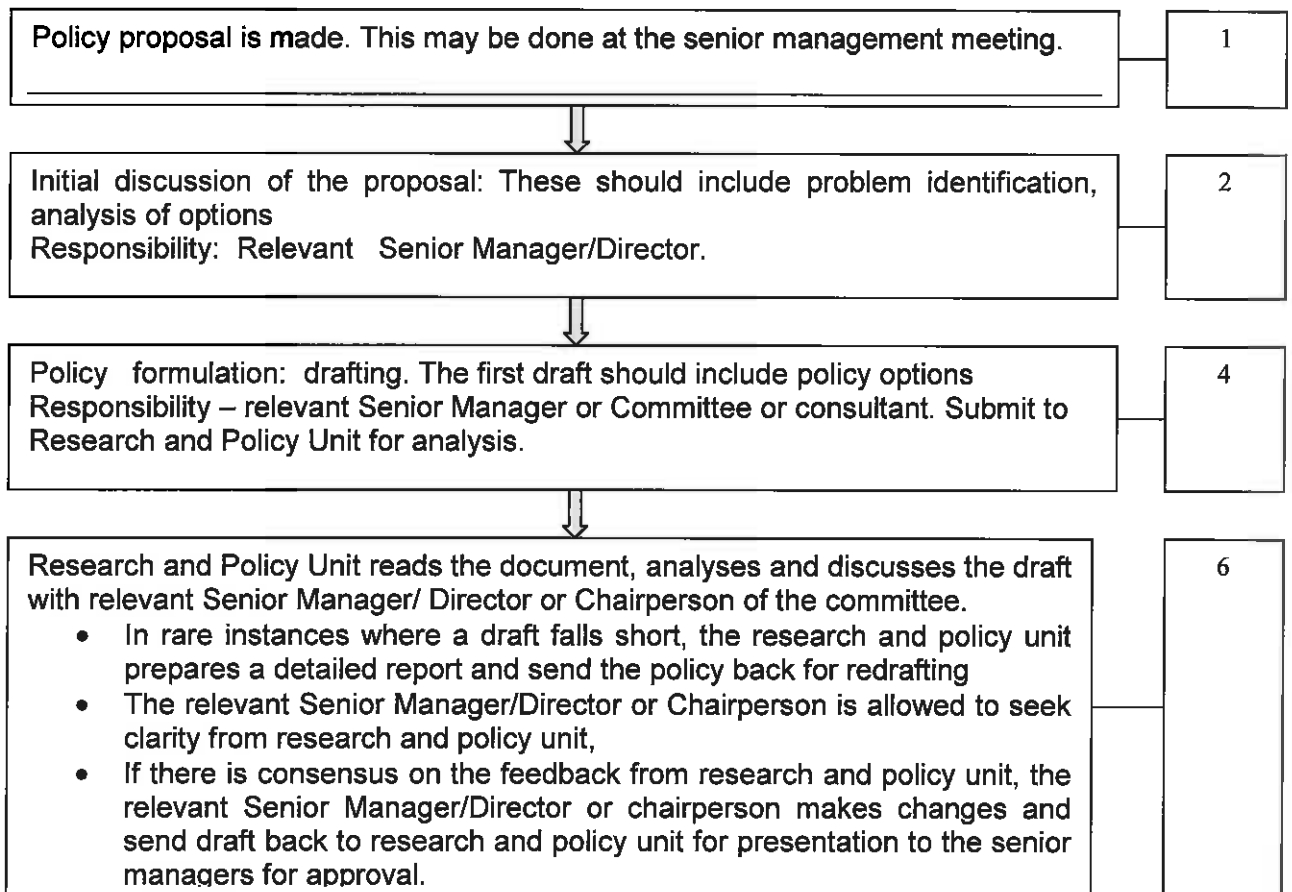
4. CONCLUSION.

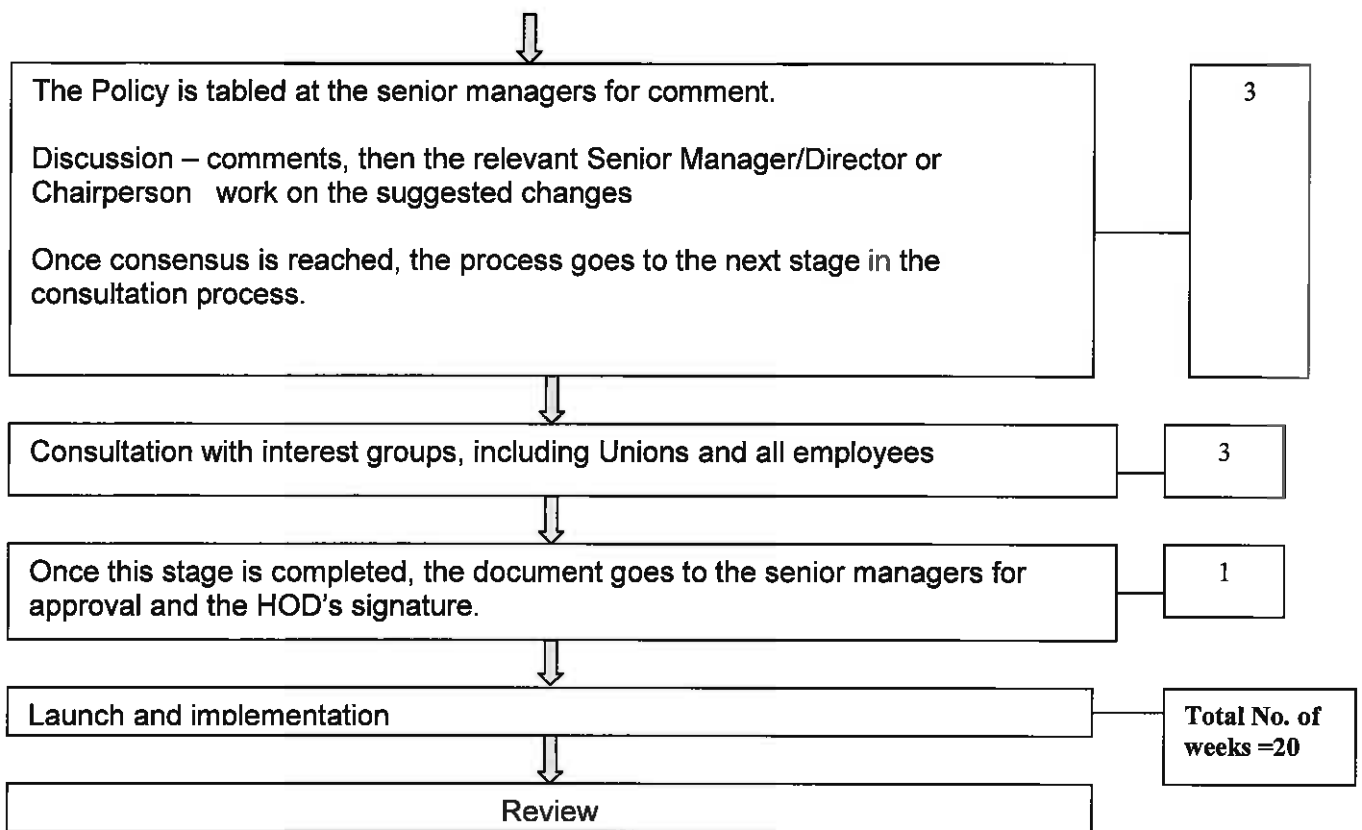
As indicated at the beginning of this document, this is meant to serve as a guide and stages are not absolute and linear. Policymaking is a cyclical process that begins with agenda setting stage, and the recognition and definition of a significant problem. Analysis of policy effectiveness in turn reveals shortcomings in formulation or implementation or new problems to add to the policy agenda. In light of the above, policies should be reviewed regularly, **at least once per year** or as far as is practicable.

5. ANNEXTURES.

ANNEXTURE 1. THE FLOWCHART.

Flowchart in the policy process shows suggested timelines. They are proposed deadlines for various phases. However, policies vary and might require individual deadlines. This flowchart merely serves as a guideline.





ANNEXURE 2.

GUIDELINES FOR DRAFTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.

1. Approval Process.

The actual process that must be taken should be documented and made available to all those who are writing policies. Establishing timeframes when the policy will be reviewed (called a review cycle) should be part of the approval process. The review cycle may be the same for all policies or policies may be divided into groups with semi-annual (half-yearly), annual or bi-annual review cycle.

NB: According to the strategic plans, the review cycle of policies and strategies are annual for the **department of education**. Policy review does not necessarily mean changing the policy.

2. Definitions

When drafting, it may be useful to keep in mind the difference between a Policy and a Procedure.

Policy: A policy is a written statement that clearly states or indicates the position and values of the organization on a given subject. It contains rules and tells one what to do. For example:

An accident report must be completed for any incident that involves staff, volunteers or interns, regardless of whether an injury occurs.

Procedure: A written set of instructions that describe the approval recommended steps for a particular act or sequence of acts. It the how to perform a set of tasks.

The person to whom an incident is reported must ensure that an incident report is completed. It maps out all the steps involved.

3. Type face and Margins.

Choose a font that is easy to read. New Times Roman and Ariel are two popular styles. Titles and headings should be a large font size and bolded to stand out from the rest of text. Avoid the temptation to use capital letters and bold and underline at the same time. If you use a different font size for the body, select a font no more than 2 points smaller. For example, if the headings and titles are a font size of 12, the main body should be a font size of 10. A font size of 10 or 12 is most commonly used for text. For the purpose of uniformity, please use font 12 for text

All margins should ensure ease of reading and space for punching holes or allowing for binding of the policy.

4. Format.

A master template is required where more than one individual is responsible for drafting of policies.

Dates

Standard format for dates is day, month and year e.g. 06/03/2010.

5. Grammar and language usage.

Pay attention to the way you use language to convey meaning. Remember, you are communicating the department's intension and values on a particular subject, and you do not want language to interfere with the meaning.

Use one spelling convention, that is, either British (UK) spelling or American (US) spelling. It is strongly recommended that you use UK spelling as it is similar to South African spelling. The difference is that SA spelling might have a few indigenous words. Whatever you do, do not mix British and American spelling.

6. Writing style.

Clear and concise

Present tense

Active verbs (as much as you can)

Use capitals with consistency.

Acceptable abbreviations can be used subsequent to writing out in full. E.g. South African Schools Act (SASA). Should you want to use an abbreviation in plural form, add a small's' without an apostrophe. E. g. MPLs for Members of the Provincial Legislature.

Place references at the end of each policy (if used)

Use position titles and divisions or units and not individual names, e.g. Senior Manager: HR

7. Layout.

See page annexure number 3.

8. Policy Review/ Revision

Policy and procedure should be reviewed on a regular basis following the predetermined policy review cycle. If no changes are made, the review date then appears in the policy and procedure header. Note: All previous review dates should be included.

When reviewing and two policies are found to be similar, management should consider combining them into one.

If a policy is no longer pertinent, it must be removed from the file of current policies and placed in the policy archives

Major revisions to Policy and Procedures are to follow the approval process as outlined in the main document.

Input from the people who will be expected to follow the policies and procedures is helpful and should be solicited when a review of policies is undertaken

The revision date then appears in the policy and procedure header. Note: All previous revision dates should be included.

It is important to remove old copies from circulation and replace with the new version.

9. Advocacy

All new policies should be communicated to all those who will be affected, either as implementers/enforcers or as people who are required to follow them.

Research and policy unit, when required, is a key component in the development and revision of policies and procedures

With revision, emphasis should be placed on changes in the policy to insure that employees fully understand the changes

10. Archiving

It is important to maintain a copy of all circulated versions of a policy in the archives.

11. Implementation Cost

Before adoption/approval, the office of the CFO should calculate the implementation costs and advise management.

ANNEXTURE 3. AN EXAMPLE OF POLICY FORMAT.

1. INTRODUCTION

A brief exposition of the policy problem and context within which it exists. If necessary this should include a brief account of the processes preceding the emergence of the policy at hand.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY.

A statement which indicates what the policy seeks to achieve.

Include a few lines on the scope of application immediately below the objectives, or opt for a separate heading, labeled 'scope of application.

3. MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS.

This is similar to a legislative context. Please do not list legislation and policies, but say briefly how this policy is located within key legislation if any. The list of legislation and other related policies will come under references.

4. PRINCIPLES.

Expression of values or principles on which the policy is based. Principles should not be confused with the actual policy statement. In some policies principles as clear cut.

5. SCOPE OF APPLICATION.

To whom does the policy apply, for example, a policy might apply to employees of the legislature but not on Members of the Legislature.

6. POLICY PROVISION.

The Department shall---

(The statement here is intended to indicate what is to be achieved by this policy. It should not tell people how to do this)

For easy referencing, numbers should be used instead of bullets.

7. PROCEDURE.

In order to carry out this policy, the following steps must be taken:

(The information included here is exactly what must be done – there is no room for interpretation or personalizing the procedure)

Number your steps, e.g.

Step 1

(a)

(b)

8. GUIDELINES.

Include any general information that may assist in carrying out the procedure. (The same numbering scheme used in the procedure may be applied to this section)

9. REFERENCES.

List here any references pertinent to the policy. A few examples may include:

Related policies

Government Acts or legislation

Another complete manual

Manual from an external organization

10. DEFINITIONS.

Definitions when necessary should be included at the end of the policy. If there are numerous definitions, an appendix to the policy may be more beneficial.

11. FORMS.

Include any sample forms with the policy for easy reference. These forms should be revised with policy at all times.

Signature

Once adopted, the accounting officer should sign the guidelines.

12. APPROVAL.

The approval of the guidelines on policy making process and coordination is sought.

HOD: MRS MOC MHLABANE
COMMENT(S).....

Approved

M Wabane

SIGNATURE:

DATE 11/21/2010