MBEYA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

GUIDELINES FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

JUNE 2020

LIST OF ABBEVIATIONS

ICT   Information and Communication Technology

DVC-ARC Deputy Vice Chancellor – Academic, Research and Consultancy

DVC-PFA Deputy Vice Chancellor – Planning, Finance and Administration

MUST   Mbeya University of Science and Technology

SIMS   Student Information Management System

VC   Vice Chancellor

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INTRODUCTION

Mbeya University of Science and Technology (MUST) has reviewed its organizational structure by merging closely related units and established new ones. The review was aiming at improving the University's efficiency and effectiveness in pursuit of academic excellence while creating avenues for growth. However, for proper functioning of the established Units, Colleges, Centres and Directorates, management tools including policies, procedures and guidelines, strategic plans, etc. needed to be developed, reviewed and implemented.

Currently, MUST has no standard policy guide to be followed by the units when developing new policies, or reviewing existing policies. Therefore, the office of the Vice Chancellor took the initiative to develop a standard MUST policy guide document to provide the support needed for the units to achieve the intended goals for which they have established. This document consists of policy guide as a standard format to be followed by Units, Colleges, Centres and Directorates at MUST, the procedures for policy development from initial stage to approval by the relevant University organs, and strategies to be adopted to improve accessibility and implementation of MUST approved policies. This document will also provide guide for reviewing and amendment process of the existing policies.

The broad guideline and procedures outlined in this document have been adapted from a series of existing templates, guidelines and benchmarking of several policy documents from local and international institutions. This guideline is by no means an exhaustive compilation, nor is it intended to dictate the techniques that should be employed, since the details of the policy development process should suit the issue being addressed, the stakeholders affected and the overall policy objectives.

RATIONALE FOR DEVELOPING THE POLICY GUIDELINES

Policies are high-level principles that set the directional tone of an institution or a unit within the organization. Writing effective policies is thus a great first step towards achieving the goals set by an organization, as they entail what must be done and/or what to adhere to. Furthermore, it is important to understand that compliance with policies is just as much an issue for an institution or unit as it is for the stakeholders or end users (student, staff member or any other party).

Policy owners have the important task of reaching their intended audience with policies that are clear, easily read, and provide the right level of information to the individuals specifically affected by the content. If users understand a policy, they are more likely to follow it and incorporate it into their daily work. In order to ensure a consistent format between policy documents, a comprehensive guide to help the writers of policies and procedures is necessary. It is in this perspective that MUST strived to obtain a standardised guide and procedures for policy development that will ensure consistency across the Units, Colleges, Centres and Directorates. The guide will also provide assistance to policy authors to order their information and present it in a logical sequence with view of benefiting end users and stakeholders in terms of being able to readily find and understand the policy information.

MUST requires a standard policy guide that provides an organized structure and information in such a way that is consistent across all units of the University. This guide provides explanations and guidelines for each of the policy sections to make it easy to begin drafting the policy. The present guide has also taken into consideration a broader context of which the University's policies need to adhere to. MUST strives to have policy documents that are consistent with each other and use common terminology, clear and reflect actual requirements, applied consistently in the University and documents that are able to be implemented, communicated and complied with. Furthermore,

use of standard policy guide could warrant the availability of the policy documents that are up to date and reviewed regularly, available to all staff, students and other stakeholders, and also that are compliant with relevant statutory and regulatory requirements.

PART ONE
PROCEDURES FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW PROCESS

1.1 Introduction

Policy development is a long process that involves a number of stages. As presented in the Figure 1, key stages of policy development process include identifying policy needs, gathering information, drafting, consulting and review.

1.2 Procedures for policy development

1.2.1 Identify policy needs and scope

The need for a policy can be identified at any level within the University. The Unit/College/Directorate/Center should constantly assess its activities, responsibilities and the external environment in order to identify the need for policy development or review and procedures. In concurrent with this, scoping the coverage of the policy, the issues that will need to be addressed, and the nature of the implementation is necessary. Idea for policy need, review or policy amendment emanating from policy user(s) should be forwarded to the head of Unit/ College/Directorate/Center for further consultation with policy overseer (VC/DVC-ARC/DVC-PFA). Ideas emanating from the policy overseer should be directed to the appointed team under close supervision of units' heads.

1.2.2 Identify who will take lead responsibility

The policy development is a long process that may take place over several months. Therefore, need for delegating the responsibility to working group, sub-committee or staff members who will be responsible for 'driving' the process is a paramount necessity. The team to develop, review or amend the policy should be appointed by the policy overseer (VC/DVC-ARC/DVC-PFA), taking into consideration the expertise required. In order to develop an accurate and complete document, there should be consideration of the expertise needed to develop a well-informed policy. In line with that,

development of a policy that casts a wide net across the Unit/College/Institute/Center should consider drawing people from different departments for input and experience.

1.2.3 Involvekey stakeholders

It is important to seek the assistance of others to analyse and define the problem. Unless the problem is defined well, it is difficult to find a solution. Involving stakeholders through meetings may be used to gather ideas from participants about the nature of the issue or problem and how it might be solved. For instance, if the issue was about how to improve the quality of consulting services provided by the University, then a meeting of lecturers, researchers, staff and officials of the consulting unit is likely to provide many suggestions.

1.2.4 Research, analyse and benchmark

Preliminary research and analysis should be undertaken before any consideration is given to drafting a policy with due aim of understanding the basis of the need for the policy, the context within and outside the University. Searching and analysing evidence to support the need for the development of the policy and the risks of not having a policy in place is essential. Evidence may include data of an institution or unit, staff or student related data, and financial or other relevant data and other statistical information. Other relevant data may include but not limited to the interrelationships with other policies and with other functions and units within the University.

1.2.5 Develop a draft policy

Once the needs to be covered are clearly defined, the team should convene and move to the next stage of embarking on the process of development a draft policy. The draft policy and procedure manual should be as clear as possible, by ensuring that the wording and length or complexity of the policy are appropriate to those who will be expected to implement it. Information in the

policy document should be organised in a logical sequence and groupings to assist the reader. Writing should consider as much as possible the language simplicity that avoids use of technical jargon that would clutter the document. Involving another party other than the policy owner write the initial draft may help facilitate an outsider's perspective, ultimately making the policy and/ or procedures more transferable to daily operations.

1.2.6 Consult with appropriate stakeholders

Consultation is part of the communication process that afford the opportunity for input from users and/ or stakeholders to enhance the policy development and implementation. Consulting stakeholders also raises awareness of the proposed policy or policy changes. Policies are most effective if those affected are consulted are supportive and have the opportunity to consider and discuss the potential implications of the policy. Parties who may be consulted will depend on whether the policy being developed aims to govern the internal working of the College/Directorate/ Center or external policy positions. These may include a group of staff and volunteers, Management Committee members; and service users or beneficiaries.

The consultation duration should range between three to four weeks, depending on the complexity of the policy, the target audience, and the time of the year. To speed up the consultation process, the authors should use several strategies such as sending notifications to targeted individuals or groups with interest in the proposed draft for drawing their attention to the availability of the draft for comment. The completed draft policy should also be circulated to key stakeholders via workshops, discussed in further meetings and forums, and get published in the University's newsletter and website. These strategies will ensure that the final policy document reflects the needs of the Unit/College/Directorate/ Center.

1.2.7 Develop a draft for approval

Following analysis of comments received and revision to the policy document a final draft for approval should be prepared. At this stage, it is necessary to seek assistance from stakeholders to fine-tune the wording, clarify meaning and make adjustments to the policy before it is finalized. It is important to ensure that each comment is assessed as to whether it is appropriate to include in the final draft, and if necessary, more than one draft version can be released for comment. In developing the final draft, it is important to bear in mind that readers are not experts on the subject matter. This highlights the need for policies and associated documents to be clear and simple and written in plain English. Upon completion of drafting of the final policy, it should be sent to the appropriate organ for final approval.

1.2.8 Policy approval

Once the lead team/ committee of the policy development process is reasonably satisfied that all issues and concerns about the policy have been aired and dealt with accordingly, it is time for the finalised document to get an approval. The path for policy approval should follow the respective committee/board of the Unit/College/Directorate/Center before final submission to the University Council as the supreme decision making body. A submission of the completed policy document to the approving authority by the policy authors should be accompanied with the covering paper briefing to the endorsing and approval authorities the rationale for the policy, its intended outcomes and the implementation issues associated with it. Core matters covered in the approval submission paper should include;

    (a) Purpose of the Policy
    (b) The nature of the changes being made (where it is a revised policy)
    (c) Consultations undertaken
    (d) Issues identified during consultations
    (e) Resource implications - training/financial/staffing/compliance

(f) Communication strategy and implementation responsibility

1.2.9 Policy communication and implementation

Following formal adoption of the policy, the policy owners should communicate to all stakeholders/end users of the approvals to new policies or amendments using university website and any other exiting platforms such as notice boards, newsletter, etc. Policies that impact on students should be posted on Student Information Management System (SIMS) as an alert. Training sessions may need to be conducted to ensure that University personnel are fully informed and able to implement the policy. Efforts to make the policy and procedures widely accessible will provide users with the tools needed to effectively move decision-making to more appropriate levels within the University/College/Directorate/Center, and provide a basis for individual and unit accountability. Prior to the policy implementation, everyone needs to be clear about the goals of the policy.

1.2.10 Monitoring and evaluation

The final stage of policy development process involves the monitoring and evaluation that may subsequently lead to policy review or amendments. Even after its adoption, policy may still require further adjustments, which can only be revealed through evaluation of its implementation. Monitoring is simply collecting pieces of information, or indicators that rates progress of the policy and eventually analyzing them and recording for the sake of evaluation in the end while the policy is in progress. On the other hand, evaluation is performed to determine the degree to which the policy objectives/goals are attained. The office of policy overseer will consistently monitor the policy implementation, appoint the evaluation team, and communicate the evaluation outcome to the University Council. Evaluation and reporting of the finding to the University Council will be conducted twice a year during the period of policy life cycle. The Unit/College/Directorate/Center will then coordinate the communication of the monitoring and evaluation report approved by the University Council to the

policy users using suitable approaches such as seminar or workshop, etc. as may be found appropriate.

1.2.11 Policy amendments and review

Monitoring and evaluation stage closes the policy cycle and contributes to issue identification and ongoing refinement of policy in response to changing circumstances. The policy should identify when and how it will be amended or reviewed to determine whether it is still required, it needs refinement or whether there is a need for a new policy. A general practice is to set a date for the policy to be reviewed; this might be one year or once in every three years, depending on the nature of the policy.

1.3   Procedures for policy review and amendments

1.3.1 Policy review

All policies should be subjected to a cycle of review in order to ensure that they are operating and being implemented in the way that was intended. Policy review should be performed to take care of any issues or concerns that have been identified in the operation of the policy, or to ensure whether the information contained in the present policy is up to date and remains consistent with any external orother regulatory requirements.

In quest of ensuring that the review is conducted thoughtfully and thoroughly, the following list of questions should be considered when reviewing existing policies;

(a) **Continued need for policy**

Is the policy still necessary in light of its stated purpose and goals? Would the document function better as procedures or guidelines?

(b) **Institutional values and objectives**

Does the policy clearly and effectively communicate the University values as well as the general purpose for the policy?

(c) **Effectiveness**

Does the policy function well as written, or should it be revised (e.g., by drafting it more clearly) in order to improve its effectiveness?

(d) **Alignment with legal requirements and best practices**

Is the policy current? Does it align with legal requirements and best practices in higher education? Does the policy meet institutional needs?

(e) Implementation

Is the policy being followed in practice, or is there a need to address and improve policy implementation?

(f) Drafting and formatting.

Is the policy well drafted? Is it formatted, consistent with the current standard policy guide?

1.3.2 Policy amendments

This refers to major or minor changes to the policy document effected outside a scheduled policy review. These changes should only be effected whenever there is a reasonable case for making so immediately. Otherwise, such changes should be deferred until the next policy review. Thus, it is pertinent to say that all policy amendments should explain the strongest reasons for the change and the amendment required. Both major and minor amendments made to the policy should be sent to the policy approval organ with appropriate explanation as to why the changes are required. Prior to submission for approval, consultation should take place as appropriate to the extent of the changes

need. For major changes, consultation is strongly recommended and formal approval is required regardless of whether a full review is conducted.
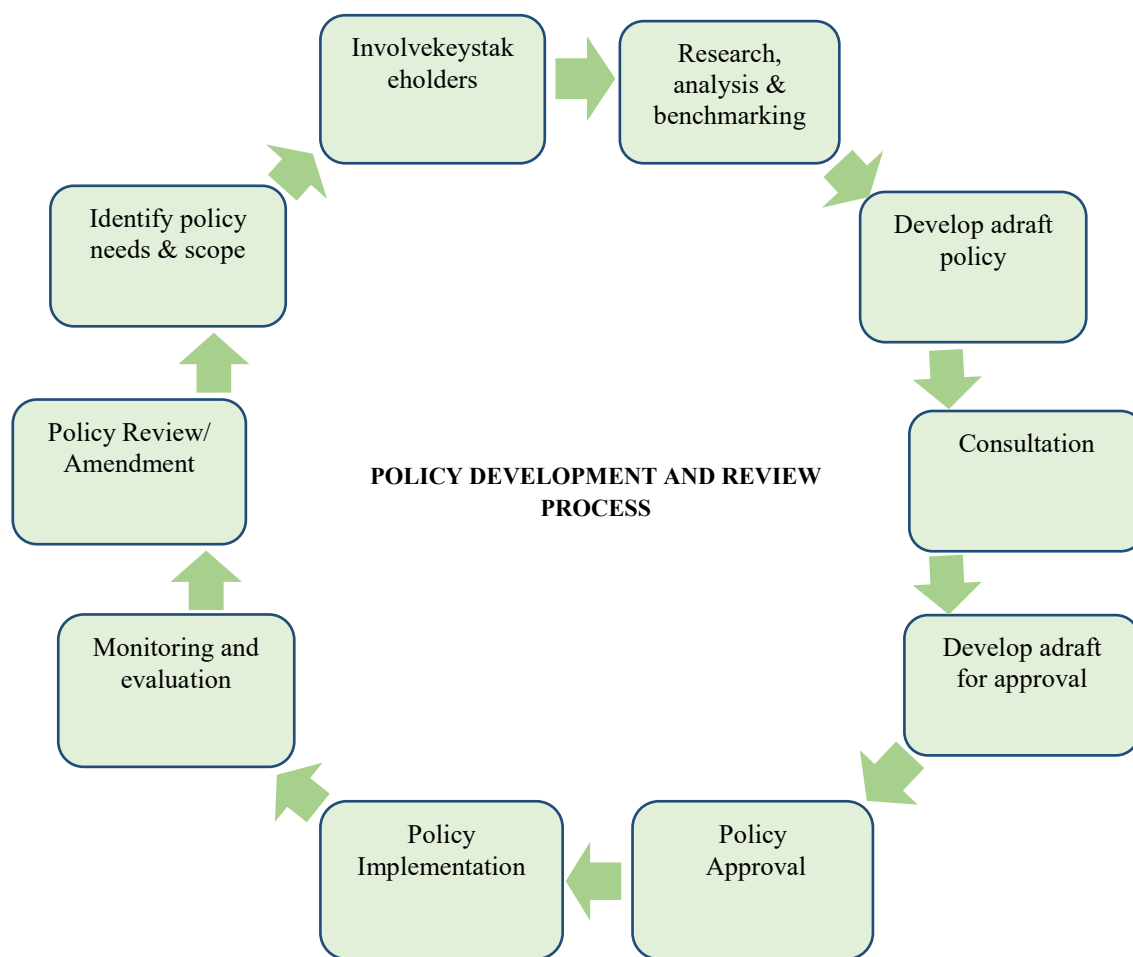
Figure 1: Summary of the policy development and review process

Policy documents should be written in a clear, concise and unambiguous language, and formatted so as to be easily readable. For policies and procedures to communicate righteously, policy writers should aim to say what needs to be said with the minimum amount of text necessary. As a general guideline, the standard policy document should consist of the following:

(i)   Cover page: Containing University Logo, title/name of the policy and the year of approval;

(ii)   Foreword: The foreword from the policy overseer (VC/DVC-ARC/DVC-PFA) should not be more than one page;

(i)   Table of Content.

(ii)   Abbreviations and acronyms; and

(iii) Definition of key terms and concepts.

CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1   Background Information

Provides the background information about MUST (Overview/Historical and current situation using Act or University Charter in the respective area where the policy is made and issues of establishment - should be two to three paragraphs).

1.2   MUST Mission

1.3   MUST Vision

1.4   Situation analysis

Should briefly state the strength and opportunity available and the gap to show the need for the policy.

1.5 **Justification**

Should state what the policy is going to do or the University/students/Researcher/Staff/Investors/Innovators will benefit through the developed policy. This will depend on the type/nature of policy being developed.

CHAPTER TWO: POLICY INTRODUCTION

2.1 Introduction

Gives a brief introduction/justification of the Chapter.

2.2 Policy Vision

It describes what the Directorate/Unit/Centre desires to achieve.

2.3 Policy Mission

Describe activities which have to be done in order to fulfill the policy vision.

2.4 Goal

The goal is the desired outcome that policy-makers/authors wish to achieve when implementing the mission. It is a broad statement of intent providing guidance for action.

2.5 Objectives

Main objective and specific objectives intended to be achieved by the implementation of the policy.

2.6 Philosophy

Gives information on how it works.

2.7 Policy Scope

The scope of the policy provides guidance on the development of a new or revised policy. It should provide a summary of a proposed policy, and ensure that those who might be affected by a policy are identified and considered. Scope may include the groups (students, community, staff, entities or units to

whom this policy applies or other statements with respect to time periods, geographic locations (e.g. Main Campus, MRCC etc.) If there are individuals, groups, entities or units who/which are exceptions to the scope that should be stated.

CHAPTER THREE: POLICY ISSUES, STATEMENTS AND STRATEGIES

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides areas in which the policy is going to work on and suggests the statements that a unit seeks to achieve at the end. Basing on the areas identified and the statements provided, the policy suggests the possible strategies to implement so as to accomplish the unit goal. The policy issues and the developed statements differ from one policy to another. The policy statements are developed based on the areas or issues the policy is working on and later for implementation the strategies are developed based on the statements.

3.2 Policy Issues

Introduce the subject matters in which the Unit/Directorate/Centre wants to work on it.

3.3 Policy Statements

Provide the set of expectations to manage performance of a Unit/Directorate/Centre. It outlines the ways in which a Unit/Directorate/Centre intends to conduct its issues. They should be reasonably brief and they should have longevity (i.e. not subject to continual amendment). Policy statements generally state what the Unit/Directorate/Centre requires or adhere to, what its objectives are or what the standards or values are. Each policy issue should be followed by policy statements to clarify the policy issues.

3.4   Strategies

Describe what the Unit/Directorate/Centre wants to accomplish. These actions/strategies should aim at addressing the issue stated in each police statement.

CHAPTER FOUR: POLICY COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

4. 1   Introduction

The policy owners should communicate to all players of the approvals to new policies, amendments to existing policies and the availability of draft policies for comments using University website and any other exiting platforms such as WhatsApp, notice boards, etc. In addition, policies that impact on students should be posted on SIMS as an alert.Efforts to make policy and procedures widely accessible will provide your team with the tools needed to effectively move decision-making to more appropriate levels within the institute, department or unit, and provide a basis for individual and unit accountability. Prior to the policy implementation, everyone needs to be clear about the goals of the policy.

4.2   Organization structure

Describe who owns the policy, order of reporting and responsibilities partners and stakeholders. State the individual or organization that will lead implementation of the policy.

4.3   Composition of the Board/Committee/Subcommittee

State clearly board/committee/subcommittee members, secretary including but not limited to the chairperson.

4.4   Role of the Board/Committee/Subcommittee

Stipulate clearly all activities that have to be taken under any member for the sake of no conflicting coordination.

4.5 **Rights and obligations/roles of stakeholders**

Describe who are the stakeholders, and distinctively explain their roles and obligation.

CHAPTER FIVE: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In this section, the policy should state what monitoring and reporting systems are in place to ensure that the policy is implemented, as well as how its usage and responses are being accessed. The policy should also state the basis as well as time at which the policy will be reviewed and revised.

5. 1 **Introduction**

Under this subsection, the following information should be captured:

(i) Clearly articulate the role and distinction between monitoring and evaluation; and

(ii) Tools for monitoring and evaluation should be well stated and explained.

5.2 **Periodical evaluation of the policy**

State how monitoring and evaluation process will be done.

(i) The policy should state who shall be responsible for monitoring and periodical evaluation of the policy.

(ii) The policy should state key terms for evaluation which include; efficiency, effectiveness, impact, relevance and sustainability.

5.3 **Evaluation report**

The policy should state the feedback mechanism i.e. the manner with which the feedback and/ or complaints will be handled, from the monitoring and evaluation organ to the MUST stakeholders/ policy users. In a situation where the policy needs to be changed or amended as the result of evaluation feedback, the policy should also state the means of how that process will be handled by the monitoring and evaluation organ and/ or any other responsible organ.

5. 4 Policy review and amendments

The policy review and/ or amendment should be set to be between one and three years after its effective date, depending on the nature of the policy content, or as it may be decided by the Council.

PART THREE
POLICY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Introduction

Effective implementation of the policy needs clearly defined strategies to be followed to facilitate its implementation. It has been observed that most policies are not operative partly due to poorly formulated strategies. The major reasons for poor policy implementation include: (i) Lack of awareness on the availability of the policy, (ii) Poor and uncoordinated dissemination of the policy document to the required parties, (iii) Lack of knowledge on what the policy is all about, (iv) Lack of monitoring and evaluation, and (v) Lack of awareness about changes made to the reviewed policy. Furthermore, it has been revealed that during policy implementation dispute do occur, and thus strategies for dispute settlement and ethical consideration should be in place to smoothen the policy implementation. Therefore, in order for the newly developed, reviewed or amended policies to be effectively implemented, the following strategies should be put in place:

(a) Policy availability and accessibility

The unit shall do the following to ensure availability and accessibility of the developed policy to all players:

(i) Make the policy available to all players through University website;

(ii) Disseminate soft or hard copies (whichever is convenient) to the responsible departments, units, frontline players and MUST library; and

(iii) Advertising the newly developed, reviewed or amended policy to the MUST community to be aware of the available policy using various platforms such as radio, website, etc.

For effective implementation of the policy, the following strategies should be put in place:

(i) The Unit must ensure that all the policy strategies have been well understood by the players/ policy implementers. This could be achieved through several means such as identifying players who are involved in the implementation process and conduct seminar/workshop/training on the newly developed, reviewed or amended policy; and

(ii) The Unit should ensure the implementation and monitoring tools are developed by preparing action plan/schedule of activities on basis of the nature of the policy, identifying resources and prepare implementation budget for all activities in the developed policy depending on the action plan developed.

(b)   Dispute settlement and appeals

The strategies to settle dispute and appeals be put in place:

(i) By placing well-designed and institutionalized processes and structures that are capable of managing, if not resolving, disputes that threaten policy implementation:

(ii) By putting the mechanism to ensure that organizational structure does not lead to conflicting interaction during policy workouts;

(iii)In case of conflict of interest within players or with outside policy or any disputes that may arise, there should be a well formulated plan for immediate resolution and settlement; and

(iv)Policy authors should ensure that current policies are not in conflict with the new policy that is being developed.

In case dispute arises during implementation of the policy the overseer of the policy should do the following:

(i) Understand the matter that cause the dispute;

(ii) Appoint dispute settlement Committee to handle the matter; and

(iii)The dispute settlement Committee should solve the matter within fourteen (14) days from the day of appointment.

(c)   Ethical consideration

The policy should generate culturally-appropriate ways to overcome or, at a minimum, stabilize the effects of social conflict.

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