## POLICY DESIGN GUIDELINES

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Breaking old habits or learning new ones is hard for some people. This can be challenging in the workplace if employees have been doing the same routine for a long time and are uncomfortable with anything they perceive to be disruptions-or even threats to job security. Their willingness to adapt to change depends largely on how changes are presented to them in written policies.

A policy is defined as a definite course of action or method selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions. It is advised to organizations to write one policy for each of the key determinants of quality.  Policies are public commitment to quality and provide a broad guide to actions and decision making while allowing discretion. It is in this regard that the following guidelines are designed to help policy developers at INES-Ruhengeri to ensure that good policies are elaborated in the future.

Before any policy being developed, there are some key factors to consider such as:

- **Public interest:** The developers must consider the best interest of the institution and society as a whole.
- **Effectiveness:** The developers must look at how well a policy will achieve its stated goals.
- **Efficiency:** the developers must look at how well the resources will be utilized in achieving goals and implementing policy i.e. doing the right things rightly-minimizing resources.
- **Consistency:** The developers must consider the degree of alignment with broader goals and strategies of government, with constitutional, legislative and regulatory regime if applicable.
- **Fairness and equity:** The developers must consider the degree to which the policy increases equity of all members and sectors of INES society.
- **Reflective:** The developers must as well also consider other values of INES-Ruhengeri community such as freedom, security, diversity, communality, choice and privacy.

## 2. IMPORTANT ASPECTS TO BE CONSIDERED IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT

### 2.1. Preliminary consideration

- A policy should be developed by a team,
- Leadership should be assigned to the group normally from the technical area in which the policy is located,
- Membership should be inclusive of all stakeholders from the beginning. Human beings of any age generally dislike being told what to do, especially if they think they're being ordered to do something without a good reason. Further, if their opinions on the subject weren't asked for in advance, there's a higher likelihood they'll put up resistance because they think the powers that be whether it's Superior don't respect them.

### 2.2. Policy development cycle

To develop a policy, you must go through different stages:

a. **Agenda setting and problem definition** as a policy has to respond to a certain challenge positive or negative.
- By looking at issues needed to be addressed;
- The agenda should reflects something being done;
- The problem definition should help to determine the gap between the reality of a current situation and the ideal.
➢ The following key questions may help during agenda setting:
- What is the issue at hand?
- How does the issue look like/appear to be?
- Who is affected?
- How big is the problem?
- Has this problem been addressed before? (If so how?)
- What should the situation be like if the problem is solved-the desired state of affairs?

b. **Setting objectives:** while defining the problem, the policy development team has to set objectives to determine what the policy will really achieve. These objectives must be expressed in concrete terms.

c. **Discerning, assessing and choosing alternatives**

- *Determining the alternatives*: in searching for alternative courses of action, the policy development team should usually begin with a shortlist of ideas with which they are familiar. For this, the team may be guided by the following questions:
  - What are the different ideas that may help to achieve the objectives?
  - What courses of action are ideal for attaining the identified objectives?
- *Assessing alternatives*: basically, an assessment of alternatives is a forecast and often, many judgmental criteria enter deliberations of assessing alternatives. The key issues to consider include the following:
  - Benefits anticipated from each alternative.
  - Costs incurred by each alternative.
  - Feasibility looking at how well the alternative is likely to work when assigned to a specific agency in its context.
  - Mutual effect: each policy relates in many other ways to other things that other institutions do; and their successes and failures are intertwined. Assessment should therefore foresee such mutual effect.
  - Political acceptability: a policy is never simply because it is right or best. It is judged right or best by legislators and executive, who see that it fits their expectations.
- *Choosing the alternatives*: in final step, the policy development team should choose one alternative or a combination to become official policy. The tools with which to implement the policy are also identified alongside.

d. **Implementation, monitoring and evaluation**

It's easy for a worker to feign ignorance and say, "Oh, I didn't know we changed that" if you don't have any proof that he or she received the memo. Whenever you create a policy or procedure, disseminate two copies of the document -- one for the worker to keep in a file at the workspace and the other to sign and return as proof of receipt. The acknowledgment that an employee received the information and will take responsibility for reading it should appear at the bottom of the document along with the date signed.

Whether you are introducing a new policy, you need to not only decide how the information will be packaged and disseminated, but also how its effectiveness will be measured. If it's a policy change, for example, you need to decide whether it will be for example in a memo format. The measurement of the new policy or procedure's success will be quantitative or qualitative based on quarterly increments. If your written policy

fails to include any mention of how the new rule will be enforced, it's going to be hard to get anyone to take it seriously.

About Monitoring and evaluation; sensitive monitoring and evaluation can aid in correcting both the policy itself and the means chosen to implement it.

**e. Other details : Write to your audience**

- Using highly technical terminology to explain a process to entry-level employees is a common and costly mistake. If audience members cannot understand the procedure, they have little hope of executing it correctly. In addition, they may become frustrated with both the language and the ineffectiveness of the document and stop trying to use it. When you are writing for large audiences of mixed backgrounds, presume that every reader reads and comprehends at a ninth-grade level,
- Avoid confusion and decrease errors by including all relevant details when writing a policy document.

- Examples often help people remember better and longer than straight information.

- The policy handbook format includes the people who are affected by the policies and procedures, and the scope of the company or organization. The policy section is developed for employees and members of an organization to inform and define their responsibilities and duties. Other significant features include effective policy dates, job titles, any revision dates, and the policy and procedure approval section.

## 3. SOME ADDITIONAL AND ESSENTIAL ADVICES FOR WRITING A POLICY

As the policy developers you are basically advised to:

1. Find similar sample policies and procedures to begin your study. Choose a variety of samples because one sample may provide insight that another might not.
2. Review the layout and design of the documents. Decide how you want your policy to look.

3.  Review the content of the document. Decide which key components you will need to appear in your policy. Consider the headings and subheadings and make sure that they are understandable for your audience.

4.  Analyze the organization's structure and function, as well as external factors, to ensure your initial proposals are not irrelevant to reality.

5.  Consult all concerned departments in order to see if the proposals can be implemented given each    department's capabilities, which may include staff and other resources. Supervisors from every concerned service, as well as representatives of the staff, can help to spot irrational demands.

6. Compose the policy guide using plain language to ensure that     everyone who reads it can understand what is required. With the exception of technical terms, make sure that everyone will understand.   Mostly the policies, for which customers and stakeholders are also interested, must be fully understandable.

7. Ensure your policy and procedures guide does not contain illegal proposals.

8. Distribute the initial draft to the staff and other interested parties using notice boards, emails and staff handbooks. Evaluate the implementation of the policy and amend the guide when everyday practice proves individual parts wrong.


## 4.  PROPOSAL OF POLICY DESIGN TEMPLATE

Title

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Abbreviations and acronyms

 Objectives and Purpose

Scope

Definitions of key concepts

Policy statement

Procedures

References /Relationship with existing policies

Further information (if applicable)

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