**Appendix 6 Version Control**

Version control is a method of managing multiple variations of the same document, particularly when it is important to keep a clear record of how the document was created, developed and changed over time. Each time the document is revised a unique identifier is applied, which enables the reader to identify the latest version of the document and differentiate between drafts and final approved versions of the document.

Version control, as outlined below, is to be applied to the development of key University documents, such as policies, procedures and strategic plans, as these documents are reviewed and updated on a regular basis and it is essential to know which version is currently in force, or which version was in force, at a point in time.

**Benefits of Version Control**

The benefits of using version control include;

* Provides a systematic and consistent approach, which is universally understood and applied.
* Creates authentic, complete and reliable records, making a clear separation between drafts and final versions.
* Provides a clear audit trail of how the document has been created, changed and developed over time.
* Enables the latest final version of a document to be found quickly and easily or trace which version was “in force” at any one time.
* Allows the deletion of drafts or redundant versions with confidence, reducing duplication, errors, confusion or misunderstanding.

**Methodology for Tracking Version Numbers**

Where it is important to identify and track minor or major revisions to the document, as is the case for SETU policies, before a final version is agreed, then the formal numbering system outlined below is to be used. The system differentiates between minor and major revisions.

Minor revisions are amendments to correct or update a title, name, numbering, web link or a reference to law, another policy document, a delegation or other relevant document; or otherwise modify it in a way that does not significantly change the intent or content of the existing version of the policy document. This includes editorial amendments to correct document formatting, spelling, grammar, or clarity of language, which does not otherwise affect the document intent or content.

Major revisions are amendments that substantially alter the intent or content of the policy. Major revisions would be where the document has had significant changes or review and requires re-approval.

Minor revisions are indicated by making increments to the decimal place e.g. V 1.2; V 1.3; V1.4

Major revisions are indicated by making increments to the whole number e.g. V 1.0; V 2.0; V 3.0

An example of how this may look in practice is seen below;

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Draft V 0.1 | This is the first version of the draft |
| Draft V 0.2 | This is the second version of the draft which reflects minor changes and additions |
| Final V 0.3 | This is the final draft version of the document |
| Version 1.0 | This is the first **approved** version of the document |
| Version 1.1 | This version reflects minor changes to the first approved version, version 1.2; version 1.3 etc can be used to record further minor changes |
| Version 2.0 | Version 2.0 indicates the second major approved version of the document. |
| Version 2.1 | This version reflects further minor changes to the second approved version of the document, version 2.2; version 2.3 etc record further minor changes |
| Version 3.0 | Version 3.0 indicates the third major approved version of the document |

The SETU policy template includes a Version Control Table, which provides useful contextual information about each change, the author, date and status of the document. A Version Control Table should be inserted on the front page of the document.

An example of a Version Control/Review Table is seen below;

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Version | Author | Date | Changes |
| V 0.1 | HR Manager | 1.1.2022 | First draft |
| V 0.2 | VP CAF | 1.2.2022 | Comments added |
| V 0.3 | HR Manager | 1.3.2022 | Executive management team comments added Final draft approved by EMT |
| V 1.0 | VP CAF | 1.4.2022 | Version 1.0 Approved by Governing Body |

Include any useful information which brings added value to the understanding and context of the history to the document.

Although documents are superseded by a later final version, remember it may also be important for the University to retain older versions of a document, for instance to demonstrate what policy, regulation or condition of grant were “in force” at a particular time.