

**Policy and Procedure
Guidelines**

**Document Code / Version Number**

In each policy and procedure there is space for you to put in a document code and/or version number. These can help you keep track of your documents (“document control”), however, they are not mandatory for conformity to the HSQF. If you don’t wish to have document or version numbers, simply delete the text.

**Policy Statement**

A policy is simply your organisation’s position on a particular issue. Together, the policy statements in each of the policies and procedures are your organisation’s approach to management and service delivery. Policy statements should always lead into procedures that direct your staff on how to act and implement your policies.

Policies are usually written to reflect legislative, regulatory, and other compliance requirements. But as a reflection of your organisation, they should also be personalised so that your staff and clients have a clear understanding of your unique philosophy. Simple language is also encouraged.

**Scope**

Scope is what parts of your organisation does the policy and procedure apply to. Perhaps the document is relevant to your human resources team, or to your support workers.

Scope should be written for the main users of the policy and procedure; it can be tempting to put ‘all staff’ in this section, however, this often leads to confusion down the track. To help, think about who would need to read the policy and procedure during their induction period.

**HSQF Related Standards**

For organisations complying with the HSQF, the indicators the policy relates to are listed here. This is not a mandatory part of a policy, however listing the relevant quality standards or indicators, whether they related to HSQF or not, help to make it clear what the policy relates to. This can be particularly useful if a standard or indicator is amended – you can quickly see what policies may need to be tweaked. This will also help identify which Indicators to check for suggested evidence and for more information about how to comply with the Indicator the policy is addressing.

**References and Related Legislation**

This section lists relevant legislation, regulation, departmental policy, etc. as per the mandatory requirements in the HSQF User Guide – Certification It has been set up so that you can easily remove references if the service stream does not apply to your organisation.

It also references which Standard Indicator the policy and procedure aligns with, which can be more than one.

Staying abreast of legislative changes can be challenging if you are trying to do it on your own.
Some ways that may help are:

* subscribing to departmental newsletters;
* through your relevant Peak Body;
* through an employer association membership;
* through the [Australasian Legal Information Institute](http://www.austlii.edu.au/); or
* through specialist websites such as SAI Global.

**Definitions**

Definitions have been provided in the policies and procedures where they may be unfamiliar terms, however, customisation of this section is encouraged if you use different terms in your organisation. Not every policy and procedure template may have this section, but you should include it if it’s needed for your organisation.

Including definitions for terms which are specific to a sector and not commonly understood is a great way to ensure shared understanding within the organisation. Occasionally, terms are understood and used differently by different organisations, so this is a good opportunity to get on the same page with what you mean by a term within your own organization.

**Principles**

While this is not a compulsory part of a policy, including principles, particularly for some policies, may be helpful for those using the policy. This sets out the organisational, or sector, principles which underpin the policy. For example, “choice” may stand out as an important principle in some policies. Some organisations will opt to include the underpinning principles in the policy statement.

**Procedure**

Procedures are the practical application of policies and provide specific steps to do things. They answer the questions of “How?”, “When?” and “Who?”. Customising this section for your own organisation is **highly recommended**. Sections have been left to include your position titles, however, customisation should go
further than that.

All parts of the template that require you to add your own information are written [like this] in enclosed square brackets and are also highlighted in yellow.

Some sections of the procedure sections relate to specific service streams. These areas are identified by a bold heading, and [remove if not required] next to the heading. If your organisation does not deliver services in those streams, remove those sections as needed.

**Supporting documents**

This section is for referencing related documents. It indicates to your staff where else they may need to look for relevant information, or what particular form they need to access to complete a process or task. It can also be helpful when you need to make changes to a process, as it will give you a prompt to check related or supporting documents in case changes need to be made to those documents as well.

**Review**

Your policies and procedures, and any related forms, registers, brochures, etc., should be reviewed on a regular and as-needs basis.

In each policy and procedure template there is space for you to put when the document was last reviewed. You can also add when the next review will be, or you can put that into a separate document review register or plan.

You do not have to review all documents in the same timeframe. Some documents may need more frequent review due to legislation, risk, or because of other changes. A one- to three-year timeframe for review is generally considered acceptable.

**Using QCOSS templates**

QCOSS has developed these templates for and on behalf of the Queensland social service sector. Your organisation may reuse, adapt and build upon the templates. You may brand the template with your own organisational logo. No acknowledgement of QCOSS is necessary as QCOSS does not hold copyright in the work. Please note that these policy templates are not intended to be exhaustive.