



Postgraduate Medical Council  
of Western Australia

# PMCWA Policy Framework and Guidelines

Prepared by: Postgraduate Medical Council of WA

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1.	Background .....	2
2.	Purpose .....	3
3.	Scope .....	3
4.	Principles.....	4
5.	Definitions of Documents .....	4
6.	Policy Governance .....	5
6.1	Roles and Responsibilities .....	5
7.	Policy Management Cycle.....	7
7.1	Development: review or establish requirement .....	8
7.2	Research, Review and Analyse .....	9
7.3	Consult and Draft .....	9
7.4	Finalise and Endorse .....	9
7.5	Implement, evaluate and monitor.....	9
8.	Document Management .....	10
8.1	Naming conventions .....	10

## VERSION CONTROL

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## **1. Background**

In August 2003, the Minister for Health established the Postgraduate Medical Council of Western Australia (PMCWA) to provide leadership for early postgraduate medical education and training in Western Australia. The delegated responsibilities and authority of PMCWA include:

- Developing guidelines and protocols for the education and training of pre-vocational doctors and other medical practitioners not in vocational training programs
- Accrediting and monitoring medical training positions for pre-vocational doctors
- Monitoring and advising on the supply and demand for the pre-vocational workforce in Western Australia
- Supporting clinicians and other professionals involved in the education and training of pre-vocational and other non-vocational doctors

This occurs through a wide range of programs and services. A significant amount of work has been carried out by PMCWA to ensure the education and training requirements of junior doctors continues to improve.

This framework aims to clearly outline and standardise the policy management process. This supports transparency and accountability for all stakeholders.

PMCWA is committed to continuously improving the quality of education, supervision and training provided to junior doctors in their prevocational years.

## **2. Purpose**

The Policy Framework has been developed for PMCWA to standardise the policy management process. The Framework aims to:

- Provide a clear and transparent process for policy development and management that supports staff and external stakeholders;
- Describe the process for document development, dissemination, implementation, evaluation and review, and document control;
- Outline associated governance and responsibilities of those involved in the process; and
- Clearly define the scope and range of PMCWA policy documents used by relevant stakeholders.

## **3. Scope**

This Framework sets out the development standards for all policy relevant to the operation of PMCWA. It aims to ensure consistent policy development processes and is applicable to all staff managing PMCWA policy documents.

## 4. Principles

The following principles underpin this Policy Framework:

- Standardisation: central electronic filing of all policy documents to ensure convenient staff access;
- Coherency: PMCWA policy documents are consistent internally and externally with policies/ standards of relevant organisations e.g. AMC accreditation standards
- Evidence-based: PMCWA policies are based on best available evidence to support good practice;
- Consultation: stakeholders effectively contribute throughout the policy management cycle;
- Endorsement: policies are endorsed by the appropriate Committees;
- Communication: stakeholders are informed of new PMCWA policies;
- Review and evaluation: measures are in place to ensure that PMCWA policies are regularly reviewed.

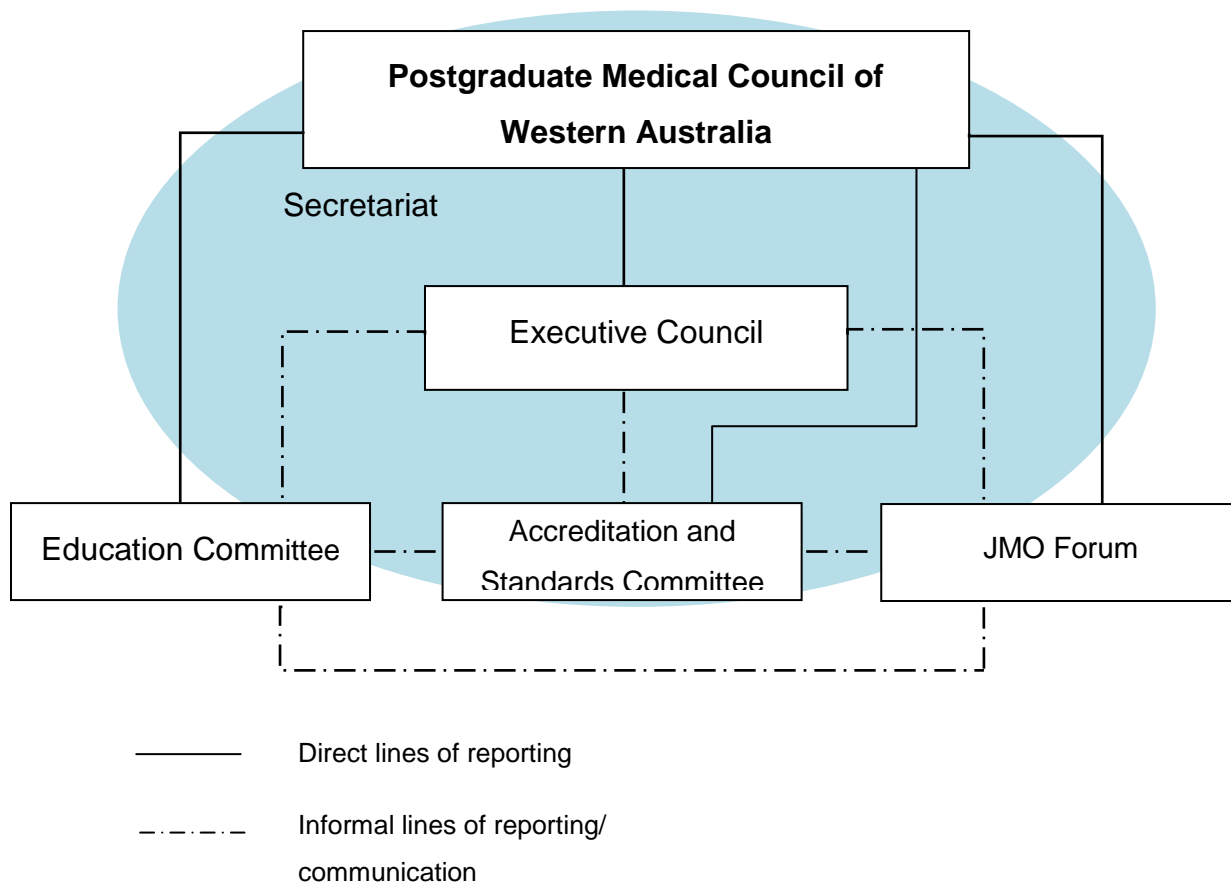
## 5. Definitions of Documents

Term	Definition
Framework	A document providing high level strategic focus and aimed at a broad range of stakeholders. Describes organisational responsibilities, articulates a set of principles and/or longer term goals that informs policy and gives overall operational direction.
Policy	A statement of intent stating required actions and responsible parties. May result from national or local directives and provides framework within which individuals or specific groups must work.
Standards	A benchmark statement that qualitatively describes the required level of service or program delivery. The standard of services may be determined and/or informed by the Council, Department of Health, professional bodies and legislation and is usually based on research evidence and consultative processes.
Criteria	A statement that represents a standard for evaluation. Usually supported by statements specifying evidence required to meet each corresponding criterion.
Guidelines	May consist of a set of guiding principles based on best practice and to assist professional in making judgements and undertaking actions in accordance with their skills, expertise and scope of practice.
Procedures	Defines a course of action, often as a step by step guide.

## 6. Policy Governance

Policy governance is part of PMCWA corporate governance and encompasses the organisation's structure, culture, policies and processes. It ensures policy documents reflect core values, emerging issues or issues relevant to core business.

The PMCWA policy governance structure is outlined as follows (Figure 1) and



**Figure 1 PMCWA Policy Governance Structure**

identifies the relevant responsibilities and accountabilities within PMCWA.

### 6.1 Roles and Responsibilities

#### **Full Council**

Members of the Postgraduate Medical Council are representatives of the stakeholder organisations involved in the support, training, supervision and administration of pre-vocational doctors and other non-vocational medical officers. Membership to the Council is via Ministerial appointment. As a Ministerial Council the PMCWA reports to the Minister of Health via the Chief Medical Officer and is supported by a number of sub-committees.

The Council is accountable for all governance activities within PMCWA, including PMCWA policies. This includes:

- Providing strategic direction
- Ensuring organisational commitment and participation in policy activities

**Executive Committee**

The executive is accountable to the Council for policy and operational decisions and is responsible for implementation and effective management of PMCWA policies, which include the following:

- Being the principal authority for the endorsement of policies
- Ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to policy activities

**Education/ Accreditation and Standards/ Workforce Committee**

The Postgraduate Medical Council is supported by PMCWA sub-committees on education, training and workforce issues of medical staff in their pre-vocational years. The sub-committees and respective roles are:

Accreditation and Standards Committee	Responsible for the development of standards and accreditation of training positions and institutions.
Education Committee	Responsible for the identification, evaluation and monitoring of education and training programs for pre-vocational medical officers and other non-vocational doctors.
JMO Forum	Responsible for providing advice and reporting to PMCWA and its Committees on issues relevant to JMOs.

All three committees are accountable to the Council for:

- Informing and advising policy of the council within their functional area of responsibility
- Providing advice in prioritising policy activities
- Reporting to the Council on relevant strategies and outcomes

## **Secretariat**

The PMCWA secretariat sits within the jurisdiction of the WA Department of Health and as a Ministerial Council is required to comply with the provisions of any relevant statutes, regulations, by laws and requirements of the Department of Health. It reports to the Minister for Health via the Chair of the Council and for administration issues via the Chief Medical Officer of the Department of Health. The Secretariat is responsible for:

- Developing, implementing, maintaining and evaluating policies
- Identifying policy needs and escalating policy issues
- Managing development and review of all policy documents, including the PMCWA Policy Framework as required
- Identifying and managing risks associated with the policy system
- Providing updates to the Council of all relevant new and amended policies and other policy issues
- Ensuring that compliance matters are recognised and addressed
- Ensure all significant breaches are appropriately managed and reported

## **Policy Custodian**

Any PMCWA policy is owned and managed by a “Policy Custodian”; the officer that has overarching responsibility for development of a policy, obtaining the required endorsement and for ensuring the policy is implemented, monitored and reviewed. The Policy Custodian is responsible identifying and setting the strategic direction for the policy (or proposed policy) and determining the overall context in which the policy should be developed or revised.

## **7. Policy Management Cycle**

In order to determine a clear standardised approach this Framework supports a policy management cycle (Figure 2) that includes

- Development (review or establish requirement);
- Research, Review and Analyse;
- Consult and Draft;
- Finalise and Endorse;
- Implement; and
- Evaluate and Monitor

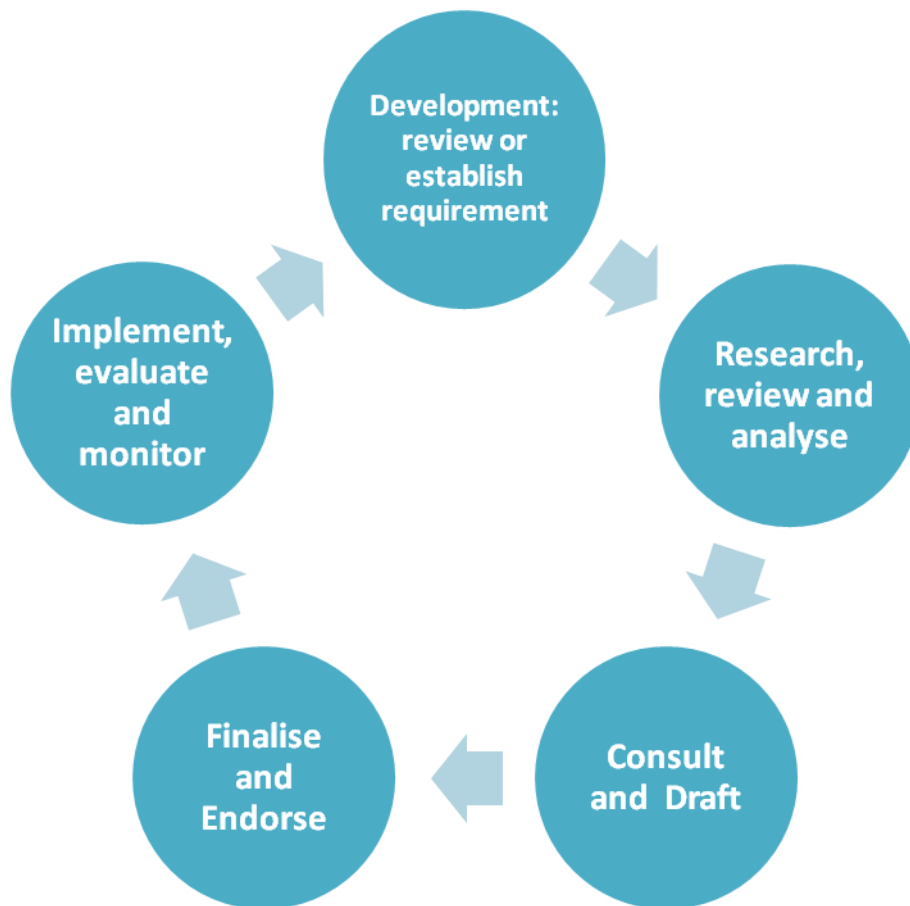


Figure 2 Policy Management Cycle

### 7.1 Development: review or establish requirement

Existing policies and procedures will be revised and updated every three (3) years by default, in accordance with the [PMCWA Policy Review Schedule](#), or when the requirement for the review/ development of a policy is identified. Where requirement for policy change is identified or where a policy is due for scheduled review, the following sources for policy change should be carefully considered:

- Staff identification of amended/ ineffective/ inefficient processes
- New or revised compliance requests by stakeholders e.g. AMC Standards
- Feedback from policy users e.g. Medical Administration, JMO Forum
- Establishment or changes to recognised best practice
- Internal/ external audits and performance reviews
- Changes to organisational structure e.g. new committees

Consideration of the above areas will establish whether there is a need to effect changes to existing policies for improvement or to develop a new policy. This will also assist to identify the policy scope, key stakeholders and the policy owner.



## **7.2 Research, Review and Analyse**

Comprehensive policy research, review and analysis must be conducted to ensure an accurate policy is developed. The process should include a review of the current policy and other supporting documents to ensure coherency e.g. National Accreditation Standards, National Curriculum Frameworks. Research and review will assist in the identification of possible options and solutions and will guide policy intent.

Seek legal advice if required in relation to policy development.

The analysis stage involves considering implementation, choices, alternatives, implications and the impact of the various options/solutions identified.

## **7.3 Consult and Draft**

Effective consultation is an essential part of all policy development and provides opportunity to eliminate inconsistency, as well as identify potential barriers to successful policy implementation. The policy author should endeavour to engage as widely as possible with the appropriate stakeholders, particularly those affected by the policy issue.

A draft policy document should be developed and forwarded to the appropriate Committee for endorsement.

All PMCWA policies should be drafted using the [PMCWA Policy Template](#) and follow key principles below:

- Succinctly articulate the policy statement, policy principles and scope of the policy
- Provide reference to underlining guidelines and supporting documents;

## **7.4 Finalise and Endorse**

PMCWA policies and supporting documents are validated by endorsement of the appropriate Committees. It is the responsibility of the policy author to ensure the process is undertaken. The PMCWA Executive Committee has final endorsement responsibilities.

The policy comes into effect from the date specified in the document. Any prior versions cease to have effect.

## **7.5 Implement, evaluate and monitor**

Implementation is the process where a policy document is put into action. Implementation strategies should be considered at every stage of the policy process and should not proceed prior to endorsement of the policy or procedure.

Policies and any supporting documents in force should be continuously monitored, reviewed and evaluated to ensure they retain their relevance and effectiveness.

Existing policies and procedures will be revised and updated every three (3) years in accordance with the [PMCWA Policy Review Schedule](#), or when the requirement for the review/ development of a policy is identified.

## 8. Document Management

An adequate policy document management system ensures that PMCWA staff have access to the most current version of policy documents. The document management system also assists the proper archiving of withdrawn or suspended policy documents to ensure the validity and quality of documents used.

All policy documents will be filed in the appropriate file paths as follows:

All current policy documents:

<W:\PG Med Edu\EPG\Postgraduate Medical Council\Policies by PMCWA>

All draft policy documents:

<W:\PG Med Edu\EPG\Postgraduate Medical Council\Policies by PMCWA\PMCWA Policies - Drafts in progress>

All withdrawn/ superseded documents:

<W:\PG Med Edu\EPG\Postgraduate Medical Council\Policies by PMCWA\Archive - outdated policies>

A delegated officer will be responsible for ensuring that PMCWA policies are named and filed accordingly. A delegated officer will also be responsible for generating periodic policy update reminders to the appropriate policy authors in accordance with the [policy review schedule](#).

### 8.1 Naming conventions

Policy documents should be saved as word documents following the prescribed naming conventions:

#### Date

- Format: YYMMDD
- Indicative of the date on which the policy became endorsed
- If the policy document is not yet endorsed, this should be written in place of the endorsement date

E.g. Yet to be endorsed\_POL\_PMCWA Policy Framework

## Underscore

- Should be used to separate each element of the file name

## Type of document

- Use an abbreviation of the type of document
- Between 2-3 alphabetical characters
  - Use 1<sup>st</sup> letters for document type consisting of more than one word  
E.g. BR for Briefing Note
  - Use 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> letters for document types consisting of one word  
E.g. MEM for Memo
  - Some truncations may be more appropriate using key consonants  
E.g. LTR for Letter

Common Abbreviations	
AGR	Agreement
FRA	Framework
FRM	Form
GUI	Guidelines
PLN	Plan
POL	Policy
PRC	Procedure
PRO	Protocol
RPT	Report
SCH	Schedule

## Policy Title

A short descriptive title should be used if the original policy title is too lengthy to be wholly incorporated into the file name.

## Example

