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**DURHAM****SU**

**How to write good  
policy**

# What is good policy?

## GOOD POLICY SHOULD...

### Be clear who it is for, and in what context

- Someone reading a policy – whether to vote on it, implement it, or read it as someone to whom it might apply – should be able to clearly see who is within the scope of the policy, and why.
- A policy should be clear about the context in which it is written, using the “Assembly Notes” section to outline this as clearly and concisely as possible.

### Demonstrate evidence, and have references

- Evidence, particularly in the “Assembly Notes” section, is important to back up the position the policy outlines – if something is a problem, why is it, what is the evidence? If something is beneficial, how can that be evidenced?
- Reference this evidence as you would in academic work – with links where possible too.

### Be specific with, and understand the use of, language and terminology

- A policy should clearly, concisely, and understandably, define any specific terms used.
- Do not assume that the way in which you are using a term is general knowledge – research any terms which may be contentious or have multiple meanings so that the policy can be as clear as possible.
- When defining a term, try to use accessible language and avoid using words which may themselves be interpreted differently.
- It can be helpful to include a short “Definitions” section where you lay out terms used for the record

### Know the limits of Assembly’s power

- Policy should be constructed in such a way that it falls within Assembly’s gift; i.e. not mandating Assembly or SU Officers to act in a way which is beyond their power, or which is unlawful.
- [Standing Order B](#) and [Paragraphs 94-98 of the SU’s Articles of Association](#) outline the limits of Assembly’s power, as well as its membership and procedures.

### Be constructed with staff support where needed

- The SU has an experience Student Voice Team staff who are always happy to help with policy creation, whether that is from an early stage, for advice around what Assembly’s limits are, or simply just as a second pair of eyes.
- Even where you’re confident with a policy, it’s still useful to speak to our staff where possible, as they may know of previous policies in the same area which could be useful to you in making the policy the best it can be.
- Email [dsu.governance@durham.ac.uk](mailto:dsu.governance@durham.ac.uk) and you’ll be connected with the most relevant staff member