

## Policy and Procedure Guideline (QA-GL-025)

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<b>Related Documents</b>	QA-Pol-023 – Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy QA-GL-024 – Internal QA Review Guideline

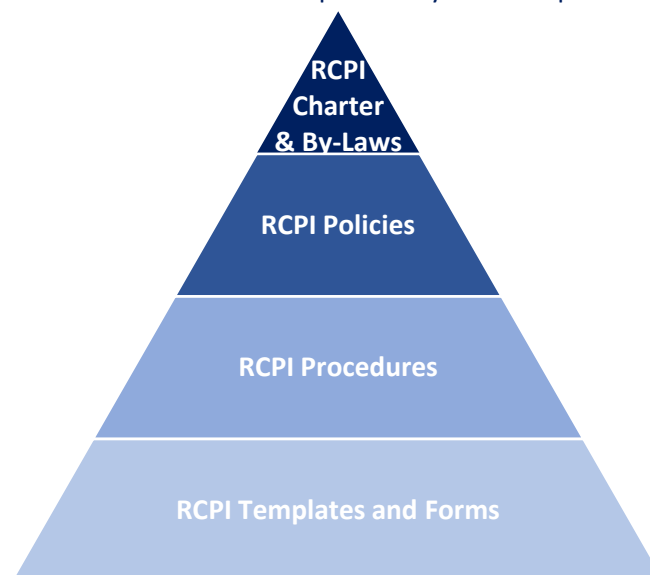
## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this guideline is to help ensure that the process by which RCPI policies, procedures, forms, templates and guidelines are developed, approved and maintained is consistent and that documents are as useful and, therefore, as effective as possible. Effective policy and procedure development mean that they are:

- appropriately developed and regularly updated
- easy to find, read and understand
- consistent with RCPI's vision, mission and values
- compliant with applicable laws
- effective in reducing risk
- a cornerstone in promoting best practices across RCPI

## 2. RCPI Policy & Procedure Hierarchy

RCPI documents are organised in an inter-related hierarchy as shown in Figure 1 below. In the event that one document conflicts with another document placed higher in the document hierarchy the higher placed document takes precedence. The lower the document is in the hierarchy, the more local the approval of the document and the responsibility for its implementation lies:



*Figure 2.4.1 Document Hierarchy*

## 3. Policy Guidelines

- A policy is a statement of intent which can be used to guide decisions. A policy may stand on its own or can be implemented through procedures and supporting templates.

- A policy has a broad application or impact throughout the organisation, it can be used ensure compliance with applicable laws or regulations or to assist in the reduction of risk.
- RCPI Policies are approved by the Executive Board, Academic Board or RCPI Council. Once approved compliance with a policy is mandatory.
- The Policy Owner is the appropriate academic or support department whose remit/responsibility covers the subject matter of the policy.
- The Policy Owner is responsible for the substance of policy documents and for ensuring compliance with the policy. The QA manager has a role in promoting an understanding of the importance of compliance.
- The Policy Owner is responsible for drafting new or revised policies, consulting with stakeholders and steering the policy through the appropriate levels of approval.

#### 4. Procedure Guidelines

- RCPI Procedures establish *who, what, where* and *when* in relation to a given activity as well as establishing accountability in support of the implementation of a policy.

When writing a procedure:

- It should be written with a new employee in mind as the reader.
- Where possible start sentences with a verb, keep them short and use simple language.
- Avoid the passive voice. It should be clear who must complete which task.
- Use a detailed table of contents so that the reader can easily find the part of the procedure that they wish to complete.
- It should be separate from the policy to which it relates. This allows the procedure to be improved locally. However, it is not always useful to separate the policy and procedure e.g. RCPI Data Breach Management Policy and Procedure covers a significant amount of work involving several internal and external stakeholders to fulfil regulatory requirements within 72 hours.

#### 5. Policy and Procedure Management

The QA Manager is responsible for the system of update and periodic review of policies, procedures etc. and for guiding staff through the process. The diagram in Figure 2 gives an overall view of the cycle of policy and procedure development, publication, attestation and periodic review.



**Figure 2 – Policy Update Cycle**

Staff who wish to update a document submit a request to the QA Manager, explaining the change and the rationale for the change. The QA Manager releases the document in an editable form to allow update and advises who needs to be consulted about the change, who will need to review the change and who will need to approve it. The QA Manager will also advise if attestation or ‘read and understood’ is sufficient or if more detailed training is required.

Once approved, the document is updated and published on the SharePoint system, a date for periodic review is set and a ‘read and understood’ notice and/or training information is circulated to all relevant staff.

The purpose of a periodic review is to re-visit the document to ensure that it is still relevant and up to date. The QA manager prepares a quarterly schedule for documents due for periodic review.