



## LABORATORY SAFETY POLICY

### 1.0 COMMITMENT

The University of Newcastle is committed to ensuring the highest practicable standard of health and safety for employees, students and visitors and other persons working at the University. Consistent with this, the University of Newcastle is committed to ensuring all reasonably foreseeable risks to health and safety in laboratory work are identified, and management strategies put into place to eliminate or minimise such risks.

### 2.0 PRIORITIES

The University of Newcastle will ensure compliance with all relevant legislation and Standards so that exposure of persons to health and safety risks arising from laboratory activities is avoided or minimised. This is to be achieved by effective control of hazards related to laboratory work.

The principles of risk management should be applied to all laboratory work, namely:

- Hazard identification, through inspection of the laboratory and associated project proposals;
- Risk assessment, through the review of health and safety information;
- Risk control, through providing appropriate facilities, induction and training

### 3.0 ACCOUNTABILITY

The University recognises that the effective provision of safe work environments and safe systems of work places reciprocal responsibilities on staff, management, students, and contractors. Of these shared responsibilities, the following are pre-requisites to the success of this policy:

- Pro Vice-Chancellors and Heads of Divisions are responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy, and for ensuring that appropriate resources are provided in order to achieve this in their delegated areas of control. They shall ensure that Heads of Schools and Service Portfolios oversee, and are held accountable for, the development of safe systems of laboratory work.
- Heads of Schools and Service Portfolios, as well as ensuring that effective supervision is provided in laboratories, should appoint a Responsible Officer for each laboratory area under their control.
- Responsible Officers should ensure that safe systems of work are provided, maintained, and disseminated in their respective laboratories.
- Staff and students must follow these safe systems of work, and report circumstances where laboratory work poses hazards that need to be addressed.

### 4.0 RESOURCES

The University supports the implementation of this policy consistent with its current operational plans and resources.

Advice, problem solving and reference material on implementation issues is available from the relevant OH&S Technical Sub-Committees and the Institutional Biosafety Committee, and the Health and Safety Team.

Implementation requires reference to:

- the University of Newcastle [Guidelines for Developing Safe Laboratory Practices](#). (**NOTE:** These Guidelines are currently in **draft** form.), and other procedural documents endorsed by the University's OH&S Committee;
- relevant Australian Standards and Legislation.

### 5.0 COMMUNICATION

The development of a Laboratory Safety Manual, as described in the above Guidelines, is seen as the first step in implementing safe systems of work for managing risks within a laboratory.

This policy, and the Guidelines associated with it, should be provided to persons working in all research and teaching laboratories at the University of Newcastle.

Before they begin work in a laboratory area new to them, staff and students should be made familiar with the contents of the relevant laboratory safety manual.

## **6.0 EVALUATION**

The Guidelines for Developing Safe Laboratory Practices provide a basis for self-evaluation by the local management of a laboratory area.

The University maintains a commitment to improving OH&S systems by regularly evaluating work practices in Faculties and Divisions. Workplace inspections may be carried out by members of the OH&S Committee, or its Technical Sub-committees. The development of laboratory safety manuals, and improvements in work practices consistent with this policy, will be considered as part of this evaluation.