



GUIDELINES FOR ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY

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With thanks to University of Wollongong who provided the template for this document

1. Context

This statement of responsibilities should be read in conjunction with the University of Newcastle's Occupational Health and Safety Policy document, and is designed to clearly define health and safety responsibilities for staff and users of the University's premises and property.

2. Introduction

The University of Newcastle is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its employees, and the health and safety of students, visitors and contractors. As such, all of these parties have OH&S responsibilities. By recognising, reporting and addressing potential hazards in the University environment, the campus community can assist the University of Newcastle in taking every reasonable practicable step to providing a safe and healthy working environment for all staff, students and visitors.

All staff have the responsibility and authority to ensure that a safe working environment exists within the University. This assists the University to fulfil their OH&S obligations. All staff will be held accountable for ensuring that they fulfil their OH&S responsibilities.

The University will ensure that the requirements outlined by the Occupational Health and Safety Act (2000) and associated regulations and standards are complied with at all University facilities. The University reserves the right to apply a risk management approach and establish and enforce more stringent standards where appropriate. Resultant policies and procedures are considered as binding upon all staff and students.

The University is committed to keeping abreast of changing safety standards and to communicating these standards within the University.

The University will develop, implement, evaluate and improve occupational health and safety policies, procedures and programs as appropriate.

3. Responsibilities, Accountabilities and Authorities

3.1 Introduction

The campus community shares responsibility for occupational health and safety, with a variety of specific responsibilities at different levels of the organisation.

Each workplace shall have a nominated supervisor and all matters of an occupational health and safety nature should be raised in the first instance with the supervisor of the workplace. The supervisor or manager (Head of Unit or School) of the workplace has initial responsibility for ensuring that reported OH&S matters are followed up and resolved. If the supervisor or manager is unable to resolve the OH&S issue or implement adequate hazard control measures, they should seek assistance from higher level management.

Following a risk assessment, if hazard control measures fail, are inadequate to meet a situation, or if further advice is required, individuals should refer matters of concern to their supervisor. If unresolved, they should then approach their Faculty Safety Committee or Representative, then to the Occupational Health & Safety Committee. Urgent issues should be brought to the attention of the senior management in the area immediately, and notification made to the Health & Safety team.

3.2 Definitions

Term	Definition
OH&S	Occupational Health & Safety
PVC	Pro Vice-Chancellor of a Faculty
Director	Director of an Administrative Division of the University
Head of Unit	Heads of Units, Schools and programs
Supervisor	University staff member responsible for staff supervision, and/or student supervision. This includes staff that assign tasks or set goals for students to complete, whether the

	student will be completing the task under that staff member's direct supervision, or working in other areas.
Responsible Officer	Nominated staff who have a co-ordination role in a specific area to ensure that the OH&S Policies and procedures are being implemented, and the relevant documentation is being maintained.
Staff	All staff, whether academic or general, irrespective of their employment status – permanent, limited term or casual

3.3 Vice-Chancellor and Senior Executive

The ultimate responsibility and accountability for occupational health and safety rests with the Vice-Chancellor who, as Chief Executive Officer of the University, has overall responsibility to the University Council for the health and safety of all persons using University land or buildings for legitimate purposes.

The Vice-Chancellor has responsibility for the implementation and review of the University OH&S policy, and delegation of OH&S management responsibilities.

In the Vice-Chancellor's absence, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor acting in the position, will act on the Vice-Chancellor's behalf in all OH&S issues. In addition, the Vice-Chancellor may delegate the authority for carrying out matters relating to occupational health and safety to other staff or contractors on site.

The Vice-Chancellor has delegated to each PVC, Director, Head of Unit/School, and Supervisor, responsibility, accountability and authority for safety performance within their respective area. This includes dedicating appropriate resources, including financial resources, to OH&S issues.

3.4 PVC, Directors and Heads of Unit/Schools

PVC's, Directors and Heads of Unit/Schools are responsible and accountable for, and have the authority to, ensure that OH&S measures required by legislation and University policies and procedures, are implemented in their area. They also must ensure any site specific measures required to eliminate or reduce risk in their area are identified, developed and implemented.

PVC's, Directors and Heads of Units/Schools must also ensure that regular consultation occurs between management and employees on OH&S issues. Using the Faculty Safety Committee/ Representative for this purpose is the ordinary mechanism for consultation with involved parties regarding OH&S issues.

PVC's, Directors and Heads of Units/Schools are also responsible to ensure that supervisors within their area of control are held accountable for health and safety matters.

In addition, PVC's, Directors and Heads of Units/Schools have the responsibility and accountability for ensuring:

- The condition of buildings are regularly monitored and any deficiencies are promptly reported to Infrastructure Services Division;
- Equipment is safe and suitable for the types of work to be carried out and that safe working practices are developed and followed;
- Occupational Health & Safety is incorporated into performance appraisals of all staff in their area;
- Staff in charge of each activity are competent in relevant health and safety matters;
- All staff in their Unit, particularly new and temporary employees, are aware of and understand all relevant health and safety arrangements as regards fire and other emergencies, first aid, and the reporting of incidents, accidents, "near misses" and hazards, and equipment and processes;
- Suitable and sufficient assessments of the risks to the health and safety of staff, students and other persons in their Unit, are carried out and reviewed;

- Corrective action is undertaken in response to recommendations from risk assessments, incident investigations, workplace audits or evaluations;
- The health and safety of visitors and contractors to the Unit or site is ensured;
- Staff are provided with the necessary instruction, information, training and supervision to enable work to be carried out safely. This includes ensuring that all new staff attend an OH&S Induction Training session;
- Risk assessments are carried out on all new experimental work, new work systems or new equipment during the design phase and before work is commenced;
- All minor works, modifications and refurbishments consider the safety of staff and students;
- Emergency equipment is in proper working order and available, regular training in the use of the equipment is provided, and regular emergency and evacuation exercises are carried out.

As part of their academic leadership role, PVC's and Heads of Unit/School should also encourage the incorporation of OH&S into curriculum and research initiatives as part of student professional development.

Where facilities used by Schools are shared with other Schools, the appropriate PVC's, Directors and Heads must determine and identify between themselves, the means by which risk assessments of those facilities are carried out and any remedial action so identified is implemented. Examples of such facilities are laboratories, workshops and machinery jointly used by one or more Units/Schools and common stairways and corridors where the procedures for reporting defects and hazards must be clearly defined. It is recommended that Faculty Safety Committees/Representatives for OH&S be utilised in this regard to improve communication across areas and for effective collaborative resolution of OH&S issues.

In some larger Units/Schools it may be necessary to delegate the authority for implementation of health and safety arrangements to other senior managers, supervisors and responsible officers in control of individual areas within the Unit.

3.5 Supervisors including Chief Investigators, Academic and Technical Staff and Supervisory General Staff

Everyone with a supervisory role has a responsibility to ensure safe working conditions are maintained. Supervisors have special responsibilities to model appropriate behaviours in relation to OH&S, and develop responsible attitudes to OH&S matters in their staff and students.

Each supervisor must provide information, training and appropriate supervision to all people in their area of responsibility. In particular, supervisors should ensure that employees and students have completed documented training in:

- a) All potentially hazardous conditions associated with any operation and the method established to control them;
- b) All safety legislation and standards applying to the area of operation;
- c) University OH&S policies, procedures and programs that relate to the task;
- d) Risk controls in place for specific hazards, such as personal protective equipment and administrative controls with regard to documented safe working practices.

Supervisors must ensure that any incidents, accidents, "near misses" or specific safety hazards are identified, assessed, controlled, and reported, in accordance with the University's Health & Safety procedures. Supervisors must also ensure that immediately following an incident, steps are taken to render the situation/environment safe, and an incident follow up and corrective action is taken.

Supervisors of students undertaking tasks such as coursework, fieldwork, site visits, industry placements or industrial experience have an additional responsibility:

- a) To carry out a full risk assessment;
- b) For hazard identification, minimisation and management;

- c) To develop a safe operating procedure with contingencies;
- d) To obtain necessary approvals;
- e) To lodge the risk assessment with the nominated school officer; and
- f) To determine any external OH&S policy associated with the worksite, and ensure compliance with it.

3.6 All Staff and Students, including Research Higher Degree Students, Undergraduate and Post-Graduate Students

At all times, students and staff must comply with all authorised safety requirements and reasonable directions, whether verbal or written.

Academic staff are responsible, during lectures, tutorials etc., for the safety of students, including informing them of any potential hazards in the area, and ensuring emergency response procedures are communicated to them.

Staff and students have a responsibility to comply with all relevant University OH&S management system policies, procedures and programs. This includes the University Injury Management Program, which applies only to staff.

Staff and students have an obligation to take all reasonable care to prevent incident or injury to themselves or to others in the workplace. They are expected to learn and to follow approved standards and procedures that apply to their activities, and check with their supervisors when they have any doubts concerning potential hazards.

All staff and students have an obligation to report any incidents, “near misses”, safety hazards and dangerous occurrences in accordance with the University’s Health & Safety Program, so that investigation and corrective action can be undertaken. Additionally, staff have a responsibility to take action to avoid, eliminate or minimise identified risks.

Staff and students must use, and not misuse, systems, protective clothing, equipment or materials provided for OH&S purposes. Machinery, plant or equipment must only be used:

- With appropriate guards or safety devices;
- With competency to use the machine;
- When following relevant procedures.

Staff and students must participate in emergency evacuation exercises. Staff should receive instruction on the location, and appropriate use, of emergency equipment.

Any staff member who fails to meet his/her obligations concerning health and safety may, depending on the circumstances, face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Any student who fails to meet their OH&S responsibilities under the Occupational Health and Safety Act NSW 2000, may, depending on the circumstances, face disciplinary action under the provisions of the Student Discipline Rules, up to and including expulsion.

3.7 Contractors

All contractors and subcontractors are required to follow University policies and procedures, including the University’s Contractor Safety program. Contractors must comply with all relevant OH&S legislation, standards, and codes of practice. Contractors must not, through their acts or omissions, do anything that could put at risk their own health or safety or that of University staff, students or visitors.

The University area engaging the contractor will provide contractors with information regarding potential hazards in the environment in which they will be working, to enable them to determine appropriate safe systems of work.

The contractor must attend the University’s Contractor Induction Program as specified by the area engaging them.

Visitors and contractors to campus should report to a University staff member, or their University contact person, if they witness any incidents, “near misses”, safety hazards and dangerous occurrences.

4. Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Committee

The OH&S Committee is the committee responsible, as set out in legislation and its constitution, for monitoring the overall safety performance of the University, for advising on health and safety policy, and for overseeing the activities of any subcommittees or working parties reporting to it.

The OH&S Committee may recommend the establishment of either permanent or temporary working parties as appropriate, or as required by legislation. Such working parties may include, but are not limited to, working parties dealing with such speciality subjects as Radiation Safety, Emergency Procedures, and Laboratory Safety. It may also link to other relevant Committees, such as the BioSafety Committee, and assist in the monitoring of OH&S issues.

The OH&S Committee is responsible for overseeing the operation of all Faculty Safety Committees and Representatives, and are also involved in a consultative fashion regarding the University OH&S management system. This may include policy, procedure and program review and implementation.

5. Health and Safety Team

The Health and Safety team, located within the Human Resource Services Division, is a resource for the University community, to facilitate all persons to meet their OH&S obligations. This team is headed by the Health and Safety Manager.

The Health and Safety team is responsible for:

- Developing and communicating occupational health and safety policies, procedures and programs to the University community, and for ensuring that such policies are disseminated, implemented, evaluated and improved;
- Communication to, and the education of, the University community regarding its obligations in occupational health and safety;
- Ensuring Faculty Safety Committees/Representatives undertake regular, systematic safety inspections of the Campus for compliance with legislated and University standards;
- Supporting the safety responsibilities of all Faculties/Divisions, by assisting in identifying and resolving health and safety problems;
- Evaluating and reporting on the status of compliance with standards, provision of technical OH&S advice where appropriate, and recommendation of required remedial actions;
- Recording, analysing and reporting University incident and hazard experience;
- Developing and providing a range of generic training programs in order to meet the requirements of legislation with respect to health and safety education;
- Ensuring that information relating to training programs is widely available to the University community.
- Meeting any other operating responsibilities that may be assigned to the Unit.

In emergency situations, and when required to do so by code, regulation or judgement, the Health and Safety Manager or their representative, may require the immediate halt, or control of practices or conditions, that have been determined to constitute an immediate and serious risk of death or serious harm, to members of the Campus community. With consideration to human safety as a priority, this should ideally be after consultation with the appropriate PVC or Director. Such actions may be appealed to the Vice-Chancellor or delegate who will make the final determination as to whether the practices may be reinstated.

The Health and Safety team is the focal point for the coordinated administration of occupational health and safety programs, and is the University's representative in contacts dealing with the health and safety of students, staff and Faculty with such bodies as the WorkCover Authority, the Environmental Protection Agency and other external agencies.

[Note: This is not to imply that other Units/Schools that require routine contact with such outside agencies are required to deal through the Health and Safety team on matters that are handled routinely by the individual Units/Schools. Those Units/Schools are encouraged to maintain a dialogue with the Health and Safety team on matters of mutual interest.]

6. Facilities Management

Facilities Management is responsible for maintaining the buildings and grounds of the University. This includes ensuring that these buildings and grounds (as opposed to the activities carried out in them) are safe for use and that they comply with all relevant building and environmental regulations and codes.