



UNIVERSITY  
OF WOLLONGONG  
AUSTRALIA

**UOW SAFE@WORK**

# WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CONSTITUTION

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# 1 Role of the Committee

The Work Health and Safety (WHS) Committee is the principal WHS consultation mechanism as outlined in the [WHS Consultation Statement](#).

The purpose of the Committee is to:

- provide a forum that will allow consultation and discussion between management and employees at the University to aid in achieving a safe workplace
- advise the University on effective ways to ensure the health and safety of staff, students, visitors and contractors
- encourage all staff, students and contractors to work together to establish a safe and healthy working environment, and
- enable all persons to refer matters for advice and assistance.

The Committee shall concern itself with all WHS matters including:

- the review of information related to WHS performance including accidents, hazards and injury and illness data so as to assist the University in reviewing, producing, updating and monitoring WHS policies and programs
- obtaining from the University, prior to implementation, all details of proposed changes to the place of work which could affect the WHS of persons at the University
- the review of risk management activities occurring within the University including scheduled workplace inspections
- recommendations for training and education for particular groups in order to address WHS issues
- initiatives to further promote and raise awareness of WHS requirements including mental health and other wellbeing initiatives.

## 2 Membership

The Committee shall consist of employee nominated members and employer nominated members. Employee nominated members shall make up the majority of the Committee membership.

The structure of the membership is intended to provide broad employee input and practical employer input to ensure that the Committee is provided with the necessary level of decision making, knowledge and expertise regarding company policy, production needs and technical matters concerning premises, processes, plant, machinery and equipment, and systems of work.

The term of membership for any member shall be two years with members allowed to serve multiple consecutive terms.

### 2.1 Employee Nominated Members

Employee nominated members on the Committee shall be current members of the respective Safe@Work Committee or Union or be a current Safe@Work Representative with a strong interest in promoting and maintaining health and safety across the University.

More information is available in section 3 Appointment of Employee Nominated Members.

## 2.1.1 Group Representatives

One employee from each group of Safe@Work Committees (SWC) or Safe@Work Representatives (SWR) listed below shall have a position on the Committee. The groups are:

- Group 1: Accommodation Services and Facilities Management
- Group 2: Library; Information Management and Technology Services; DVC Education and Senior DVC
- Group 3: Faculty of the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities; Faculty of Business and Law
- Group 4: Faculty of Science, Medicine and Health; Illawarra Health and Medical Research Institute
- Group 5: Faculty of Engineering and Information Sciences; AIIM
- Group 6: Safe@Work Representatives not represented by a Safe@Work Committee as listed in the [Terms of Reference for Safe@Work Representatives](#)

Employees, students or other workers that are not represented from the groups listed above can report WHS issues directly to the WHS Committee Chair or Manager WHS, who will escalate to WHS Committee as required.

### Alternate Group Representatives

Alternate members attending on behalf of a Group Representative will be a current member of the respective Safe@Work Committee or a current Safe@Work Representative. More information is available in section 5.3.2 Attendance.

## 2.1.2 Union Nominated Members

One representative from each of the following unions shall be nominated to the Committee:

- Community Public Sector Union
- National Tertiary Education Union

### Alternate Union Nominated Members

Alternate members attending on behalf of a Union Nominated Member will be a current member of the respective Union. More information is available in section 5.3.3 Attendance.

## 2.2 Employer Nominated Members (Management Representatives)

Employer nominated members on the Committee shall be persons involved at senior management levels of the University who are able to make decisions about health and safety. Both academic staff and professional services staff will be included to provide diversity and balance to the Committee.

Employer nominated members of the Committee include:

- Vice Chancellor or nominee appointed from the Senior Executive
- Six employer members appointed by the Vice-Chancellor, including an Executive Dean on a rotational basis.

In matters where an action proposed by the Committee is beyond the authority of the senior University representative in attendance to implement, then the Committee shall forward its recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor or appropriate Senior Manager.

### Alternate Employer Nominated Members

Alternate members attending on behalf of an Employer Nominated Member will be at an equivalent senior management level and have similar delegations. More information is available in section 5.3.2 Attendance.

## 2.3 Ex-Officio Members

Ex-Officio members of the Committee include:

- Manager WHS or nominee
- Health and Safety Advisor(s), one of whom shall act as Committee Secretary.

Ex-Officio members DO NOT have voting rights.

## 2.4 Other Attendees

Other attendees of the Committee include:

- A WHS Unit Representative, who shall act as Committee Minutes Secretary

The following entities have a standing invitation for one representative to attend Committee meetings:

- UOW Global Enterprises
- UOW Pulse
- Wollongong Undergraduate Student's Association
- Wollongong Postgraduate Association.

The Committee may extend an invitation to a meeting to other Representatives as appropriate.

Other attendees DO NOT have voting rights.

# 3 Appointment of Employee Nominated Members

Each group listed in section 2.1.1 is required to nominate one employee from the Safe@Work Committees or Safe@Work Representatives which form that group as a representative to the Committee.

Where there is a requirement for an employee nominated member, expressions of interest shall be communicated to all members of the Group by the WHS Unit outlining the process for nomination. Should two or more SWC members be nominated to represent a group on the WHS Committee and rotational representation is not agreed between the members, an election shall be conducted by preferential ballot administered by the WHS Unit.

# 4 Quorum

A quorum for a meeting shall be eight voting members, provided there is a majority of employee nominated members (eg 5 employee nominated members plus 3 management representatives). The Chairperson may request an appropriate number of employer nominated members to be observers to allow a meeting to be quorate.

Where a meeting is not quorate, at the discretion of the Chairperson's decision, any recommendations from the Committee can be ratified at the next quorate meeting. If the decision is time-sensitive, electronic voting may be utilised for a decision to be ratified between meetings.

## 5 General

### 5.1 Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson

The Chairperson will be elected by and from the employee nominated members on the Committee for a term of two years. At the completion of this term, the Chairperson may nominate again. If no employee members nominate for the position of Chairperson, then a nominated employer member may fill the position with the consent of a simple majority of employee members. If a new chairperson needs to be appointed before the end of the elected Chairperson's term, then the Manager WHS is entitled to ask a current Committee member to act as the Chairperson until an election can be held.

A Deputy Chairperson may be elected. Alternatively, the Chairperson may appoint an acting Chairperson when absent.

### 5.2 Changes to the WHS Committee Constitution

Any changes to the constitution require consultation with, and endorsement by, the majority of the members of the WHS Committee.

### 5.3 WHS Committee Operation

The Committee shall, as far as possible, act as a consultative Committee. The procedures, consideration and triggers for Committee consultation is outlined in Appendix 2: WHS Committee Consultation of the [Work Health and Safety Consultation Statement](#).

#### 5.3.1 Voting

All voting members shall have equal voting rights on matters considered by the Committee. The Chairperson shall not have a casting vote. As far as possible, the Committee should work by consensus.

#### 5.3.2 Attendance

A member should appoint an alternate to attend in their absence. Alternate members have full voting rights if the nominated member they are substituting for is not present at the meeting.

Alternate members shall not attend Committee meetings if their representative is available except in special circumstances (i.e. for continuity purposes) where the Chairperson may approve the attendance of both the representative and substitute in advance.

If a member fails to attend three consecutive meetings, the Committee may call for a replacement.

In certain circumstances non-members may be permitted to attend with prior agreement of the Chairperson, i.e. if there is a requirement for specialist expertise.

#### 5.3.3 Meeting Frequency

The Committee shall normally meet every two months. Additional meetings may be called by the Chairperson as required. Members shall normally receive at least one week's notification of any meeting. Minutes shall be distributed after the meeting and made available electronically on the WHS intranet site.

### 5.3.4 Resources

All members shall be allowed reasonable time during working hours to discuss WHS issues with persons whom they represent and also for the purpose of carrying out other tasks or functions associated with their role on the Committee.

Committee members shall have access to adequate and appropriate resources to enable and support their consultation duties.

### 5.3.5 Training

Committee members are required to complete the following WHS training courses:

- [Addressing Hazards and Risks in the Workplace](#)
- [WHS Principles for Safe@Work Committee Members.](#)

## 5.4 Issue Resolution Procedure

WHS issues which arise should be resolved by following the process outlined in Appendix 1 of the [WHS Consultation Statement](#).

Types of issues which could arise include reported WHS hazards or ineffective risk control measures. The resolution to any WHS issue will be documented in WHS Committee meeting minutes.

## 6 Delegation

The Committee may delegate some of its activities to other committees (such as local workgroup or section committees), groups (such as the WHS Unit) or persons (such as the Radiation Safety Advisor) provided that appropriate reporting mechanisms exist such that the WHS Committee is fully aware of the progress of the delegated activities.

Where an activity is delegated the Committee will monitor completion of the activity via business arising during subsequent meetings.

## 7 Related Documents

- [WHS Consultation Statement](#)
- [Terms of Reference Safe@Work Committees](#)
- [Terms of Reference Safe@Work Representatives](#)
- [Terms of Reference School/Unit Committees](#)
- [NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#)
- [NSW Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017](#)

## 8 Version Control Table

Version Control	Date Released	Approved By	Amendment
1	November 1996	Manager WHS	New document created
2	November 2003	Manager WHS	Document updated to reflect current requirements
3	November 2005	Manager WHS	Document updated to reflect current requirements
4	August 2008	Manager WHS	Document updated to reflect current requirements
5	March 2009	Manager WHS	Align with the National Audit Tool
6	December 2009	Manager WHS	Addition of link to Resolving an WHS Hazard Or Issue Guideline.
7	July 2010	Manager WHS	Document updated to incorporate the Personnel name change to Human Resources Division. Groups updated to include IHMRI and Shoalhaven campus and remove Law & Education as now covered by WHS Representatives.
8	January 2011	Manager WHS	Document updated to reflect changes to UOW WHS consultation structure.
9	March 2012	Manager WHS	Rebrand
10	March 2013	Manager WHS	Inclusion of new faculty structure and other minor amendments.
11	June 2014	Manager WHS	Minor amendments
12	August 2017	Manager WHS	Update to section 2.1, addition of Safe@Work Representatives, other minor amendments.
13	August 2019	Manager WHS	Minor amendments to clarify employee nomination process.
14	December 2019	Manager WHS	Clarified role of Committee members. Improved flow of document. Minor terminology and formatting changes.
15	September 2020	Manager WHS	Updated 5.3 to reflect the addition of Appendix 2 to the <a href="#">Consultation Statement</a> .