



UNIVERSITY  
OF WOLLONGONG  
AUSTRALIA

**UOW SAFE@WORK**

# TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SCHOOL OR UNIT SAFETY COMMMITTEES

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# 1 Purpose

The NSW Work Health and Safety Act (2011) and Regulation (2017) require the University to:

- ensure that the health and safety of workers and others is not put at risk
- consult with other duty holders if they have a duty to the same matter under the Act
- consult with workers who carry out work for the University or whose health and safety are likely to
- be directly affected by work carried out by the University
- undertake consultation in accordance with Part 5 of the Act.

This document outlines the terms of reference for School/Unit Safety Committees (abbreviated to Safety Committee) for WHS including their membership, role and administration.

# 2 Roles and Responsibilities

Safety Committees complement Safe@Work Committee's (SWCs) and the Central WHS Committee's role, through the implementation of local workplace WHS initiatives. Safety Committees have an essential role in assisting the local area in controlling health and safety risks.

Examples of activities that Safety Committees may undertake at the workplace level include:

- assistance in the identification and control of physical and psychological hazards in local work areas
- encouragement of safe work practices and the promotion of co-operation in regards to WHS issues
- advise corrective actions and endeavour to resolve WHS issues
- assistance in the development of safe working procedures, operating procedures and maintenance schedules
- assistance in the development of site specific manuals for each area and specific induction programs
- promotion of staff mental health and wellbeing initiatives
- coordination of the workplace inspection program, including follow-up and reporting
- identification of staff and student training needs
- development and review of local WHS policies, practices and consultative procedures
- assessment of building wardens and first aider needs with recruitment where necessary.

# 3 Structure

It is recommended that Safety Committee has involvement from all areas of the representative area, both staff and students where applicable. Each area of teaching and research should be represented on the committee. Members will include as appropriate:

- Head of School, Unit Manager or their nominee
- academic staff
- professional services staff
- student representatives.

Membership and the Chair of the committee are to be reviewed at the first meeting of each year. The Chair should be the Head of School/Manager of Unit or their nominee. New membership should be encouraged each year. If requested, a WHS Unit representative can attend as a non-voting member.

## 4 Meetings

Meetings should be conducted at least every 3 months. The frequency of meetings should be determined in accordance with workplace needs. It is recommended that a representative of the Safety Committee attend the Faculty/Division SWC to ensure communication between the SWC and Safety Committee on agenda items.

Meetings are to include membership attendance of at least 50% attendance to be quorate.

### 4.1 Agendas and Minutes

Agenda items are to be sent to the Safety Committee Chair.

Recommended agenda items for Safety Committees Meetings include:

- business arising from previous meeting - to ensure unfinished business remains on the agenda for implementation
- recent hazards and incident reports
- workplace inspections/audits findings
- WHS Training needs or upcoming courses of interest
- first aid requirements e.g. nominated first aiders in work area, first aid equipment needs
- emergency management requirements e.g. building warden coverage, last emergency evacuation and feedback, local emergency procedures
- feedback from the university WHS Committee and Faculty/Division Safe@Work Committee
- legislative or policy/program changes that are applicable to the work area
- any changes that may affect the health and safety of workers in the area.
- mental health hazards that have been identified in specific work areas
- Minutes of meetings are to be recorded and circulated to the members of the Safety Committee as well as being issued to staff either electronically or on noticeboards.

## 5 Training

The following courses are available for School or Unit Safety Committees members:

- WHS Principles
- Addressing Hazards and Risks in the Workplace
- Other training as required, for example Safe Work Procedures, Hazard and Incident Reporting.

## 6 Issue Resolution

WHS issues should be attempted to be resolved at the Safety Committee level. If the issue cannot be resolved it should be forwarded to the SWC for assistance in issue resolution. Urgent issues should be brought to the attention of the Head of School/Unit and/or the Dean/Director as soon as possible for resolution.

## 7 Related Documents

- [WHS Consultation Statement](#)
- [WHS Committee Constitution](#)
- [Terms of Reference for Safe@Work Committees](#)

## 8 Version Control Table

<b>Version Control</b>	<b>Date Released</b>	<b>Approved By</b>	<b>Amendment</b>
1	August 2005	WHS Manager	Document created.
2	June 2008	WHS Manager	Updated to reflect current requirements.
3	August 2010	WHS Manager	Document updated to incorporate the Personnel name change to Human resources Division.
4	June 2011	WHS Manager	Scheduled review. Minor formatting changes.
5	March 2012	WHS Manager	Rebrand
6	May 2013	WHS Manager	Legislative update
7	June 2014	WHS Manager	<p>Removed need for Chair to be elected and added that the Chair should be the Head of School of their nominee.</p> <p>Added WHS Advisor attendance as optional and in a non-voting capacity.</p> <p>Removed timeframes for minute circulation.</p> <p>Added flexibility to where minutes should be posted.</p>
8	August 2017	Manager WHS	Document updated to reflect changes to UOW WHS consultation structure.
9	February 2020	Manager WHS	Document updated to include reference of mental health in roles and responsibilities and meetings sections