

# ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES FOR WORKPLACE HEALTH & SAFETY - BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The University of Wollongong is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its employees, and the health and safety of students, visitors and contractors. As such, University Executive and management have WHS responsibilities, authority and accountabilities as outlined in position descriptions, guidelines and procedures and as summarised in this document.

By recognising, reporting and addressing potential hazards in the University environment, the campus community can assist the University of Wollongong in taking every reasonable practicable step to provide a safe environment. In support of this, the University will give appropriate priority and support to eliminate or mitigate hazards that pose a threat to the health and safety of all in the workplace.

The University strives to foster the development of safety consciousness in all members of its community in order to minimise the risk of injury to persons or of damage to property or facilities. In addition, the University has a moral and a legal responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment in which to study and to work.

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

The University will ensure that the requirements outlined by the Occupational Health and Safety Act (2000) and associated legislation are complied with at all University facilities. Legislated and other accredited standards in health and safety are accepted by the University as minimum standards. 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 will develop, implement, evaluate and improve occupational health and safety policies, procedures and programs according to legislative requirements and University policies and programs.

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

## 2. WHS RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibility for Occupational Health and Safety is legislated in the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 and contains the requirements for employers and employees in the workplace. The matrix on page 3 of this document outlines the WHS responsibilities, authorities, and accountabilities for each role in the University.

### 2.1 Employers

Under the General Duties section of the Act, employers (i.e. the University) have the responsibility of ensuring the health, safety and welfare of their employees when at work by:

- maintaining places of work under their control in a safe condition, and ensuring safe entrances and exits;
- making arrangements for ensuring the safe use, handling, storage and transport of plant and substances;
- providing and maintaining systems of work, and working environments, that are safe and without risks to health;
- providing the information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to ensure the health and safety of employees;
- providing adequate facilities for the welfare of employees.

In addition, employers must ensure the health and safety of people visiting or working at their places of work, who are not their employees, by not exposing them to risk. In the University environment this includes students, contractors and visitors to the campus.

### 2.2 Employees

Employees must take reasonable care of the health and safety of themselves and others and must co-operate with employers in their efforts to comply with occupational health and safety requirements.

All persons must not:

- interfere with or misuse things provided for the health, safety or welfare of persons at work;

- obstruct attempts to give aid or attempts to prevent a serious risk to the health and safety of a person at work;
- refuse a reasonable request to assist in giving aid or preventing a risk to health and safety;
- disrupt a workplace by creating health or safety fears.

## 2.3 Specific WHS Responsibilities

As the responsibilities for WHS are defined at the macro level, specific responsibilities for roles within the University have been documented in Appendix 1: WHS Responsibilities, Accountabilities and Authority Matrix. Further detail on WHS responsibilities shall be outlined in position descriptions where appropriate.

## 3. WHS AUTHORITY

Commensurate with responsibility, the level of WHS authority details the level of control a role with the University has to influence WHS outcomes. Every role within the University has the authority to report hazards in the workplace and exercise their responsibilities under the WHS Act. However, the authority to make decisions in the workplace to eliminate or reduce the risk of occupational hazards varies in the University, according to the organisational structure.

Financial authority, which is closely linked to the level of WHS authority a role can be perform, is detailed in the University's [Delegations of Authority Policy](#).

## 4. WHS ACCOUNTABILITY

WHS Accountability refers to the method(s) by which fulfillment of WHS responsibility can be assessed. WHS accountability mechanisms which are utilised at the University to verify the implementation of WHS responsibilities at the University include:

[hazard and incident reporting process](#),  
[review of WHS performance indicators](#),  
[internal WHS verification audits](#),  
[review of business plans](#),  
[performance enhancement and career development record](#),  
[performance planner process](#),  
[UOW performance management procedures](#).

## 5. REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

Reporting relationships for WHS matters will be in accordance with the University [organisational structure](#).

## 6. REVIEW AND EVALUATION

In order to ensure that these guidelines continue to be effective and applicable to the University, this document will be reviewed biennially in consultation with the WHS committee. However, more frequent reviews may be required according to legislative requirements, organisational change or WHS performance.

## 7. APPENDIX 1: WHS RESPONSIBILITIES, AUTHORITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS

Position	WHS Responsibilities	WHS Authority	Accountability Mechanisms
<b>Deans, Administrative Directors and University Librarian</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure WHS requirements are implemented and monitored for faculty/division to enable legislative compliance;</li> <li>• Ensure communication/consultative mechanisms are established;</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate WHS training is provided;</li> <li>• Monitor WHS performance of faculty/division and direct reports;</li> <li>• Dedicate appropriate resources to enable WHS functions in the faculty/division;</li> <li>• Other as outlined in <a href="#">WHS system documentation</a>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The authority to make decisions and act on any matter of WHS management within their area of responsibility as described in the <a href="#">Delegations of Authority Policy</a> and applicable WHS Guidelines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WHS performance indicators;</li> <li>• Faculty/Division strategic plans;</li> <li>• Hazard and Incident Reporting;</li> <li>• WHS verification audits;</li> <li>• Performance reviews.</li> </ul>
<b>Head of School or Department/ Research Centre Directors/Unit Managers.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure activities of the school/research centre comply with</li> <li>• workplace health &amp; safety legislation and UOW WHS management system;</li> <li>• Ensure WHS risk management activities are implemented within area of responsibility including any site specific measures required to eliminate or reduce risk in their area are identified, developed and implemented;</li> <li>• The provision of safe plant and processes for staff, students and visitors;</li> <li>• Staff and students are provided with the necessary instruction, information, training and supervision to enable work to be carried out safely;</li> <li>• Ensure the implementation of corrective actions as a result of hazard/incident reports or incident analysis;</li> <li>• Monitor WHS performance of unit and direct reports;</li> <li>• Fulfil responsibilities of the UOW injury management program for injured employees;</li> <li>• Other as outlined in <a href="#">WHS system documentation</a>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The authority to make decisions and act on any matter of WHS management within their area of responsibility as described in the University's <a href="#">Delegations of Authority Policy</a> and applicable WHS Guidelines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WHS performance indicators;</li> <li>• Unit plans;</li> <li>• WHS verification audits;</li> <li>• Hazard and incident reporting;</li> <li>• Performance reviews;</li> <li>• UOW performance management procedures.</li> </ul>

Position	WHS Responsibilities	WHS Authority	Accountability Mechanisms
<b>Academic &amp; general staff with responsibility for the management or supervision of staff, students or facilities.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that work/study/research areas under their control are</li> <li>• without risk to health and safety of occupants;</li> <li>• Ensure employees, staff and others are trained in and adhere to safe work procedures, legislative requirements and University guidelines;</li> <li>• Staff and students are provided with the necessary instruction, information, training and supervision to enable work to be carried out safely;</li> <li>• The identification of hazards, assessment and risk control in the workplace;</li> <li>• Reporting health and safety risks or difficulties to senior managers, relevant specialist areas, or the WHS Unit;</li> <li>• Assist individual employees to improve WHS performance;</li> <li>• Ensure all hazards and incidents are reported and corrective actions implemented via the University reporting processes;</li> <li>• As outlined in <a href="#">WHS system documentation</a>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The authority to make decisions and act on any matter of WHS management within their area of responsibility as described in the University's <a href="#">Delegations of Authority Policy</a> and applicable WHS Guidelines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance planner reviews;</li> <li>• Hazard and incident reporting;</li> <li>• WHS inspections;</li> <li>• WHS verification audits.</li> <li>• UOW performance management procedures.</li> </ul>
<b>All Staff and Students</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are required to take reasonable care of themselves and others in the workplace;</li> <li>• Have a responsibility to co-operate with management and staff with nominated or elected OH&amp;S functions;</li> <li>• Have a responsibility to comply with relevant University OH&amp;S management system policies, procedures and programs, as appropriate;</li> <li>• Must not bypass or misuse systems or equipment provided for OH&amp;S purposes;</li> <li>• Must report any unsafe conditions which come to their attention and address where possible;</li> <li>• As outlined in <a href="#">WHS system documentation</a>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The authority to make decisions and act on any matter of WHS management within their area of responsibility as described in the University's <a href="#">Delegations of Authority Policy</a> and applicable WHS Guidelines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance planner reviews;</li> <li>• Hazard and incident reporting guidelines;</li> <li>• Local area supervision;</li> <li>• UOW Performance management procedures.</li> </ul>

Position	WHS Responsibilities	WHS Authority	Accountability Mechanisms
<b>WHS Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist and support University management in consultation on strategic WHS issues affecting the University as a whole and implementation of WHS improvements and including :               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- monitoring the overall safety performance of the University;</li> <li>- providing recommendations to improve WHS policy;</li> <li>- overseeing activities of any subcommittee (including WACs) or working parties reporting to it;</li> <li>- improve communication and awareness of WHS across the University;</li> <li>- investigate WHS issues or incidents for the University;</li> <li>- recommend initiatives to improve the standard of WHS for the University.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise WHS issues to University management or WorkCover NSW;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees represented;</li> <li>• Periodic consultation arrangement review.</li> </ul>
<b>Workplace Advisory Committees</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist and support area management in consultation and implementation of WHS improvements including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- monitoring the overall safety performance of the area represented;</li> <li>- providing advice on the implementation of WHS policy and procedures;</li> <li>- overseeing activities of any subcommittee or working parties reporting to it;</li> <li>- improve communication and awareness of WHS across the area of representation;</li> <li>- assist with the investigation of WHS issues or incidents;</li> <li>- recommend initiatives to improve the standard of WHS for the area.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise WHS issues to the WHS Committee,</li> <li>• University management or WorkCover NSW.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biannual WAC Committee Survey;</li> <li>• WHS Committee attendance;</li> <li>• Periodic consultation arrangement review.</li> </ul>
<b>School Safety Committees</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist and support area management in the implementation of WHS improvements and awareness including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- monitoring the overall safety performance of the area represented;</li> <li>- raising WHS issues to area management and the WAC;</li> <li>- improve communication and awareness of WHS</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate WHS issues or incidents for the area of representation;</li> <li>• Recommend initiatives to improve the standard of WHS for the area of representation;</li> <li>• Raise WHS issues to the WAC, WHS Committee, University management or WorkCover NSW.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nil</li> </ul>

	for the area of representation.		
<b>Position</b>	<b>WHS Responsibilities</b>	<b>WHS Authority</b>	<b>Accountability Mechanisms</b>
<b>Nominated First Aid Officers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring their first aid qualifications and training are current;</li> <li>Checking and ensuring first aid kits and equipment are appropriately stocked after use;</li> <li>Ensuring administered first aid treatment is recorded via University procedures;</li> <li>Assisting in emergency coordination;</li> <li>Assisting in and promoting the University procedures in relation to reporting and recording incidents;</li> <li>Notifying personnel of changes in their position or contact details.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These positions have the authority to give first aid treatment within their skills and competency and arrange for further treatment if required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hazard and incident reporting.</li> </ul>
<b>Building Wardens</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-ordination of the emergency evacuation of staff, students and visitors from buildings. They are the contact person until the University Emergency Coordinator or the emergency services arrive with regard to fire evacuations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These positions have the authority to conduct sweeps of buildings to notify staff, students and visitors to exit the building in case of an emergency.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emergency management processes.</li> </ul>
<b>Contractors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow University policies and procedures including the University's Contractor Safety program;</li> <li>Contractors must comply with all relevant WHS legislation, standards and codes of practice;</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These positions have the authority to make decisions and act on WHS matters within the contractors area of responsibility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly WHS Contractor performance report;</li> <li>Hazard and incident reporting guidelines;</li> <li>Contractor/University project meetings;</li> <li>Contractor monitoring processes.</li> </ul>