

## HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Approved by Council: 17 August 2011

Revised by Council: 27 August 2014, 28 November 2018



### Related documents

*Occupational Health and Safety Act (Victoria) 2004*

*Occupational Health and Safety Regulations (Victoria) 2017*

WorkSafe Victoria, *Officewise, a Guide to Health and Safety in the Office*

### 1. Aims and Rationale

- 1.1 The University recognises its obligation to take all reasonable precautions to provide and maintain, so far as is practicable, an environment that is safe and without risks to health for all members of and visitors to the University, including staff, students, visitors and contractors.
- 1.2 This Policy ensures that the University and its Colleges meet their responsibilities to provide a healthy and safe environment.
- 1.3 This Policy's objectives are:
  - a) To establish and maintain a systemic approach to the management of risks to health and safety.
  - b) To provide adequate resources to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the system.
  - c) To comply with applicable health and safety legislative obligations.
  - d) To promote a culture of health and safety through education, instruction, information and supervision.
  - e) To define and communicate to staff, students and visitors their responsibilities in relation to health and safety.
  - f) To identify and manage health and safety risk via a documented hazard identification, risk assessment, risk control and monitoring process.
  - g) To improve processes to ensure that incidents and hazards are promptly reported, investigated where appropriate, and control measures are put in place to eliminate or minimise the chance of a repeat event.
  - h) To maintain building infrastructure, plant and equipment in a safe condition with documented safe systems of work.
  - i) To monitor and review OHS performance routinely to achieve continual improvement.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, students, visitors and contractors at the OVC or the Colleges of the University.

### **3. Personal Responsibilities**

3.1 All staff, students, visitors and contractors at the OVC or the Colleges of the University are responsible for being alert to risks to themselves and to others, and have a duty of care to ensure that they perform in a manner that is not harmful to their own or others' health and safety.

#### 3.2 Senior managers

Staff in senior management roles must ensure that activities within their areas of control are undertaken with proper diligence to health and safety giving full attention to:

- a) Provision of site-specific inductions for all staff and students
- b) Consultation with staff and students
- c) Communication of safety procedures
- d) Identification of hazards and risk management within their areas of responsibility
- e) Investigation of accidents and remedial action
- f) Staff with special safety duties such as health and safety representatives.

#### 3.3 Supervisors

Supervisors who allocate tasks to staff or students are responsible to their managers for ensuring that work is carried out safely. They should ensure that:

- a) Staff and students are briefed in relevant safety procedures
- b) Staff and students comply with these procedures
- c) Unsafe conditions are remedied or reported
- d) All injuries and accidents are reported.

#### 3.4 Employees

Each employee of the University is responsible for ensuring work environments are safe and healthy including compliance with this Policy and with site-specific policies and procedures. In addition, employees must:

- a) Take all reasonable care for the health and safety of self and of others who may be affected by workplace conduct
- b) Not wilfully or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety or welfare
- c) Co-operate with the University in relation to actions taken by the University to comply with health and safety legislation
- d) Comply with health and safety instructions
- e) Attend induction and training events

- f) Take action to avoid, eliminate or minimise hazards
- g) Make proper use of personal protective equipment
- h) Not wilfully place at risk the health and safety of self and others
- i) Seek information and advice where necessary
- j) Be familiar with reporting, emergency and evacuation procedures.

### 3.5 Students

All students are responsible for adopting safe work and study practices including compliance with this Policy and with site-specific policies and procedures. In addition, students:

- a) Must not wilfully place at risk the health or safety of any person at the University or its Colleges
- b) Must not wilfully or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety or welfare and must cooperate with the University and its Colleges in relation to actions taken to comply with applicable legislation
- c) Comply with health and safety instructions
- d) Attend inductions and training as initiated by a College
- e) Take action to avoid, eliminate or minimise hazards
- f) Make proper use of personal protective equipment
- g) Not wilfully place at risk the health and safety of self and others
- h) Seek information and advice where necessary
- i) Be familiar with reporting, emergency and evacuation procedures.

### 3.6 Visitors

Visitors are required to comply with all instructions given by authorised University or College staff for the protection of their health and safety while on University or College premises.

## 4. College Responsibilities

- 4.1 Each College of the University is responsible for providing a safe and healthy environment for staff, students and visitors to their premises.
- 4.2 Each College of the University must maintain and implement a site-specific policy that complies with applicable legislation.
- 4.3 Through the annual College Information Collection, College Principals report to the Vice-Chancellor on the management of health and safety.

4.4 Through the College Annual Review process the Vice-Chancellor reports on the management of health and safety at the Colleges to the Risk Management and Audit Committee as required by the College Review Policy.

## **5. Vice-Chancellor Responsibilities**

5.1 The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for reporting to the University Council at least annually on the implementation of this Policy.

5.2 The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for ensuring responsible officers at the OVC have appropriate training in the management of health and safety.

5.3 As the Employer of OVC staff, the Vice-Chancellor is required:

- a) To consult the OVC Health and Safety Representative(s) (HSR) on a wide range of issues including
  - Identifying and assessing hazards and risks
  - Making decisions about measures to be taken to control risks
  - Making decisions about facilities
  - Making decisions about procedures to resolve OHS issues and on how consultation will occur
  - Making decisions about monitoring employee health
  - Making decisions about providing information and training
  - Determining the membership of the OHS Committee
  - Proposing changes to the workplace, the plant, substances or other things, or the conduct of the work
- b) To provide an HSR with access to all information relating to actual or potential hazards and the health and safety of Designated Working Group members. This includes results of workplace monitoring, reports, statistics and so on.
- c) To allow an HSR to be present at interviews with Designated Working Group members, and the employer and/or an inspector
- d) To permit an HSR to attend an approved initial (and subsequent refresher) course of their choice
- e) To allow an HSR to take time off with pay to exercise his/her powers or to attend approved training
- f) To provide an HSR with facilities and assistance

## **6. Office of the Vice-Chancellor Health and Safety Committee (OVC HSC)**

6.1 Membership

- a) A person appointed by the Vice-Chancellor as the OVC Health and Safety Manager who is Chair of the Committee

- b) At least two members of OVC staff elected by the OVC staff as Health and Safety Representatives for a term of up to two years. Persons so elected are eligible for appointment.

## 6.2 Meetings

The OVC HSC must meet at least four times each year and must report to the Risk Management and Audit Committee after each meeting. A quorum is two persons. Other persons may be invited by the Committee to attend meetings, but are not members of the Committee.

## 6.3 Responsibilities

The OVC HSC is responsible for:

- a) Maintaining the Hazard and Incident Tracking (HIT) Register.
- b) Removing or controlling any health and safety hazards identified, including maintenance of a list of potential hazards and risk controls including specific precautions required
- c) Ensuring the OVC complies with applicable health and safety legislation, including maintenance of a register of all applicable legislation, standards and codes of practice.
- d) Maintaining an accurate and current list of all hazardous resources, including plant, chemicals, personal protective clothing and equipment.
- e) Developing, proposing and implementing activities which enhance the wellbeing of all OVC employees.

## 7. OVC Roles and Responsibilities

### 7.1 OVC Health and Safety Manager

The OVC Health and Safety Manager is responsible for ensuring a safe and healthy environment for staff, contractors, and visitors at the OVC. This includes:

- a) Maintaining the workplace in a safe condition (such as ensuring fire exits are not blocked, emergency equipment is serviceable, and the worksite is generally tidy).
- b) Providing staff, contractors, and visitors with adequate facilities (such as clean toilets, cool and clean drinking water, and hygienic eating areas).
- c) Ensuring staff, contractors, and visitors have adequate information, instruction, training and supervision to work in a safe and healthy manner.
- d) Monitoring and keeping records relevant to employees' health and safety (such as records of ergonomics, first aid records and relevant medical information).
- e) Employing or engaging people with the necessary qualifications or expertise to advise on health and safety issues affecting staff.
- f) Consulting with staff, contractors, and visitors on matters that may directly affect their health, safety or welfare. Where the staff, contractors, and visitors are

represented by a health and safety representative (HSR), the HSR must also be involved in the consultation.

- g) Dealing with staff, contractors, and visitors and their health and safety representatives in resolving health and safety issues at the workplace.
- h) Providing the staff, contractors, and visitors with information about the workplace health and safety arrangements, including the names of those to whom an inquiry or complaint can be made.
- i) New employees must be informed in writing of the nature of the work and asked if they have any pre-existing injury or illness that may be affected by the work.
- j) Staff and contractors must be informed in writing that failing to notify or hiding a pre-existing injury or illness which might be affected by the nature of the proposed employment could result in that injury or illness being ineligible for future compensation claims.

## **7.2 OVC Health and Safety Representative**

The OVC Health and Safety Representative may exercise any of the rights and powers under Division 5 (s58-66) of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. These include:

- a) To inspect any part of the workplace where members of their DWG work at any time, after giving notice, or immediately in the event of an incident or any situation involving an immediate risk to the health or safety of any person.
- b) To accompany an inspector
- c) To require the establishment of an HSC
- d) Be present at any workplace Health and safety-related interview with a member of their DWG
- e) To seek resolution of any workplace Health and Safety issue
- f) To seek the assistance of any person
- g) To direct that work cease if there is an immediate threat to the health or safety of any person
- h) To issue a "Provisional Improvement Notice" if the situation is not of immediate concern.

## **7.3 OVC Staff, contractors, and visitors**

7.3.1 All staff, contractors, and visitors have a duty of care to ensure that they perform in a manner that is not harmful to their own and others' health and safety, and comply with these procedures. All must be alert for risks to self and others, in areas such as:

- a) Manual handling
- b) Dangerous goods/hazardous substances
- c) Plant

- d) Electrical safety
- e) Working at heights
- f) Ergonomics in the office environment.

7.3.2 All staff must ensure that:

- a) Debris and waste resulting from work is removed regularly
- b) Materials, tools and waste must be located so as to reduce risks to health and safety prior to leaving the office daily
- c) Major pathways and emergency exits are kept clear.

7.3.3 All staff must report any hazard or incident to the Health and Safety Committee, which must update the HIT Register and who may carry out further investigation and reporting.

## **8. Working outside of normal hours**

OVC staff working alone before or after the standard working hours of 9am to 5pm must ensure that all external doors are locked. The Health and Safety Committee must ensure there is sufficient lighting to and at the car park. Maintaining sufficient lighting may necessitate tree trimming or adjustment to the angle of exterior floodlights.

## **9. Fire precautions**

The Health and Safety Committee is responsible for ensuring that:

- a) copies of the emergency evacuation plan are located in central areas and are maintained in good condition
- b) staff, contractors, and visitors are aware of evacuation procedures and that signage for emergency exits is checked at regular intervals for battery replacement
- c) new staff are aware of the operation of fire extinguishers
- d) that all staff receive refresher training annually in the use of fire extinguishers by a licensed professional.

## **10. Alcohol and drugs**

The OVC reserves the right to instruct anyone who is intoxicated due to consumption of drugs or alcohol to leave the premises. When alcohol is served at any OVC event, organisers must ensure that:

- a) Food is provided.
- b) Non-alcoholic drinks including water are also served.
- c) Responsible drinking or drinking in moderation is encouraged.
- d) Anyone who is intoxicated is refused service of alcohol.

- e) Emergency services are contacted on 000 when there is violence or illness due to intoxication.

## **11. Bullying and harassment**

All complaints of bullying or harassment are to be managed in accordance with the Complaints Policy published on the University website.

## **12. Office furniture and equipment**

Workstations must be set up according to the following recommendations by WorkSafe Victoria:

### **12.1 Chair**

- a) Backrest height and back tilt are adjusted to fit the curve of the user's back and allow a slightly reclined posture.
- b) Seat height and angle are adjusted so that the user can sit with their feet flat on the floor, hips between 90 degrees and 120 degrees.
- c) An adjustable-height footrest is supplied if required.

### **12.2 Desk/bench**

- a) If the desk is adjustable, the surface should be set just below the user's elbow height.
- b) If the desk is not adjustable, the surface should be just below elbow height (e.g. chair raised slightly, foot rest supplied).
- c) The desk should be large enough to fit the task requirements of the job.
- d) The desk should be deep enough to allow the computer screen to be approximately at arm's length away.
- e) There should be adequate space under the desk to allow comfortable forward facing posture and ability to access and exit the workstation.
- f) The desk corners and under desk space should be rounded, smooth and free of sharp edges (e.g. no keyboard or shelves under desk).
- g) Items such as disk drives, files, rubbish bins and desk drawers should be stored so that they do not interfere with available space under the desk.
- h) Frequently used items on the desk should be stored within easy reach (e.g. keyboard, telephone).
- i) Large or heavy items should be stored within close reach and not above shoulder height, or nearby where one has to stand to access them.

### **12.3 Computer**

- a) The keyboard should be close to the front edge of the desk allowing space for the wrists/forearms to rest on the desk surface (about 12 – 15cm).

- b) The keyboard feet should be adjusted to position the keyboard as flat as possible on the desk.
- c) Staff should touch type to avoid the need to look down at the keys.
- d) The mouse should be positioned as close to the keyboard as possible.
- e) The mouse should be as close as possible to the midline and staff should not hold the mouse when not in use.
- f) The screen should be positioned at approximately arm's length from the staff member's seated position.
- g) The screen should be positioned so one can look straight ahead and slightly down at the screen (top of screen level with or below eye level when the user is sitting upright).
- h) The screen should be positioned directly in front of the user (or close to this position if a document holder or second screen is required).
- i) The screen should be positioned to avoid reflections or glare from windows or lights (e.g. not facing or backing onto windows).

#### 12.4. Telephone

- a) The telephone should be placed within close reach on the side which is comfortable to use with other tasks and equipment.
- b) If there is considerable telephone work, a headset should be provided.
- c) The headset should be appropriate for the task (one or both ears) and comfortable to wear.

### **13. First Aid**

13.1 There must be at least two staff who hold a current first aid certificate. The first aiders are responsible for ensuring that the first aid kit is well stocked.

13.2 First aiders should only provide assistance if it is safe to do so. The person who is injured or sick should consult a doctor after receiving first aid.

13.3 Workplace first aid facilities and arrangements include:

- a) First Aid Officers' names and contact details are published.
- b) First aid kit(s) must be readily available.
- c) Those who require first aid treatment should obtain it from a designated First Aid Officer.
- d) First aid treatment is recorded on the Hazard and Incident Report and entered in the HIT Register.
- e) Biological waste is reported to a First Aid Officer for removal.

### **14. Toilets**

Toilets must be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition by engaging a contract cleaner. Each toilet used by women must have a Sanitary Disposal Unit. Consumables are to be replenished regularly to ensure a continuing supply.

**15. Travel**

All travel arrangements must comply with the University's Travel Policy.

**16. Noise**

Staff must not be exposed to excessive noise levels and the Noise Regulation states that the noise exposure limits are an 8 hour average level of 85 decibels and a peak noise level of 140 decibels at the staff's ear position. In accordance with the Noise Regulation, a hierarchy or order of controls must be applied when fixing noise problems. These are:

- a) Elimination of noise sources.
- b) Substitution of quieter plant or processes or use of engineering measures.
- c) Administrative measures.
- d) Hearing protectors.

**17. Smoking**

There must be no smoking at OVC premises.

**18. Temperature**

The optimum temperature is between 19 - 22°C in winter and 22 - 25 °C in summer. If the building temperature drops below 16°C, or reaches 35°C after consecutive days of extreme heat and climate control equipment fails, staff are to be given the option of going home. On warm days, staff are encouraged to take frequent cool drinks and the Health and Safety Committee must ensure that cool water is available.