



# Health and Safety Guideline

## HSG 1.2 Roles and Responsibilities

### 1. Purpose

This document outlines roles and responsibilities for the leadership and management of health, safety and wellbeing across the University, including how these may be defined, documented and communicated.

### 2. Scope

This Guideline applies to all health, safety and wellbeing activities of staff, students, visitors (including volunteers and contractors), Council members, and other persons interacting with the University of Newcastle (workers); the operations of staff of University aligned Research Centres and controlled entities; and all activities conducted by or on behalf of the University of Newcastle on and outside of the University's campuses.

### 3. Guidelines

#### 3.1. Defining and documenting responsibilities

Health and safety duties are defined in the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW), including the duties of the University (the Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU)), Officers and Workers. This Guideline assigns health and safety responsibilities and accountabilities for workers at the University. The Guideline also identifies how roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are defined, documented, actioned, and communicated for effective management and leadership.

Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for Health, Safety and Wellbeing may be outlined in:

- the Health and Safety Management System (HSMS) Framework, including policies, elements, guidelines, and key risk area documentation;
- position descriptions;
- RASCI Matrix (Responsibility, Accountability, Support, Consulted, Informed) or similar Guidance;

- SafeWork NSW documentation, including Safe/Standard Operating Procedures, or Safe Work Method Statements; and
- leadership shown through best practice safety behaviour.

### 3.2. The Work Health and Safety Policy

The University Work Health and Safety Policy is a statement of intent which describes the actions the University takes to meet its responsibilities, accountabilities and duty of care to provide a safe and healthy workplace. It must be available in the University Policy Library, noting:

- the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team are responsible for reviewing the Policy every three (3) years to keep abreast of regulatory and University requirements and other policy changes;
- if any review identifies that change is required, the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team will draft changes to the Policy in consultation with University, College and Division Health and Safety Committees;
- the revised Policy will be presented to the Executive Committee for their endorsement and approved by the Vice-Chancellor's signature;
- the Policy must be available where it can be seen and read by workers, visitors and any other people who may interface with the University; and
- the requirements of the Policy are communicated to workers through induction, Health and Safety Committee meetings and other appropriate channels.

### 3.3. The Health and Safety System (HSMS) Framework

The Health and Safety Management System (HSMS) Framework outlines responsibilities for health and safety to specific roles related to an Element, Guideline or Key Risk Area. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing team is responsible for developing, regular review, supporting implementation and communication of the University's HSMS Framework and associated documents, including the [HSMS Framework Map](#).

Vice-Chancellor operational sub-delegations under the University [Policy Framework](#) Schedule C facilitates approval of a policy relating to workplace health and safety by the roles specified below:

- Vice-Chancellor: Subject to the recommendation of Executive Committee.
- Chief People and Culture Officer: Minor/administrative amendments and supporting documentation (ie Guidelines).
- University Secretary: Minor/administrative amendments

An overview of responsibilities for safety, health and wellbeing for roles at the University are included in this Guideline. Detailed responsibilities and accountabilities relating specifically to Laboratory Safety are detailed in the [Laboratory Roles and Responsibilities Guideline](#).

Detailed responsibilities and accountabilities for Officers can be found in Guideline [HSG 1.3: Due Diligence](#).

### **3.4. Position Descriptions**

Responsibilities and accountabilities for health, safety and wellbeing must be outlined in position descriptions for a specific role, including specific health and safety responsibilities, activities, skills or experience required.

### **3.5. RASCI Matrix (Responsibility, Accountability, Support, Consulted, Informed)**

A RASCI (Responsibility, Accountability, Support, Consulted, Informed) Matrix may be developed to inform and confirm responsibilities and accountability for safety activities for a defined working group, Division / College or similar technical or risk group. Refer to Appendix 1 for a template to guide the development of a RASCI Matrix.

### **3.6. Responsibilities**

#### **University Council**

The University Council is responsible for exercising due diligence to ensure that the University complies with regulatory requirements by taking reasonable steps to:

- acquire and keep up-to-date knowledge of workplace health and safety matters;
- gain an understanding of the nature of the operations of the University and generally of the workplace hazards and risks associated with those operations;
- ensure the University has available for use, and uses, appropriate resources and processes to eliminate or minimise risks to health and safety from work carried out by or on behalf of the University;
- ensure the University has appropriate processes for receiving and considering information regarding hazards, incidents and risks and responding in a timely way to that information;
- ensure the University implements processes for complying with any Regulatory requirement;
- comply with specific responsibilities and accountabilities of Officers as detailed in Guideline [HSG 1.3: Due Diligence](#).
- verify the provision and use of the resources and processes referred to above; and
- endorse the [Wellbeing, Health and Safety Strategic Plan](#).

## **Vice Chancellor and University Executive Committee**

The Vice Chancellor and members of the University Executive Committee are responsible for providing leadership and exercising due diligence to ensure that the University complies with Regulatory requirements. This includes taking reasonable steps for:

- overall accountability for the safety of all activities conducted by the University;
- implementation of the [Wellbeing, Health and Safety Strategic Plan](#) for their area of responsibility;
- implementation and review of the Health and Safety Management System Framework;
- acquiring and keeping up-to-date knowledge of workplace health and safety matters;
- gaining an understanding of the nature of the operations for their area of responsibility and the workplace hazards and risks associated with those operations;
- ensuring the University implements processes for complying with any Regulatory requirement;
- ensuring the University has appropriate processes for receiving and considering information regarding hazards, incidents and risks and responding in a timely way to that information;
- driving improvement of the University's workplace health and safety performance through the establishment of measurable objectives and targets, and monitoring the actions taken in response to reported hazards, risks, incidents, injuries and illnesses;
- ensuring appropriate funds and resources are provided in order to maintain a safe and healthy work environment and implement the Health and Safety Management System Framework for the area of responsibility;
- allocation of responsibilities for managing Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policies and Procedures;
- establishing and facilitating effective safety and wellbeing consultative mechanisms, including consultation with Workers via the University Health and Safety Committee;
- promoting a proactive workplace health and safety management culture by recognising, reinforcing and rewarding desired actions and behaviours;
- monitoring and review of compliance with legal and other requirements and the Health and Safety Management System Framework;
- complying with specific responsibilities and accountabilities of Officers as detailed in Guideline [HSG 1.3: Due Diligence](#);
- verifying the provision and use of the resources and processes referred to above; and
- regularly reporting on workplace health and safety matters to the University Council.

## **Leaders and Supervisors**

Leaders and Supervisors include Academic Leaders (including Chief Investigators and Course Coordinators), Divisional Directors, Team Leaders (Heads of School, Research Leaders and Supervisors, Executive Officers).

Leaders and Supervisors have responsibility for health, safety and wellbeing management of all activities within their organisational unit (area) and are accountable to the Executive Committee for ensuring this occurs. This includes:

- the day-to-day management of workplace health and safety within their areas of responsibility;
- allocate responsibilities for health, safety and wellbeing within their area, incorporating these into Position Descriptions and PRD activities where appropriate;
- an understanding of the hazards and risks of the area of responsibility and risk controls for managing these;
- driving improvement in workplace health and safety performance in their areas of responsibility through targeted workplace health and safety initiatives to address areas of identified risks;
- communicating to persons that they supervise on how to implement the requirements for compliance with the Health and Safety Management System Framework, including the relevant policies, elements, procedures and guidelines;
- allocating responsibilities for workplace health and safety within their areas of responsibility, incorporating these responsibilities in position descriptions and performance review and development activities where appropriate;
- ensuring that resources are made available to support workplace health and safety management in their areas of responsibility;
- ensuring incidents, accidents, “near misses” or hazards are identified, assessed, controlled and reported with immediate action taken and then follow up as required;
- ensuring all personnel including external contractors are appropriately inducted, trained and competent for the work that they do;
- communicate and enforce requirements for students, staff, and others in the area to conduct Risk Assessments, follow Safe Operating Procedures (SOPs) and utilise Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) if applicable;
- ensuring the implementation of health and safety consultation processes;
- encouraging the incorporation of health, safety and wellbeing into curriculum and research initiatives for student professional development and producing graduates who are ‘workplace ready’;
- nominating a Local Safety Contact Person for their areas of responsibility; and
- actively participate in return to work programs for staff who sustain a work related illness or injury.

## Workers

Workers include professional staff, technical and site management staff, academic staff and teachers. All workers are responsible for:

- co-operating and actively contributing to workplace health and safety management by complying with relevant policies, elements, procedures and guidelines incorporated into the Health and Safety Management System Framework;
- completing induction and training as directed by their Leader or Supervisor in order to meet workplace health and safety responsibilities and accountabilities relevant to role and location;
- report hazards, incidents, injuries, and illnesses and take action to remedy non-conformances and improvements as required;
- undertaking risk management activities to identify, assess, and control workplace health and safety risks in the workplace, including regular review of changes to work methods and practices;
- complying with requirements for undertaking Risk Assessments, following Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and utilising Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as and when required;
- comply with University purchasing policy and requirements with respect to purchasing chemicals, equipment and travel;
- completing and participating in audit, inspection and monitoring activities for the work area;
- monitoring and maintaining plant, equipment and substances in accordance with University and local processes;
- taking reasonable care of themselves and others in the workplace and ensure that their actions or omissions do not adversely affect the health or safety of other persons;
- co-operating and comply with the University's injury management and return to work plans if injured or ill as a result of work.
- technical and site management staff must monitor and maintain Laboratory or site chemical registers using the Chemwatch database and manage the processes for site specific risk assessments and control of all stores; and
- academic staff and teachers are responsible for the oversight of students and to safeguard the health and safety of students in their charge. This includes developing Course or Program specific induction and teaching materials, or other related health and safety resources.

## **Local Safety Contact Person**

Local Safety Contact Persons are responsible for:

- acting as the nominated point of contact within their College, Division, School, Centre or other organisational unit in order that Workers in that area can seek advice and assistance regarding relevant policies, elements, procedures and guidelines incorporated into the Health and Safety Management System Framework; and
- facilitating communication on workplace health and safety matters between their area and the Health and Safety Team, or within their area by escalating issues for attention or review to Managers or Supervisors within their organisational unit.

## **Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team**

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team are responsible for:

- developing the Health and Safety Strategic Plan, in consultation with Health and Safety Committees;
- maintaining, updating and communicating documentation contained within the Health and Safety Management System Framework;
- and ensure that the Framework documents are understood, disseminated, implemented, evaluated and improved;
- providing advice and support to University Council, Executive Committee, Leaders, Supervisors, Workers, and Health and Safety Committees regarding workplace health and safety management, issues, and concerns;
- providing operational and technical workplace health and safety advice and support to Colleges and Divisions;
- ensuring relevant information on workplace health and safety is provided to stakeholders as required through induction and ongoing training;
- delivering targeted workplace health and safety training and presentations to University Council, Executive Committee, Leaders, Supervisors, Workers, and Health and Safety Committees; and
- provide specific operational and technical advice and support to Colleges and Divisions, Health and Safety Committees, Institutional Biosafety Committee, and Chemical and Radiation Technical Committee.

## **Conjoint, Student, Visitors and others**

Responsibilities include:

- co-operating and actively contributing to the safety, health and wellbeing of themselves and others at the University, by engaging and complying with the Health and Safety Management System Framework;

- complying with reasonable directions from University staff relating to safety, health and wellbeing requirements as well as following directions from University Staff and Evacuation Wardens during Emergency Evacuation Procedures; and
- complying with requirements for undertaking inductions and safety training, undertaking Risk Assessments, following SOPs and utilising PPE.

### Contractors

Responsibilities include:

- follow University policies and procedures and submit all required documentation for work including SOPs, Safe Work Method Statements or Job Safety Analysis;
- comply with all relevant health and safety legislation, standards, codes of practice;
- undertake additional H&S training or inductions as directed by their Supervisor to meet H&S responsibilities; and
- follow supervisor's work health and safety instructions and wear required PPE.

### 3.7. Assignment of Responsibilities

Leaders or supervisors may choose to assign specific health, safety and wellbeing responsibilities to a worker under their management control. Managers or supervisors who have chosen to assign their health, safety and wellbeing responsibilities remain accountable for the provision of a healthy and safe working environment that is under their control. Managers or supervisors may transfer an assigned responsibility to a more suitable manager or supervisor only when both parties have agreed to do so.

## 4. Definitions

In the context of the Health and Safety Management System Framework:

Accountability	The person who is ultimately answerable for the completion of the activity. This person ensures the prerequisites to complete the activity are available and delegates the activity to the responsible person.
Executive Committee	Consisting of the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellors, the Pro Vice-Chancellors, the Chief Operating Officer and the Chief Financial Officer.
Hazard	A situation, condition, or event, including a person's behaviour, that exposes a worker to a risk to their health or safety during the course of work in a workplace, that has the potential to cause injury, illness or even death or to damage buildings, plant or equipment.
Health Safety and Wellbeing Strategic Plan	The University's documented plan setting out workplace health and safety objectives and targets at the organisational level.



Local Safety Contact Person	A person within an organisational unit that has been allocated a role to act as a knowledge, communication and support point for the organisational unit with regards to Health and Safety.
Leader / Supervisor	Any member of the University who is responsible for supervising staff and/or undergraduate or postgraduate students and/or for leading research projects.
Officer	As per the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, an officer is a person who makes decisions that affect the whole or a part of the organisation and/or has the capacity to significantly affect the financial standing of the organisation and/or on whose instruction the directors of the corporation are to act. Officers have a duty under the WHS Act 2011 to demonstrate due diligence in taking reasonable steps to ensure the organisation complies with its work health and safety obligations. At the University, members of Council and Executive Committee are Officers. Other senior staff and managers may also be considered Officers under the act where their role meets the definition.
Position description	A document which describes the authority, accountabilities, required qualifications, and proficiency for an individual position.
Regulatory requirements	The legal obligations imposed upon the University, its officers and employees, and other Workers under the <i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i> (NSW) and the <i>Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017</i> (NSW).
Responsible	The person who is allocated the responsibility to ensure the activity will be completed, by doing the work themselves or assigning it to others within their team.
Risk	The likelihood that a hazard will cause harm and the consequence of that harm.
University Council	The University's governing authority established under section 8A of the University of Newcastle Act 1989 (NSW).
Worker	Includes an employee, conjoint, student on work experience, contractor, sub-contractor, and volunteer. A person is a worker if the person carries out work in any capacity for the University or another person conducting a business or undertaking, including work as: (a) an employee, or (b) a contractor or subcontractor, or (c) an employee of a contractor or subcontractor, or (d) an employee of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work in the person's business or undertaking, or (e) an outworker, or (f) an apprentice or trainee, or (g) a student gaining work experience, or (h) a volunteer, or (i) a person of a prescribed class.

## 5. Responsibilities

A comprehensive list of health, safety and wellbeing responsibilities is provided above.

## 6. References & Related Documents

The following documentation is referenced in, or applicable to this Guideline:

[University of Newcastle Wellbeing, Health and Safety Strategy](#)

[University of Newcastle Policy Framework](#)

[HSG 1.3: Due Diligence](#)

[HSMS Framework Map](#) (REF-EL01.01)

## 7. Amendment History

Version	Date of Issue	Approval	Section(s) Modified	Details of Amendment
1, 2, 3	October 2019	Manager Health and Safety	-	Original version with latest amendment HSG 2.2 Roles and Responsibilities
4	July 2023	CPCO	All	1. Renumbered from HSG 2.2 to HSG 1.2 2. Updated all content in all sections 3. Added new/renamed Related Documents 4. Added Amendment History 5. Amended document control header and footer

## 8. Appendices

Appendix 1 Template for RASCI Matrix

**Appendix 2 Template for RASCI Matrix**

Activity	Role	Role	Role	Role	Role	Role	Role	Role	Role	Role	Role	Role	Role	Role	Include additional roles as required
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Responsible	R	Accountable	A	Support	S	Consulted	C	Informed	I
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