



Health and Safety Guideline

HSG 2.1 Consultation and Communication

1. Purpose

This document outlines the arrangements and process for health, safety and wellbeing related consultation and communication.

Effective communication, consultation and participation between employers and workers is a key element to stronger commitment to decision-making impacting health, safety and wellbeing; open and respectful understanding of issues; and drive for continuous improvement for the prevention of incident, illnesses and injuries.

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. Consultation with Workers

Arrangements must be in place to provide workers with an opportunity to contribute effectively to the health, safety and wellbeing decision making process, and to comply with legislative requirements. This shall consist of at least the following:

- exchange of views and sharing of health, safety and wellbeing information with workers at local team meetings or toolbox talks;
- opportunity for workers to express their views and to contribute to the issues without fear of reprisals; and
- consultation with and participation of workers before decisions are made.

All Leaders and Supervisors are required to consult with workers who conduct work under their supervision in relation to matters that affect their health and safety including:

- the introduction of new products, services and processes, or implementing changes to existing products, services and processes associated with:
 - physical workplaces and surroundings;
 - work organisation and work force;
 - working conditions; and
 - equipment.
- making decisions about facilities for the welfare of workers;
- resolving work health or safety issues;
- monitoring the health and safety of workers;
- providing health and safety information and training to workers;
- conducting investigations into reported incidents and near misses;
- changes to implementation and integration of the HSMS; including:
 - changes to legal requirements and other internal or external requirements;
 - changes in knowledge or information about hazards and health, safety and wellbeing risks;
 - developments in knowledge and technology or views of interested parties.

Leaders and Supervisors must determine the manner and extent of consultation with workers considering the following factors, but at a minimum consultation will occur quarterly as a team meeting or work group meeting:

- the level of risk to the health and safety of any workers;
- availability of workers to participate in consultation;
- the number of workers a change might impact;
- the degree to which workers might be expected to change the way they perform work;
- delivery of information in a timely manner, in a form they can understand;
- a reasonable opportunity to express worker views about the matter in a suitable forum (i.e. meetings or digital communication platforms); and
- creation of consultation records in accordance with Guideline [HSG 7.1: Health and Safety Records and Document Control](#) including:
 - the date of consultation and the workers in attendance;
 - feedback that was received; and
 - the outcome or any actions from the consultation.

3.2. Consultation and communication on the Health and Safety Management System (HSMS)

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team must consult on any proposed major changes to the Health and Safety Management System (HSMS) by:

- communicating proposed changes to all University Health and Safety Committees and allowing at least two (2) weeks of formal consultation with stakeholders;
- updates to Health and Safety Committees in regular meeting reports;
- updates to Executive Council via monthly and quarterly reports as documented in the HSMS Document Register and Legislative Matrix;
- consideration of stakeholder feedback and amendment to system documentation where relevant; and
- receiving endorsement from the Chief People and Culture Officer.

Changes to the HSMS can be requested by following Guideline [HSG 7.1: Health and Safety Records and Document Control](#) specifically the [Health and Safety Management System – Consultation and Amendment Request Form](#).

3.3. Issue resolution

If a health, safety and wellbeing issue is identified, the affected parties should attempt to resolve the issue at the time if reasonably practicable to do so. Health and safety concerns able to be addressed to the satisfaction of all parties within an agreed timeframe, do not need to enact the formal Health and Safety Issue Resolution process (Appendix 1).

Details of the issue, the agreed actions to resolve the issue, timeframes and persons responsible for completing action items must be recorded in AIMS in accordance with Incident Notification and Investigation guideline. Details of the issue can also be reported to the relevant Health and Safety Committee as noted in Guideline [HSG 1.2: Roles and Responsibilities](#).

The health and safety issue resolution process also excludes the resolution of allegations of unacceptable behaviour. For further definition and defined processes for the resolution of unacceptable behaviour, refer to the [University of Newcastle Complaint Management Policy](#).

3.4. Reporting and monitoring progress

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing team must ensure reports are made available to Leaders and Supervisors via a dashboard and regular executive reports that provide appropriate information on issues and trends that can be used to measure health, safety and wellbeing performance and compliance against objectives. This includes performance against induction and centrally managed health, safety and wellbeing training programs.

College and Business Area Health, Safety and Wellbeing Plans should be monitored twice a year through the relevant HS Committee and leadership meetings.

3.5. Feedback and continuous improvement

Feedback on the HSMS and related functions and services is used to continually improve health, safety and wellbeing performance. Feedback can be provided via:

- [Health and Safety Management System – Consultation and Amendment Request Form](#);
- Email to healthandsafety@newcastle.edu.au;
- Telephone (02) 4033 9999 Option 5; and
- Email or call to an individual member of the [Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team](#).

3.6. External communication

Where an external party (including a government authority) requests information relating to health and safety matters within the University, the Leader, Supervisor or Worker should contact the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team prior to providing any information.

4. Definitions

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

Communication	Communication is the process by which information is transmitted and understood between two or more people.
Executive Committee	Consisting of the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellors, the Pro Vice-Chancellors, the Chief Operating Officer and the Chief Financial Officer.
Health Safety and Wellbeing Strategic Plan	The University's documented plan setting out workplace health and safety objectives and targets at the organisational level.
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.
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).
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.
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5. Responsibilities

A comprehensive list of health, safety and wellbeing responsibilities is provided in Guideline [HSG 1.2: Roles and Responsibilities](#).

Specific responsibilities under this Guideline include:

Leaders and Supervisors

- A head of academic/administrative unit has the overall responsibility for ensuring that the issue resolution process is followed. They may nominate a management representative who is authorised to approve changes to a workplace. This is commonly a manager or deputy head.
- Promptly address health and safety issues that are brought to their attention in consultation with those involved or affected and ensure that the issue resolution process is followed. Notify the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team of any cease work orders.
- Oversee and ensure the completion of actions within the AIMS system to ensure resolution of issues within the agreed timeframes.

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- Participate in the issue resolution process in accordance with the flow chart.
- Notify Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team of any cease work orders.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team

- Provide advice to leaders and supervisors on suitable health, safety and wellbeing performance or development goals for workers.

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 Code of Conduct](#)

[HSG 1.2: Roles and Responsibilities](#)

[HSG 5.1: Health, Safety and Wellbeing Event Notification and Investigation](#)

[HSG 7.1: Health and Safety Records and Document Control](#)

HSMS Document Register and Legislative Matrix (REG-EL01.02)

[Health and Safety Management System – Consultation and Amendment Request Form \(FRM-EL02.01\)](#)

7. Amendment History

Version	Date of Issue	Approval	Section(s) Modified	Details of Amendment
1, 2	October 2016	Manager Health and Safety	-	Original version with latest amendment HSG 8.1 Consultation and Communication
3	July 2023	CPCO	All	1. Renumbered from HSG 8.1 to HSG 2.1 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 Issue Resolution Process Flowchart

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