

## Key Risk Area (KRA)

### KRA 1.10 SCUBA and Water Based Activities

#### 1. Purpose

This document provides guidance on how the University of Newcastle (University) intends to meet its obligation to ensure the health and safety of people undertaking SCUBA diving, snorkelling and other water-based University activities, so far as is reasonably practicable.

#### 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. Risk Management and Safety Review

The general Health and Safety Risk Assessment Form should be used to assess all hazards associated with SCUBA diving, snorkelling and other water-based activities in accordance with the Guideline [HSG 3.1 Health and Safety Risk Management](#).

As SCUBA diving and water-based activities have been identified as having a higher risk profile due to the potential consequence to human health, a [safety review application](#) form must be submitted prior to undertaking activities.

The University Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team must appoint one or more competent persons to be dive coordinator, dive officer, dive supervisor, snorkelling coordinator or snorkelling supervisor (as relevant to the activity being performed), and ensure each such appointed coordinator, officer or supervisor discharges all applicable statutory requirements in relation to diving supervision, dive plans, dive instruction and dive safety logs on the University's behalf to comply with Part 4.8, Division 3 of the WHS Regulation. All SCUBA diving, snorkelling or other water-based activities must only be led by a suitably qualified

person, who has the knowledge and experience to identify all reasonably foreseeable hazards that could give rise to risks to health and safety.

Typical considerations for SCUBA diving, snorkelling or other water-based activities for inclusion in the risk assessment are:

- Suitability of the equipment to be used for the particular task;
- Skills, knowledge and certification of the people involved in the activity;
- Environmental conditions;
- Foreseeable abnormal situations, misuse and fluctuation of conditions;
- Suitability of available equipment to support the activity;
- Suitability and condition of all available accessories;
- Ergonomic needs relating to the transport of equipment and people; and
- Location of the activity.

### **3.2. Qualification and Certificate of Competency**

All SCUBA diving, snorkelling or other water-based activities must only be led by a suitably qualified person.

Where required, all persons undertaking SCUBA diving, snorkelling or other water-based activities are to hold a qualification of the appropriate type. This may include:

- Skippers Licence;
- Boating licence;
- Motor vehicle driver licence;
- SCUBA diver qualifications.

### **3.3. Registration of Equipment**

Some items of equipment required for water-based activities must be in New South Wales and meet requirements for use in other states and jurisdictions if vessels are to be used outside of NSW. These may include:

- Boats that meet one of the following conditions:
  - Vessels that are powered by an engine with a power rating of 4.0 kilowatts or more;
  - Any vessel of 5.5 metres or longer;
  - Every vessel requiring a mooring licence (including marina berths); and
  - Personal watercraft.

- Any trailer or similar vehicle that is designed to tow the boat or vessel behind a vehicle on the roads.

### 3.4. Induction, Training and Supervision

Competency assessment and explanation of requirements is to be included in relevant Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). Operating and activity instruction must comply with the requirements of [Guideline HSG 4.2 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Induction, Training and Competency](#).

Effective supervision is an essential element of risk management and must be provided at appropriate levels by suitably qualified and experienced personnel for all SCUBA diving, snorkelling or other water-based activities.

### 3.5. Maintenance of Equipment

All equipment used or planned to be used for SCUBA diving, snorkelling, boating or other water-based activities is to be maintained in line with manufacturers and suppliers' instructions.

As a part of the preparations for any SCUBA diving, snorkelling or other water-based activity, the equipment to be used must be inspected, and where there is any damaged equipment, it is to be repaired, disposed of or clearly marked as Out of Service to avoid the risk of inadvertent use. All SCUBA diving equipment must be used in line with AS/NZS 2299.2:2002 Occupational Diving Operation – Scientific Diving. All equipment is to be cleaned upon return from a water-based activity and stored in a manner to avoid damage.

The operators of all boats and other vessels used on water must follow the directions of Transport for NSW and comply with all associated maritime safety laws.

## 4. Definitions

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

Boat	A watercraft designed to float or work on water.
Dive Coordinator	A person who supervises and coordinates any SCUBA dive activity and who is responsible for the SCUBA dive team's safety.
Dive Leader	A person in charge of a specific part of a SCUBA diving operation.
Dive Officer	The person nominated by the University to oversee diving procedures.

Employer	Means the University of Newcastle (the University).
Executive Committee	Consisting of the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellors, the Pro Vice-Chancellors, the Chief Operating Officer, Chief People and Culture Officer and the Chief Financial Officer, the University Secretary and the President of Academic Senate.
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.
SCUBA diving	Diving activities where the person is using self-contained underwater breathing apparatus.
Snorkelling	Swimming on or in water using a mask and tube (snorkel).
Snorkelling Coordinator	A person who supervises and coordinates any snorkelling activity and who is responsible for the snorkelling team's safety.
Snorkelling Leader	A person in charge of a specific part of a snorkelling operation.
Water based activities	Any activity undertaken on or in water, including (without limitation) SCUBA diving, snorkelling and boating.
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 in [HSG 1.2 Roles and Responsibilities Guideline](#).

Specific responsibilities under this Guideline include:

### Leaders and Supervisors

- Implement and monitor systems and processes in line with these procedures and ensure that these are being followed to control the risks to the health and safety of people who may be undertaking SCUBA diving, snorkelling or other water-based activities;

- Ensure that any registration requirements are met;
- Ensure that all Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are developed and updated as required, and that appropriate instruction is provided to the people undertaking SCUBA diving, snorkelling or other water-based activities;
- Ensure that any operator of equipment for SCUBA diving, snorkelling or other water-based activities has the required certificates, training or competencies (including medical certifications), and that those certificates are kept up to date and copies are provided to and kept by the University in accordance with statutory requirements;
- Monitor that all inspections, testing, certifications or registrations have been undertaken;
- Ensure that the records of all commissioning, testing, inspections and registrations are kept and available to anyone who uses or has reason to verify that these things have been completed; and
- Ensure that a Safety Review Application is completed for all research activities involving SCUBA diving, snorkelling or other water-based activities.

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

- Provide advice to the University community in regard to the particular requirements for safety during SCUBA diving, snorkelling and other water-based activities;
- Appoint one or more competent persons to be dive coordinator, dive officer, dive supervisor, snorkelling coordinator or snorkelling supervisor (as relevant to the activity being performed), and ensure each such appointed coordinator, officer or supervisor discharges all applicable statutory requirements in relation to diving supervision, dive plans, dive instruction and dive safety logs on the University's behalf to comply with Part 4.8, Division 3 of the WHS Regulation; and
- Support the University community in the selection of equipment for water-based activities; and
- Coordinate the review of safety risk assessments for SCUBA diving, snorkelling or water-based activities through the Safety Review process.

#### **Workers**

- Follow the SOPs and instructions provided for safe water-based activities;
- Ensure licences and other qualifications, training and certifications for SCUBA diving, snorkelling and using other water-based equipment are maintained and current before the relevant work is performed, and provide copies to the University where required;
- Attend instruction and training sessions relating to use and maintenance of any equipment used for SCUBA diving, snorkelling or other water-based activities; and

- Undertake risk assessments and have those assessments reviewed by suitably competent people, and where appropriate in accordance with Guideline [HSG 3.1 Health and Safety Risk Management](#).

## 6. References & Related Documents

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

[HSG 1.2 Roles and Responsibilities](#)

[HSG 3.1 Health and Safety Risk Management](#)

[HSG 4.2 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Induction, Training and Competency](#)

## 7. Amendment History

Version	Date of Issue	Approval	Section(s) Modified	Details of Amendment
1	June 2015	Director, People and Workforce Strategy	-	Original version.
2	October 2023	CPCO	All	1. All sections reviewed for legal compliance 2. Updated content in all sections 3. Added new/renamed Related Documents 4. Added Amendment History 5. Amended document control header and footer

## 8. Appendices

Nil