

Overview

4.03.01 OHS Working Groups facilitate the implementation and ongoing continuous improvement of workplace health and safety throughout UNE.

Terms of Reference

Name of the Groups: Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Working Group 1-8 hereafter referred to as OHSWG1- OHSWG8 or Working Group”.

Reports to: OHS Committee - hereafter referred to as “the OHSS Committee”.

Composition of the Working Group

4.03.02 Where possible each Working Group will consist of a mixture of academic and general staff. The recommended composition of the each working group will be stated in the Terms of Reference for each Working group.

4.03.03 OHS Representatives on Working Groups will hold office for a period of two years, however, may be re-elected.

4.03.04 To ensure continuity, elected members would normally be elected for a two-year term, with half the elected members retiring each year.

4.03.05 After the composition of the Working Group has been established and the OHS Strategic Committee representative is elected, the OHS unit will publish the members’ names on the OHS web site.

Elections

4.03.06 All employees within the Schools represented by the Working Group are eligible to stand for election.

4.03.07 Elections will be held every two years, and each member will be elected for a two year term. At each election, all Representatives who have served for two years (including any Representatives appointed to fill a casual vacancy for a person who would have served for two years) will be required to vacate their position on the Working Group and such positions will be opened to election.

- 4.03.08** Candidates can either nominate themselves or be nominated by another staff member represented by that Working Group. In both cases, they must sign a nomination form.
- 4.03.09** Heads of Schools, Departments, Faculties and Senior management will facilitate the call for nominations and election of Working Party representatives. The recommended number of representatives on each working party is stated in the UNE OHS Plan 2002-4. If working party members do not complete the mandatory training, or if insufficient candidates are available, the terms of reference of the Working Party may be amended at the first meeting of the Working Party. All amendments to the Terms of reference must be ratified by Heads of Schools, Departments, Faculties or Senior management.
- 4.03.10** If more than the required number of nominations is received, then a postal ballot will be conducted among the staff members of the Working Group. The method of election will be by a "first past the post" system of voting.
- 4.03.11** Where the required number of nominations are not received, the Working Group may co-opt additional staff by invitation and will consider – (1) gender balance, - (2) the balance of Academic and General Staff, and - (3) the geographical working location of the staff member.
- 4.03.12** In the event of a casual or permanent vacancy occurring, the Working Group may co-opt a representative to fill that vacancy until the next election.

Training of OHS Representatives

- 4.03.13** All OHS Representatives must complete an appropriate accredited Committee Training Course in accordance with Clauses 31 and 32 of the Occupational Health Safety Regulation 2001.
- 4.03.14** The training of new OHS Representatives will take place as soon as possible after their election or appointment to the Working Group.
- 4.03.15** Any OHS Representative attending a training course in accordance with the provisions as laid down in Clause 31 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001 shall be entitled to the appropriate rate of pay, travel allowance and subsistence.

Role of the Working Group

- 4.03.16** The Working Group will:
- (a) Hold regular meetings to look at issues which have arisen.
 - (b) Appoint a representative to the OHSS Committee.

- (c) Conduct regular workplace inspections and report to the appropriate supervisor any deficiencies in health and safety matters for action.
- (d) Attempt to resolve OHS issues in accordance with the Policy for Resolving OHS Issues.
- (e) Provide general information and assistance to all staff within the Working Group on OHS matters.
- (f) Discuss workplace health and safety matters in general and make recommendations of workplace health and safety systems to the Committee.

Meetings

- 4.03.17** The Working Group will meet at least quarterly, and at least three weeks before each next scheduled OHS Strategic Committee Meeting.
- 4.03.18** The date, time and place will be decided by mutual agreement between members of the Working Group.
- 4.03.19** It is recommended that the OHS officer convenes and attends the first meeting of each Working Party. This will enable the OHS Officer to provide advice on legislative requirements and facilitate in the election of a representative to the OHS Strategic Committee.
- 4.03.20** If the OHS Officer facilitates the OHSS Committee election process, election will be by secret ballot. If the secret ballot does not identify a preferred representative an open ballot will take place. Self nomination will not be permitted in the open ballot process. The OHS officer will have the casting vote if the open ballot process results in an impasse.
- 4.03.21** The meeting's Agenda will include:
- (a) A list of those present.
 - (b) Apologies for absences.
 - (c) Business arising from the previous meeting.
 - (d) Verbal Report of OHS Issues since the previous meeting.
 - (e) Review of OHS Policies, Reports or correspondence.
 - (f) Items of General Business, the decision of the meeting, and the appropriate action to be taken.
 - (g) Venue for next meeting.
 - (h) Conduct Workplace Inspection.

Appointing an OHS Representative to the OHS Strategic Committee

4.03.22 The OHS Working Group will elect a representative to the OHS Strategic Committee by consensus within the Working Group. If agreement cannot be reached by members of the Working Group, the matter will be referred to the OHS Strategic Committee, which will make a decision, taking into account gender balance, and the balance of General and Academic staff on the Committee.

Workplace Inspections

4.03.23 The Working Group will conduct workplace inspections and or audits as it deems as appropriate, e.g. the Group might carry out one School inspection per meeting. This will be determined by the inherent level of risk of the activities, or the recorded injuries that have occurred.

4.03.24 In order to conduct an inspection, where required, the Working Group will be entitled to the appropriate rate of pay, travel allowance and subsistence.

4.03.25 Inspections/audits will be conducted through the following procedure.

- (a) The Working Group will contact the appropriate supervisor and arrange a mutually agreeable time to enable that supervisor and at least two OHS Representatives to conduct a walk through inspection of the workplace.
- (b) The Working Group may discuss OHS matters with staff within the Directorate/Unit.
- (c) The OHS Representatives will record any OHS deficiencies identified and provide a copy to the relevant Supervisor and the OHS Officer within one week of the inspection.
- (d) The Supervisor must consider the OHS deficiencies in consultation with the relevant staff, and respond to the Working Group within two weeks.
- (e) A copy of the completed Inspection/Audit will then be provided to the OHS Strategic Committee for review.

Resolving OHS Issues

4.03.26 In the event of strong conflicting views in the workplace on how an OHS matter should be managed, an OHS Representative, may become involved to assist in the resolution of the issue, in accordance with the University Policy for Resolving OHS Issues. The Representative will keep a record of the matter and inform the other OHS representatives at the next scheduled Working Group meeting, for their information/discussion.

Provide general information and assistance to all staff within the Working Group on OHS matters.

4.03.27 OHS Representatives shall be permitted reasonable time to discuss and provide assistance to staff that they represent on OHS matters, and may refer the matter to the next scheduled Working Group meeting for discussion.

Discuss workplace health and safety matters in general and make recommendations of workplace health and safety systems to the Committee.

4.03.28 Any documentation which the Working Group wishes to have considered by the Committee, must be in the hands of the Secretary at least seven working days prior to any Committee meeting, for it to be able to be included in the Agenda of that meeting.

Ratification of the Terms of Reference

4.03.29 These Terms of Reference will be submitted in writing to the OHSS Committee by the Working Group's representative to the Committee. The Terms of Reference will need to be ratified by a two-thirds majority vote of the Committee.

4.03.30 The Terms of Reference must be in the hands of the Secretary at least seven working days prior to any Committee meeting, for it to be able to be included in the Agenda of that meeting.

Amendments to the Terms of Reference

4.03.31 Any changes to the Terms of Reference will be developed by consensus of the Working Group and then submitted, in writing, to the Secretary to the Committee at least seven working days prior to any Committee meeting, for it to be able to be included in the Agenda of that meeting.

Further Information

Occupational Health and Safety Unit (ext. 3232)

References

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000

Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001

WorkCover Code of Practice: OHS Consultation

TRIM Document No:

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