

## **WHS OP023 Hazardous Chemical Pregnancy and Reproductive Hazards Procedure**

### **Section 1 - Overview**

(1) The University has a responsibility to advise all workers and students of any health and safety risks relevant to their work and/or research, and to ensure controls are in place to mitigate risk. Workers and students who are pregnant may be at higher risk from exposure to certain chemicals and associated hazards.

### **Section 2 - Scope**

(2) This procedure applies to female and male workers and students who work with hazardous chemicals in the capacity of their research and/or work.

### **Section 3 - Procedure**

(3) When workers or students commence work or research at the University, their supervisor should advise if there is any known risk of exposure to teratogenic or reproductive hazards.

#### **Chemicals**

(4) The manager/supervisor must determine whether chemicals used in the work area could create a risk to pregnant workers or students. Safety Data Sheets (SDS) must be kept for all chemicals used or stored in a workplace.

#### **Limiting Exposure to Chemicals**

(5) Limiting chemical exposure levels below recognised exposure limits (as determined by the ACGIH Threshold Limit Values and Biological Exposure Indices) should not present a health risk to the unborn foetus. A risk assessment should be undertaken to ensure that levels are below exposure limits. The SDS should be included in the risk assessment process.

#### **Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) and Job Safety Analysis (JSA)**

- (6) When establishing an SOP or JSA the following considerations should be made:
- a. Review the SDS to identify possible reproductive hazards presented by a chemical;
  - b. Eliminate or replace the chemical for a less hazardous chemical if able to do so;
  - c. Include use (where applicable) of a fume cupboard;
  - d. Avoid contact by inhalation by only using chemicals in a containment hood;
  - e. Store chemicals in sealed containers when they are not in use;
  - f. Use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as gloves, gown and a mask;
  - g. Wash hands after contact with any laboratory reagents; and
  - h. Participate in training and education programs provided for chemical safety.

#### **Ionising Radiation**

(7) When a worker or student declares their pregnancy, the manager/supervisor must determine whether the use of ionising radiation in the work area could create a risk to the worker or student.

#### **Limiting Exposure to Radiation**

(8) Radiation dose limits for pregnant workers and students must be no more than that of a member of the general public. Therefore the dose limit is 1 mSv per year. A risk assessment

should be undertaken to ensure that the dose received is limited to no higher than 1 mSv per year. In the case of open sources, the SDS should be included in the risk assessment process.

(9) Further advice can be sought from the University Radiation Safety Officer.

(10) Where there may be exposure to a neutron source, the University Radiation Safety Officer must be contacted before the pregnant individual works in this area.

## **Authority and Compliance**

(11) The Procedure Administrator, pursuant to the University's Work Health and Safety Rule, makes these procedures.

(12) University Representatives and Students must observe these Procedures in relation to University matters.

(13) These Procedures operate as and from the Effective Date.

(14) Previous Procedures relating to WHS OP013 (Interim) Hazardous Chemicals Procedure are replaced and have no further operation from the Effective Date of this new Procedure.

## **Section 4 - Definitions**

(15) Effective Date means takes effect on the day on which it is published or on such later day as may be specified in the procedure.

(16) Hazard means a situation or thing that has the potential to harm a person, property or the environment.

(17) Hazardous Chemical means any substance, mixture or article that satisfies the criteria for a hazard class in the Globally Harmonised System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS).

(18) University Representative means a University employee (casual, fixed term and permanent) contractor, agent, appointee, UNE Council member, adjunct, visiting academic and any other person engaged by the University to undertake some activity for or on behalf of the University. It includes corporations and other bodies falling into one or more of these categories

(19) Student means an Admitted Student or an Enrolled Student, at the relevant time.

a. Admitted student means a student who has been admitted to a UNE course of study and who is entitled to enrol in a unit of study or who has completed all of the units in the UNE course of study.

b. Enrolled student means a student who is enrolled in a unit of study at UNE.

(20) UNE Act means the University of New England Act 1993 No 68 (NSW).

(21) A worker, as defined by the WHS Act, is a person that carries out work in any capacity for a person conducting a business or undertaking, including work as:

a. An employee;

b. A contractor or subcontractor;

c. An employee of a contractor or subcontractor;

d. An employee of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work in the person's business or undertaking;

e. An outworker;

f. An apprentice or trainee;

- g. A student gaining work experience;
- h. A volunteer; or
- i. Person of a prescribed class.