

Safety and Wellness Policy



Responsibility for policy: Associate Director Safety and Wellness

Approving authority: Vice-Chancellor

Last reviewed: October 2023

Next review: October 2028

Application

1. This policy applies to all staff, students, contractors and visitors to the University of Waikato.

Purpose

2. The purpose of this policy is to set out the University's commitment and approach to the safety and wellbeing of its staff, students and visitors through the implementation and management of a documented safety and wellness management system and the continuous improvement of safety and wellness in the workplace.

Related documents

3. The following documents set out further information relevant to this policy:
 - [Code of Student Conduct](#)
 - [Education \(Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners\) Code of Practice 2021](#)
 - [Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#)
 - [Health and Safety at Work \(General Risk and Workplace Management\) Regulations 2016](#)
 - [Staff Code of Conduct](#)
 - [Students with Disabilities and Impairments Policy](#)
 - [University of Waikato Safety and Wellness Management System – Principles and Requirements](#)

Definitions

4. In this policy:

hazard means a situation, conditions or source that has the potential to lead to harm or loss. A hazard is not the negative outcome itself.

incident means an event which had the potential to give rise to injury, ill health, damage, loss or fatality, but did not do so, also known as a near-miss or a near-hit

just culture means learning from unsafe acts in order to improve the level of safety awareness through the improved recognition of safety situations and helps to develop conscious articulation and sharing of safety information

Officer means a person who makes decisions that affect the whole, or a substantial part, of the University as set out in [section 18](#) of the [Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#)

reasonably practicable means something which is, or was, at a particular time, reasonably able to be done in relation to ensuring safety and wellness, considering all relevant matters.

risk means the probability of suffering harm or loss from exposure to a hazard.

safety means the prevention of harm, including work related injury and illness and psychosocial harm

safety and wellness management system means a systematic approach to managing safety and wellness, including the necessary organisational structures, accountabilities, policies and procedures

staff member means “worker” as set out in [section 19](#) of the [Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#), including employees of the University, employees of a controlled entity of the University, Council members, contractors or consultants engaged by or working at the University, volunteers and any other person providing services to or at the University

worker means an individual who carries out work in any capacity for the University

workplace means a place where work is being carried out, or is customarily carried out, including any place where a worker goes, or is likely to be, while at work. This includes the use of University vehicles.

Principles

5. The University is committed to:
 - a. an effective workplace safety and wellness management system with evaluation and management review for continuous improvement
 - b. a standardised safety risk management process that is consistent with the nature, activities and scale of its operation, to ensure workplace hazards are eliminated or, where elimination is not possible, identified, assessed, controlled and reviewed
 - c. complying with all applicable health and safety legislation, Approved Codes of Practice, Australian/New Zealand Joint Standards, Good Practice Guidelines and other requirements
 - d. establishing measurable objectives and targets for safety and wellness aimed at the elimination of work-related harm and at continuous system improvement
 - e. providing and disseminating appropriate safety and wellness information, instruction, training and supervision to staff, students and visitors
 - f. allocating sufficient financial and physical resources to enable the effective implementation of this policy, and
 - g. implementing and maintaining a process to engage all staff, so far as reasonably practicable, for consultation and where there is an impact on their safety and wellness while at work, for decision making.

Leadership and culture

6. The University promotes excellence in safety and wellness leadership and a positive culture of safety and wellness by:
 - a. ensuring the University’s work safety and wellness management system is appropriate to the University’s operation and is implemented consistently across all campuses, parts and functions of the University
 - b. integrating safety and wellbeing risk management into all aspects of its business
 - c. encouraging and supporting innovative, healthy and safe work practices and systems of work
 - d. determining, in consultation with staff and the staff unions as appropriate, safety and wellbeing outcomes

- e. improving the University's safety and wellbeing performance
- f. ensuring staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve appropriate safety and wellbeing outcomes, and
- g. ensuring the application of a 'just culture' for safety incidents and events.

Responsibilities

7. The University of Waikato is a 'person conducting a business or undertaking' (PCBU) under the [Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#) and the University of Waikato Council and the Vice-Chancellor, as Officers of the PCBU, will exercise due diligence to ensure that the University complies with all of its duties and obligations in accordance with the Act.
8. Executive managers (e.g. Pro Vice-Chancellors, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Directors or equivalent) are responsible for exercising due diligence equivalent to that of Officers and leadership that ensures effective implementation of the University's safety and wellness management system across the areas of their portfolios.
9. Senior managers (e.g. Heads of School, or equivalent) are responsible for implementing the University's safety and wellness management system and for supporting managers in fulfilling their responsibilities and accountabilities across the areas of their portfolios.
10. Staff, students and visitors are responsible for:
 - a. taking reasonable care of their own safety and the safety of others, and
 - b. complying with any reasonable instruction, policy or procedure of the University in relation to safety.
11. The Associate Director Safety and Wellness is responsible for the provision of a safety and wellness management system that upholds the principles set out in this policy and includes associated monitoring and reporting.

Responsibility for monitoring compliance

12. The Director of People and Capability is responsible for monitoring compliance with this policy and reporting any breaches to the Vice-Chancellor.
13. Breaches of this policy by staff may result in disciplinary action under the [Staff Code of Conduct](#).
14. Breaches of this policy by students may result in disciplinary action under the [Code of Student Conduct](#).
15. Breaches of this policy by contractors will be managed in accordance with the relevant contract.

Note

The term 'School' in this policy includes Faculties and the term 'Head of School' includes Deans.