

Health and Safety - Issue Resolution Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose / Objectives

(1) This Procedure aims to provide a framework for the timely resolution of occupational health and safety (OHS) issues, and is made pursuant to section 73(1) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 .

Section 2 - Scope / Application

(2) This Procedure applies to the University for OHS issues.

(3) This Procedure excludes issues that have a specific procedure i.e [Animal Welfare Complaints Procedure](#).

Section 3 - Definitions

(4) An OHS issue is a problem, question or concern that individuals may have regarding hazards identified in the workplace.

Section 4 - Policy Statement

(5) See [Health and Safety Policy](#).

Section 5 - Procedures

Part A - Procedures

(6) OHS issue resolution is the process by which any OHS issue should be raised by employees and addressed by managers, with a view to ensuring a consistent and effective approach to hazard management.

(7) It is an obligation of ALL employees to report all OHS issues in the workplace. If a hazard is noted then the employee should endeavour to immediately correct if possible i.e remove a box blocking the exit door.

(8) The process by which an OHS issue should be raised is as follows:

- a. Where an employee identifies an OHS issue within the workplace, they must bring the matter to the attention of the Supervisor/ Manager of the work area involved. Initially this should be done verbally and by use of the Hazard Report form online in the VU Hazard/Incident Reporting System (located under 'Incident management').
- b. A consultative process must be employed to endeavour to resolve the OHS Issue in particular:
 - i. Where there is an elected employee Health and Safety Representative (HSR) for the Designated Work Group this person must be included in the discussion on how the issue should be resolved.
 - ii. With those affected either by the OHS issue or the method by which it is proposed to be resolved.

- c. The Supervisor/ manager of the work area, the employee and /or HSR (where there is one) must meet to discuss how the issue should be resolved as soon as possible after the issue has been reported.

Where timely resolution is reached

(9) If the supervisor and employee/HSR are able to reach agreement on the means to deal with the OHS issue, the matter is then regarded as satisfactorily resolved at the local level.

(10) Actions should be recorded in the VU Hazard/ Incident Reporting System (located under 'Incident management'). Satisfactory resolution would include:

- a. immediate settlement of this and any related concerns;
- b. an agreed plan and timetable for future action, if immediate action is not possible.

(11) Once the satisfactory resolution has occurred the HSR (or the Supervisor where there is no HSR) must communicate the outcome to the employees affected. This communication can be via email or by verbal briefing.

What happens if the issue cannot be resolved?

(12) If the issue cannot be resolved at the local level or it cannot be resolved in a timely manner any of the parties in the work area can escalate the issue to the next level up management representative and the OHS Team via P&C Service Centre. It is recommended that this should be documented with details of the issue and any actions taken previously to try and resolve it.

(13) The employee, HSR, Manager and OHS team member will then engage in an attempt to reach agreement. Satisfactory resolution would include immediate settlement of this and any related concerns as well as an agreed plan and timetable for future action.

(14) If no satisfactory agreement can be reached the OHS issue may be escalated to higher level of management for resolution.

(15) If no satisfactory agreement can be reached the HSR may, in accordance with Section 60 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 , issue a Provisional Improvement Notice.

(16) Any party at any stage of the procedure may also call a WorkSafe Inspector. A WorkSafe Inspector can assist in the resolution of an issue by performing any of their functions as they consider reasonably necessary in the circumstances. It should be noted that a Worksafe Inspector on being contacted will enquire whether the issue has been reported and/or activation of the issue resolution procedure.

Part B - Immediate serious safety issues

(17) Where there is immediate and significant threat to a person's health or safety, a directive to cease work can be made. The employee and/ or the HSR will inform the Supervisor / Manager of the work area who will call an immediate halt to work. In the event the Supervisor / Manager cannot be contacted then the HSR will direct affected employees to cease work and contact the OHS Team via P&C Service Centre.

(18) The issue resolution procedure will then be followed. Alternative duties may be found for affected employees in the meantime.

Part C - Health and Safety Committee

(19) The Health and Safety Committee is a consultative committee. Its role in this procedure is for reporting of the issue and resolution for information and dissemination to employees. The Health and Safety Committee is not an

escalation pathway.

Part D - Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Everyone working at VU	To follow the process outlined when a health and safety issue arises.
Executives and Leaders	Ensure a consultative process is employed in resolving the OHS issue. Provision of resources, as far as reasonably practicable, to resolve issues based on sound safety management.
Manager and Supervisors	Ensure VU staff are aware of the current procedure for OHS issue resolution. When an issue is raised they follow the process to resolve the issue promptly. Ensure a consultative process is employed in resolving the OHS issue. If resolution is not met then escalate the issue promptly.
Teachers, Academic Staff and Researchers	Ensure VU staff are aware of the current procedure for OHS issue resolution. When an issue is raised they follow the process to resolve the issue promptly. Ensure a consultative process is employed in resolving the OHS issue. If resolution is not met then escalate the issue promptly.
Health and Safety Representative	Assist with the resolution of safety issues raised within their designated work group.
OHS Team	To act as OHS expert to assist the employee and management to discuss and resolve ohs issues promptly. Assist with the liaison with external parties approached to assist with issue resolution.

Part E - OHS Issue Resolution Flowchart- Reference Parts B to D

(20) See [OHS Issue Resolution Flowchart](#).

(21) The flowchart supports the [Staff Complaints Resolution Policy](#) and the [Health and Safety Policy](#) and directly reflects the OHS Act 2004 and OHS Regulations and [WorkSafe guide 'Resolving occupational health and safety issues 2012'](#).

Section 6 - Guidelines

(22) Nil

Section 7 - References and Supporting Documents

(23) This procedure is required to support the following:

- a. [Health and Safety Policy](#)
- b. [Health and Safety - OHS Consultation Procedure](#)

(24) The following documents have been referenced in this procedure:

- a. Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

- b. [WorkSafe guide 'Resolving occupational health and safety issues 2012'](#)
- c. [Staff Complaints Resolution Policy](#)

Status and Details

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