

## **Health and Safety Support Staff – person and position specifications, Departmental committees.**

Managers can also nominate a support person(s) to undertake delegated health and safety responsibilities of their behalf. The role of a safety support officer is explained in this document. An alternative to a safety support person is a Departmental (or equivalent unit) safety committee. The function if Departmental safety committees are also explained.

### **Role of Safety Support Officers**

The legislation places responsibility for health and safety with those who manage employees, i.e. Heads of Departments, Institutes, or Schools and Managers of Sections or Units. As such Health and safety should be a standing item on all management meetings, or regularly reviewed by managers.

To ensure compliance with health and safety minimums it is managers may allocate health and safety matters to a designated safety support officer. In the absence of formal delegation it is assumed by the courts the manager wishes to undertake safety duties personally.

Indicative responsibilities for safety support officers who support managers follow:

**Objective:** To assist the manager in the application of safety policy and practice at a workplace level by:

- To provide a source of advice to the manager on health and safety matters.
- To review adequacy of hazard management within the workplace and processes undertaken by the Department, Institute, School, Section, Unit or equivalent. Copies of general department hazard identification and risk assessments should be supplied to the Regional Health and Safety Advisor to ensure coordination of hazard management across campus.
- To assist with accident investigation. It is recommended that for events, which could have been more serious that the manager co-opt independent health and safety expertise external to their area of control. Both the independent investigator and the manager need to sign off investigations as complete.
- To review accident reports and ensure appropriate investigation and follow up has occurred.
- To identify areas of concern in the workplace, refer these to the manager.
- To provide an opportunity for the active involvement of colleagues or employee representatives in health and safety including the identification and management of hazards in the workplace.
- Assist with coordination of health and safety management on the campus for mutual benefit of campus users.

### **Safety Support Officer - Person Specification:**

Where managers delegate safety responsibilities to a support person the officer is to ensure health and safety management responsibilities are effectively completed on behalf of the manager. The safety support person should be familiar with the

technical aspects of processes undertaken within the department, and have sufficient authority to act on behalf of the manager in safety matters if required. If the safety support officer is not a senior manager, then it is recommended they are included on Department, Institute, School, Section, Unit or equivalent management meetings when health and safety issues are discussed.

### **Departmental Safety Committees:**

An alternative to a nominated individual with delegated safety responsibilities or in addition to a nominated safety support officer is to establish Departmental, Section, School, or Institute safety committee. Committees are more effective at facilitating staff involvement if elected health and safety representatives are included, and allow more comprehensive communication of issues of interest and concern to staff.

However, it is more difficult to hold a committee accountable for ensuring compliance responsibilities.

Managers may establish a Departmental, Section, School, Institute or College Health and Safety Committees. The purpose of the committee should follow the indicative responsibilities of safety support officers detailed above.

If the disciplines in a College have similar health and safety risk profile then a single health and safety committee at college level will be sufficient. For disciplines or activities with significant risks further sub committee(s) may be required. The PVC, or Heads of Departments, Institutes, Schools or equivalent would need to initiate a more detailed structure if needed.

### **Regional Health and Safety Committees:**

At minimum there must be a College support officer who represents the College at Regional Safety Committee meetings.