Work, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Section 1 - Background

(1) Australian Catholic University (ACU) operates across multiple Australian jurisdictions and must comply with Model work health and safety laws in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Queensland, and South Australia, and the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004(Vic).

Section 2 - Purpose

(2) This Policy articulates ACU's commitment to establishing, implementing, maintaining and continuously improving its Work Health and Safety Management System (WHSMS). It affirms the University's commitment to providing a safe working and learning environment, and to promoting the health and wellbeing of its community. ACU will manage, so far as is reasonably practicable, risks to physical and psychological health and safety across all ACU workplaces, in accordance with applicable legislation and contemporary regulatory expectations.

Section 3 - Application

(3) This Policy applies to all staff members, staff representatives, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors engaged in workplaces or participating in University-related activities, whether in Australia or overseas. It applies to all activities undertaken by, or under the control or influence of, the University.

Section 4 - Definitions

(4) Within this Policy, the following terms are used as defined:

Definition	Explanation
Officer	A person who makes, or participates in making, decisions that affect the whole or a substantial part of ACU. Officer status is determined by applicable WHS/OHS legislation and the person's role and influence. Where a person is an officer, they must exercise due diligence to support ACU's compliance with its duties. This includes taking reasonable steps to keep up to date on WHS/OHS matters, understand ACU's operations and hazards, ensure appropriate resources and processes are available, and verify those processes are used.
Work group	A group of workers represented by Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) on each campus, who in many cases share similar work conditions (for example, all the professional and academic staff members on the Strathfield Campus).
PCBU	Person Conducting a Business Undertaking
Psychosocial Hazard	Any factor in the design, management or carrying out of work, or in personal or work-related interactions, that may cause a negative psychological response and create a risk to health or safety.
Psychosocial Health	Includes cognitive, emotional and behavioural wellbeing and the ability to cope with normal work-related stressors while contributing productively to the University community.

Section 5 - Policy Statement

(5) The University is committed to:

a. providing a welcoming, safe and health working and learning environment for all staff, students, contractors, volunteers and visitors;
b. implementing, maintaining and continuously improving its WHSMS, with the objective of eliminating risks so far is reasonably practical, and where elimination is not possible, minimising risks to physical and psychosocial health and safety;
c. supporting and promoting wellbeing initiatives that complement risk management strategies and contribute to a positive and proactive safety culture;
d. complying with applicable work and health and safety legislation, regulations, Codes of Practice, standards and guidelines, and relevant University policies and procedures;
e. engaging in meaningful, timely and two-way consultation with workers, HSRs, contractors and other relevant stakeholders on matters relating to health, safety and wellbeing, including hazard identification, assessment and control of risks, and review of control effectiveness;
f. promoting a proactive safety culture in which the reporting of hazards, incidents, injuries and near misses is encouraged, supported and appropriately actioned to strengthen risk controls and improve organisational performance;
g. identifying and controlling significant WHS risks, in collaboration with staff and contractors, and opportunities for improving the WHSMS;
h. supporting sustainable, timely and safe return to work programs for staff experiencing work-related injury or illness, consistent with legislative obligations and the University's commitment to recovery and wellbeing;
i. integrating work, health and safety into University governance, planning, operational and decision-making processes, to ensure the WHSMS remains suitable, adequate and effective; and
j. provide appropriate resources, training, supervision, instruction and support to enable leaders, staff and others to understand fulfill their WHS/OHS responsibilities, to confidently apply safe systems of work, and contribute to a positive workplace safety culture.
k. preventing psychological injury by identifying, assessing, and controlling psychosocial hazards arising from work design, the management of work, workplace interactions and the work environment;
l. reviewing risk controls, including psychosocial risk controls, following changes to work systems, incidents, new information, or requests from HSRs; and
m. consulting with staff, students, contractors, and HSRs when identifying psychosocial hazards, determining control measures, and reviewing their effectiveness, consistent with section 35 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 and regulation 9 of the Occupational Health and Safety (Psychological Health) Regulations 2025.

Section 6 - Roles and Responsibilities

All Staff and Students

(6) ACU has the primary duty to provide and maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable, a working and learning environment that is safe and without risks to health. Staff and students contribute to health, safety and wellbeing by taking reasonable care for their own health and safety and the health and safety of others, and are able to do this by:

a. understanding how they contribute to the WHSMS;
b. actively participating in WHS and Wellbeing consultations;

c. engaging with risk assessment and management processes;
d. confidently apply safe work instructions or procedures;
e. identifying and reporting hazards, incidents, injuriesm and 'near misses' within Riskware, ACU's online reporting system; and
f. participating in WHSMS improvement opportunities, such as participating in WHS inspections and completing ergonomic checklists.

Senior Executive and Executive Staff

(7) Certain members of the Senior Executive and Executive Staff may meet the definition of an officer under applicable WHS/OHS legislation. Where a person is an officer, their due diligence obligations arise from legislation. ACU may also allocate internal responsibilities to Senior Executive and Executive Staff to support compliance with ACU's duties as an employer or as a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU). This allocation does not transfer ACU's primary statutory duties. Senior Executive and Executive Staff must maintain current WHS knowledge, ensure ACU controls its WHS risks, and allocate sufficient resources to ensure the WHSMS is implemented, maintained and continuously improved and aligned with other business processes and University frameworks.

(8) Senior Executive and Executive Staff also:

a. demonstrate leadership by ensuring this Policy and WHS objectives and targets are established, aligned with the strategic direction of the University and are achievable;
b. are accountable, within their areas of responsibility, for ensuring significant WHS risks are identified and controlled, and appropriate safe systems of work are regularly reviewed and maintained;
c. actively monitoring and evaluating health and safety management;
d. continuously learn about WHS matters, including compliance obligations, respond to information about incidents, hazards, WHS risks and opportunities, and implement processes to control these risks and continuously improve the WHSMS;
e. engage in two-way consultations with staff and others, including contractors, about WHS risk and initiate reviews of the WHSMS, every two years, to ensure that it is suitable, adequate and effective.
f. ensure psychosocial hazards are identified and associated risks are eliminated or reduced so far as reasonably practicable in their areas of responsibility;
g. respond promptly to reported psychosocial hazards or wellbeing concerns; and
h. ensure there are appropriate processes to respond promptly to reported psychosocial hazards or wellbeing concerns and maintain effective risk controls.

Safety and Wellbeing Team

(9) The Safety and Wellbeing Team provides specialist advice and system-level support to enable the effective implementation and continuous improvement of the University's WHSMS.

(10) The Team supports the University community by:

a. providing expert guidance on hazard identification, risk assessment and the selection of appropriate control measures;
b. developing and maintaining WHS policies, procedures, tools and frameworks;
c. supporting consultation processes with workers and HSRs;
d. assisting with incident response, investigation and reporting processes;
e. monitoring WHS performance data and identifying emerging risk trends; and
f. advising on legislative requirements and regulatory developments.

(11) The Safety and Wellbeing Team provides advisory and assurance functions and supports compliance; however, it does not assume statutory duties or operational responsibility for managing risks. Primary accountability for health and safety, including the implementation of risk controls, remains with officers, leaders, managers and other duty holders in accordance with applicable WHS/OHS legislation.

Campus Work Health and Safety Committees

(12) Campus WHS Committees represent staff and students and help to improve the University's WHSMS and the management of WHS risks and opportunities. They review incidents, injuries, near misses and hazards, and make recommendations about corrective actions to apply learnings from these events. Committee Members review WHS risk registers, conduct WHS inspections and actively participate in WHS consultations. Members are updated about the work the Work Health and Safety Management Committee (WHSMC) is undertaking to improve health and safety outcomes.

Work Health and Safety Management Committee

(13) The Work Health and Safety Management Committee (WHSMC) provides University-wide oversight of the WHSMS. The Committee monitors health and safety performance, emerging risks and trends, sets WHS direction, objectives and targets, and reviews the suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of the WHSMS.

(14) The WHSMC provides assurance that appropriate consultation arrangements are in place across the University, and that significant physical and psychosocial risks are identified and effectively managed. The Committee promotes leadership accountability and continuous improvement by ensuring that the WHSMS is applied to those working and learning activities that they manage or influence.

Health and Safety Representatives

(15) Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) are elected to represent staff within designated work groups and play an importrant role in consultation, issue resolution and the continuous improvement of health and safety practices across the University.

(16) In accordance with applicable legislation, HSRs:

a. represent staff in consultation on matters relating to health and safety, including physical and psychosocial hazards and risks;
b. request reviews of risk controls to understand their effectiveness and contribute to their improvement;
c. raise and facilitate resolution of WHS concerns within their work group and escalate matters where required by following appropriate processes; and
d. exercise powers and functions conferred under legislation.

Contractors

(17) Contractors are responsible for ensuring, so far as reasonably practicable, the health and safety of their workers and others affected by their activities. They must comply with applicable legislation, consult, co-operate and co-ordinate activities with ACU, implement and apply safe systems of work, and formally identify, assess and control risks arising from their work.

Section 7 - Revisions made to this Policy

(18) The University may make changes to this Policy from time to time to improve its effectiveness. If any staff member wishes to make any comments about this Policy, they should forward their suggestions to People and

Capability.

Section 8 - Further Assistance

(19) Any staff member who requires assistance in understanding this Policy should first consult their nominated supervisor, who is responsible for the implementation and operation of the WHSMS within their work area. Should further information or advice be required, staff should visit Service Central.

Section 9 - Associated Information

(20) For related legislation, policies, procedures and guidelines and any supporting resources, please refer to the Associated Information tab.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	24th August 2026
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Approval Authority	Governance Officer
Approval Date	24th August 2026
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Angelle Laurence Chief People Officer
Responsible Manager	Adrian Taylor National Manager, Safety and Wellbeing
Enquiries Contact	Bernardine Lynch ER and Safety Committees and Policy Officer People and Capability