WHS Risk Management Procedure

Section 1 - Governing Policy

(1) This Procedure is governed by the Work, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy and is a critical component of the University's Work Health and Safety Management System (WHSMS).

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Procedure applies to all staff members, staff representatives, students, visitors, volunteers and contractors. The scope of the University's Work Health and Safety Management System (WHSMS or framework) also extends to assessing and managing the significant, on site and off site, WHS risks, which ACU manages and influences.

(3) During bi-annual reviews of the WHSMS, the University will also assess and manage the WHS risks which impact upon its capacity to achieve the intended outcomes for the framework.

Section 3 - Definitions

Term	Explanation
Administration Controls	Safe Work Method Statements, signage and other procedural treatments (controls) are designed to minimise hazard exposures and risk. For example, using signage to alert people about a hazard or procedures for conducting chemical mixing processes.
Chemwatch	ACU is a subscriber to the Chemwatch chemical inventory management database. Users access the database from Chemwatch and should submit a Service Central request to obtain organisational unit login details, for each campus, from local Employment Relations and Safety staff.
Elimination	The most effective control measure treatment) within the Hierarchy of Control is to eliminate the hazard and associated risk. For example, you could remove trip hazards on the floor or by disposing of unwanted chemicals.
Engineering Controls	A treatment that is physical, including a mechanical device or process. For instance, using a trolley in the library to move heavy books.
Hierarchy of Risk Control	A system used in industry to minimize or eliminate exposure to hazards. The hazard controls in the hierarchy are, in order of decreasing effectiveness: Elimination, Substitution, Isolation, Engineering, Administration and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
Australian Dangerous Goods	Substances or articles that pose a risk to people, property or the environment, due to their chemical or physical properties. They are usually classified with reference to their immediate risk.
Hazard	A situation or thing that has the potential to harm a person. Examples of hazards: noisy machinery, a moving forklift, chemicals, tight and continuous deadlines, electricity, working at heights, a repetitive job, bullying and violence at the workplace.
Isolate	Involves physically separating the source of harm from people by distance or using barriers. For instance, install guard rails around exposed edges of a building.
Personal Protective Equipment	Examples of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) include earmuffs, gloves, respirators and protective eye wear. PPE limits exposure to the harmful effects of a hazard but only when they are worn.

Plant	Any machinery, equipment or tool, and any component. This is a broad definition covering a wide range of items, ranging from complex installations to portable equipment and tools. Examples include: 1) cranes, forklifts, hoists and elevated work platforms; 2) hand tools (either powered or non-powered) including drills, hammers, saws, and computers.
Risk	Is the possibility that harm (death, injury, illness, property damage or environmental impacts) might occur when exposed to a hazard(s). Threats to the University's Work Health and Safety Management System are also classified as risk.
Risk control	Taking action(s) to eliminate WHS risks so far as is reasonably practicable, and if that is not possible, minimising the risks so far as is reasonably practicable. For example, a staircase may be repaired to reduce the risk of people falling down the stairs. Also, refer to the Hierarchy of Risk Control.
Substitution	Substitution is a Level 2 Control Measure (treatments within the Hierarchy of Risk Control, which involves substituting the hazard within something safer e.g. replacing solvent-based paints with water-based paints.
Risk Treatment	Risk Treatment is the process of selecting and implementing of measures to modify risk. Risk treatment measures can include avoiding, optimizing, transferring or retaining risk.

Section 4 - Background

(4) ACU is committed to improving its Work Health and Safety Management System (WHSMS or framework) by continuously improving its capacity to eliminate and minimise WHS risks to staff members, students, visitors, volunteers and contractors and the framework.

Section 5 - Shared Responsibilities for Managing Risks

(5) ACU staff members and students should actively identify hazards and risks on a day-to-day basis within working and learning areas.

(6) Staff members should also collaborate with their Nominated Supervisor or Manager to identify and resolve hazards and associated risks. For example, a staff member may remove a box from a thoroughfare to remove a trip hazard or place a box on a lower shelf to remove a falling object hazard.

(7) They also log reports of hazards, within Riskware, which cannot be easily resolved. They should also promptly log near misses, incidents and injuries within Riskware. These reports are assessed by Nominated Supervisors and other staff for any relevant WHS risks and documented within Riskware Action Plans within five working days.

(8) Many hazards should also be formally assessed for WHS risk, using tools such as the WHS Risk Assessment Form, by organisational units prior to introducing new changes to the workplace and during regular reviews of risks and prior to commencing activities which have not been assessed for risk, and it is not immediately clear what hazards, risks and solutions are associated with these activities.

(9) Some examples of the hazards that may be associated with University activities, include: electrical hazards, long work hours, poor manual handling techniques, dangerous goods or hazardous chemicals, workplace fatigue, exposure to threats of violence, sharps or needle exposures, inadequate lighting, wet surfaces and long-term exposures to loud noises.

(10) Staff conduct or participate in formal WHS risk assessments using a relevant ACU tool, form or Riskware Action Plan. They also apply any treatments and processes that are developed to manage these risks. They also participate in WHSMS improvement opportunities such as conducting WHS inspections, completing a Workstation Ergonomics

Checklist or Job Safety Analysis Form. 'Walk arounds' are also used to identify hazards. Refer to Section 6 for more information about these tools.

Section 6 - Use the University's Risk Management Tools

(11) ACU publishes and provides access to a range of tools that should be used by organisational units to identify and manage their significant WHS risks and resolve hazards. Refer to Section 9 for more guidance.

Table 1: Risk Management Tools and Triggers for Using these Tools

WHSMS Forms and Tools	Purpose of this Tool?	Frequency of Use	Responsibility
WHS Inspection Checklists for: 1) Offices (WHS Inspection Checklist for Offices); 2) Properties and Grounds (WHS Inspection Checklist for Buildings and Grounds); 3) Simulated Laboratories (WHS Inspection Checklist for Simulation Learning Environment); and 4) Laboratories (WHS Inspection Checklist for Laboratories).	• Supports organisational units and WHS Committee Members to quickly identify and resolve hazards within working and learning areas; and • These inspections support staff to remove trip, falling objects and other hazards from working and learning areas. Note: WHS Inspections should be an essential risk management activity.	• Schedule every 3 - 6 months, within 'high risk' environments, such as laboratories; and • Conduct every 6 - 12 months within low to moderate risk areas.	• Staff should volunteer to conduct these inspections; and • Executive Staff and/or their Nominees should ensure that these inspections are regularly conducted.
'Walk throughs'	This informal process, of walking through areas, supports staff, contractors and others to identify issues of concern. Complements other risk management activities.	Every month within 'high risk' areas such as laboratories	• Staff who are working within 'high risk' areas such as laboratories; and • Executive staff can complete these 'walk throughs' to increase their understanding of relevant risks.
Job Safety Analysis Form	• Used to identify and resolve hazards that are associated with 'high risk' tasks; • Supports staff to identify contributing factors to injuries as each relevant work task should be assessed for hazards; and • Supports staff to systematically identify and resolve hazards.	Schedule as required and prioritise using the tool for higher risk activities	• Executive Staff and/Senior Managers should influence staff to use this tool; and • Staff contribute to reducing risks by conducting a Job Safety Analysis Form.

WHSMS Forms and Tools	Purpose of this Tool?	Frequency of Use	Responsibility
Riskware Reports	• Assess and manage relevant risks which may be identified whenever a report of a hazard, near miss, incident or injury is submitted. • Riskware reports can highlight deficiencies in the treatments that are applied to manage risk and can facilitate improvements; • Helps the University to identify and manage risks; and • Supports organisational units to provide support to staff, students and others who are impacted by incidents and injuries.	• Whenever staff and students are concerned about hazards which cannot be easily resolved; and • Whenever near misses, incidents, injuries and work-related illnesses occur.	• Staff and students should submit incidents which impact upon themselves or others, including visitors, volunteers and contractors; and • Nominated Supervisors and other staff should complete a Riskware Action Plan to manage the report within 5 working days.
Workstation Ergonomics Checklist	• Supports staff to work efficiently and safety at their workstation; and • Contributes to reducing injuries which are associated with workstations.	Schedule at least annually	All staff members
WHS Risk Assessment Form	• Supports staff to systematically identify and document the hazards, risks and treatments which are associated with a thing or activity (Whenever it is not immediately clear what the issues and solutions are); • Should inform decision making about which risks are managed and how they should be treated; and • Supports organisational units to improve their governance by assessing hazards, associated risks and treatment options.	• During annual and more frequent reviews of risks; • Whenever working and learning areas are proposing to introduce changes that impact upon existing practices and risks; and • Whenever Riskware reports expose gaps in the application and management of risk.	• Staff, contractors and others should conduct WHS risk assessments in collaboration with their Nominated Supervisors; and • Members of the Senior Executive and Executive Staff should ensure that regular reviews of risk are conducted, and formal risk assessments are initiated whenever they are required.
Chemwatch Risk Management and Credo Modules	Support relevant staff to systematically identify and manage the hazards and associated risks which are associated with each hazardous chemical and manage these risks.	• During annual and more frequent reviews of risks; • Prior to purchasing new hazardous chemicals; and • During the planning for a new practical demonstration within learning spaces.	• Staff, contractors and others should conduct WHS risk assessments in collaboration with their Nominated Supervisors; and • Members of the Senior Executive and Executive Staff should ensure that regular reviews of risk are conducted, and formal risk assessments are initiated whenever they are required.
Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS)	Provides staff, students, contractors and others with instructions that support them to safely perform and activity Note: A critical component of risk management activities which is informed by formal WHS Risk Assessments, manuals and other resources.	Produce as required (likely to be informed by risk assessments)	Relevant staff members

Section 7 - Reviews of Risks Should be Conducted

(12) Members of the Senior Executive and Executive are responsible for ensuring that reviews of WHS and general risks are conducted, at least annually, within their working and learning areas. These reviews should result in gaps in

risk management being identified and managed.

(13) Some of the WHS risks, which are identified by this review, should be informed by a formal WHS risk assessment whenever it is not immediately clear what hazards, risks and solutions are associated with an activity or thing. These assessments should be conducted by staff members that have a good working knowledge of existing processes or have relevant subject matter expertise. Refer to Section 8 for more information.

(14) Relevant managers, Nominated Supervisors, subject matter experts and others should be engaged in this review, which should result in the University's significant risks being identified and managed, including risks which are associated with major construction projects, community engagement activities and a broad range of working and learning activities.

(15) Some Members of the Senior Executive and Executive staff also contribute to the formal assessment of WHS risks during the bi-annual reviews of the WHSMS, including those risks which impact upon the framework and its capacity to achieve the University's intended outcomes. Refer to the WHSMS Planning Procedure for more information.

(16) Annual reviews should be conducted by the end of the first quarter, each year, and risks should be reviewed more frequently within 'higher risk' environments. Other reviews of risks and treatments should also be conducted whenever proposed changes to working and learning practices, are being considered by organisational units and gaps in risks managements are identified. See Section 7 for a more detailed listing of the circumstances which may trigger these additional reviews.

(17) These reviews should be documented and should be retrievable during WHSMS audits, incident investigations, WHS regulator investigations and inspections, and subsequent reviews of WHS risks and treatments. They should also be made available to Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) whenever this information is requested by these staff.

Table 2: An example of a basic template that could be used by work areas to document the hazards, WHS risks and treatments that are identified during these reviews.

Assessment of what?	File Paths: Relevant WHS Risk Assessments	System	Hazard(s)	Risk(s)	Treatment(s)
Practical demonstrations in learning spaces	WHSMS/WHS Risk Assessments/Manual Handling	WHS SharePoint site	Manual Handling	Staff sustaining back, shoulder and other injuries	All identified staff will attend manual handling training; and Manual handling tools will be provided to staff.

Guidance about Conducting a Review of Risks

(18) The review of WHS risks should be a collaborative process and conducted in consultation with anyone that could be exposed to the hazard(s), is familiar with work processes and/or has specialist knowledge about the hazard(s) and risk(s).

(19) Hazards may be associated with using plant, chemical substances, machinery, workload, field trips, research, work processes or other aspects of the working or learning environments, including footpaths, which may impact upon staff, students, visitors, volunteers and/or contractors.

(20) There may be a range of different hazards and associated risks that are part of the same working or learning process (within laboratories, learning or teaching spaces) or are associated with plant and equipment which may impact on different people or each other to present greater levels of risk. The scope of these WHS risks should be documented within a WHS risk assessment.

(21) Organisational units should identify things, situations and activities that could potentially cause harm to people, property and/or the environment.

(22) Observational 'walk arounds' the environments which are being assessed for risks can assist work areas to identify WHS issues that may be easily resolved or formally assessed for WHS risk.

(23) These and other review processes should support staff, contractors and others to assess:

a. whether staff, students, volunteers or contractors are carrying out working or learning activities without risks to their safety (e.g. unobstructed movements, adequate ventilation and enough lighting);
b. the suitability of tools and equipment for tasks and whether they are appropriately maintained (e.g. is the configuration of a workstation likely to aggravate a repetitive strain injury or should manual handling aids, such as trolleys, be used to reduce the risk of back injuries?); and
c. whether changes within working and learning environments are likely to impact upon physical or mental health and safety.

(24) The risks associated with work stressors or long hours may be identified by regularly checking in with staff and engaging in open dialogue about these pressures and potential solutions. Riskware reports about stress-related injuries and myVoice Survey results and other feedback mechanisms and consultations, may also inform this review.

Guidance about Conducting a Review of Risk Treatments

(25) The following considerations should be considered in the review of treatments:

a. considering whether accountability has been fully assigned to staff members, including Nominated Supervisors or Managers, and they have the authority to implement and maintain effective treatments;
b. changes in working and learning spaces, which present new threats, should trigger a reassessment of the treatments that are applied to manage WHS risk;
c. ensuring that plant and equipment is regularly maintained;
d. ensuring that staff members or students that apply treatments have 'up to date' training and competency and are committed to applying them;
e. verifying that staff members, students, contractors and others apply safe work procedures;
f. the updating of hazard information, including Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for chemical substances, may impact on the treatments that should be applied;
g. there have been changes to operating conditions, such as the relocation of facilities, or the ways in which tasks are carried out;
h. temporary or permanent changes within working or learning spaces;
i. injury or other Riskware reports provide evidence that treatments are not being effectively applied or are ineffective; and
j. consultations with staff members or Health and Safety Representatives (HSR) may identify other changes that should be made to treatments.

Section 8 - Triggers for Reassessing Risks and Treatments Throughout the Year

(26) In addition to annual assessment and review of hazards, associated WHS risks and the ways in which they are treated, WHS risks should be reassessed whenever there are changes to working or learning environments, such as the establishment of new projects, which could impact upon the threats which may be present within these areas, or

the ways which these risks should be treated (controlled).

(27) Some other relevant triggers:

a. introducing or changing services, processes and other aspects of working and learning environments;
b. the design of new capital projects or the design of existing facilities;
c. prior to the commencement of work activities involving contractors;
d. an organisational unit is proposing to purchase a new chemical substance that may be hazardous and/or is classified as a dangerous good;
e. relocating to different working and learning locations and surroundings;
f. there is only limited knowledge about a hazard or risk or how the risk may result in injury, illness, property damage or environmental impacts;
g. more information is available about hazards and treatments should be modified to account for this new knowledge;
h. changes in knowledge or technology that may inform the identification of new hazards or the way the associated WHS risks are managed;
i. there is uncertainty about whether all relevant threats have been identified;
j. staff have expressed concerns about work pressures; and
k. gaps in treatments for managing WHS risks may be identified through incidents, injuries, near misses or hazards which have been logged in Riskware. For example, an uneven surface or fatigue may have contributed to an injury.

(28) Organisational units also complement these risk management activities by conducting WHS Inspections, Job Safety Analyses, WHS Risk Management Plans for large projects and logging and managing Riskware reports.

Section 9 - Using a WHS Risk Assessment Form to Formally Assess WHS Risks

(29) Organisational Units should conduct WHS risk assessments during review reviews of risks and whenever they are proposing to make changes to working and learning areas. These assessments are only required whenever it is not immediately clear what hazards, risks and solutions (treatments) are associated with an activity or thing.

(30) The following steps provide guidance about completing a WHS risk assessment, using either the:

a. WHS Risk Assessment Form; or
b. WHS Risk Assessment Form for Practical Activities/Research.

(31) Similar methodologies are applied whenever staff formally assess other risks, using tools such as the Chemwatch Risk Management Module. Also refer to the Hazard Identification and WHS Risk Treatment Processes process map for an overview of risk management processes.

(32) A relevant form may be used to assess a working or learning activity, process, or thing that impacts upon aspects of the University's on or off campus environment, such as the storage of flammable substances or handling bulky or awkward items.

(33) Relevant staff, staff representatives, students, contractors, subject matter experts and others, including Health and Safety Representatives should be fully engaged in the full WHS risk assessment processes. These consultations are likely to result in more threats being identified and stronger levels of commitment toward applying the treatments that are selected to manage the identified risks.

Step 1: Identify and Review Hazards

(34) Populate the first page of the WHS Risk Assessment Form with relevant information about the activity or thing that you are assessing for hazards and associated WHS risks.

(35) Refer to the hazard identification section of the relevant ACU risk assessment form and other resources to prompt you as you consider the full range of hazards that may be associated with the process, activity and/or thing that is being assessed for hazards and risks.

(36) Enter the processes or activities that are being assessed for risks in Section 1 of the relevant WHS Risk Assessment Form, provide location details and outline who has been consulted about the assessment.

Step 2: Perform a Risk Analysis

(37) Perform a risk analysis by describing the process or activity, identify hazard(s), and risk(s). This analysis may be informed by WHS Risk Management Procedure Guidance about Using Risk Management Tools, other reference materials and consultations with subject matter experts and others. Enter this information into the "Assess the Hazards and Risks" section of the WHS Risk Assessment Form.

Step 3: Assess the Risk Rating of Applying Existing Treatments (Risk Controls)

(38) Enter any current treatments that are applied to manage a relevant WHS risk into the "Assess Hazards and Risks" section of the relevant form you are using.

(39) Use the Risk Rating Table, within the Appendices, to determine the risk rating. This rating is assessed by determining the likelihood of hazard exposures occurring and the potential consequences e.g. the consequences of someone tripping on a slippery footpath. The intersection point between these assessments is the risk rating. The risk rating will range from Insignificant (1) to Catastrophic (100).

> For example: If the Likelihood Rating is assessed as Likely (1) and the Consequence Rating is Minor (3): the risk rating is Moderate (3).

(40) Enter any relevant risk ratings into Section 2 of the WHS Risk Assessment Form or Section 3 of the WHS Risk Assessment Form for Practical Activities/Research. If the risk rating is Low, you may decide to prioritise the management of more significant risks and proceed to Step 6.

Step 4: Develop New Treatments to Manage Significant Risks

(41) Develop additional treatments, while referencing the Hierarchy of Risk Control (Treatments), which will either eliminate or reduce the WHS risk(s). It is often not possible to eliminate risks.

(42) Select either a single treatment or a combination of treatments if the identified risk(s) is significant. Higher-level treatments (Level 1 is the highest), such as engineering solutions which eliminate the risk, should be implemented to manage higher level risks.

(43) Administrative actions/ treatments, such as a Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS), are less effective as they are informed by how well people understand, oversee and are committed to applying the treatments which are selected to manage the WHS risk(s).

(44) The new treatments should be documented in Section 2 of the WHS Risk Assessment Form/Section 3 of the WHS Risk Assessment Form for Practical Activities/Research. Also, quantify any additional costs, if they are known. These costs may need to be endorsed by Members of the Executive or Senior Executive.

Step 5: Reassess the WHS Risk

(45) Recalculate the risk rating based on the application of existing and the proposed treatments(s) and consider whether any risks may be associated with implementing the proposed treatments. Assign a priority to reducing the risk down to a Low rating, whenever it is reasonably practical, and develop additional treatments if the risk rating is still too high. If the risk is still too high, additional treatments should be selected to reduce the risk rating (ideally a risk rating between Low to Moderate (3)).

(46) Enter this rating in Section 2 of the WHS Risk Assessment Form/Section 3 of the WHS Risk Assessment Form for Practical Activities/Research.

Step 6: Gain Approval

(47) Ensure that a Nominated Supervisor or Manager endorses and signs off the WHS risk assessment, including any potential costs which may be incurred. High level risk assessments and some expenditure items, associated with treatments, should also be signed off by Members of the Executive or Senior Executive. The WHS risk assessment form should also be updated once a Nominated Supervisor or Manager has verified the proposed treatments have been implemented.

Section 10 - Applying and Selecting Treatments to Manage Risks

(48) The treatments (risk controls) that are selected will often require changes to the way that working or learning activity is carried out as a result of new or modified equipment or processes, new or different chemicals or the use of different personal protective equipment. The treatments that are selected should reflect the level of risk e.g. the most effective treatments should be selected to manage risks rated High.

(49) Seriously consider complementing these treatments with:

a. safe work procedures; or
b. Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS)

(50) The procedures should describe the task being performed, the hazards, and should document how the tasks will be performed to minimise the risk.

Training, Instruction and Information

(51) Staff and/or students should be provided with the right training to enable them to perform tasks safely, such as moving heavy objects with manual handling tools. Training, instruction and information should be provided in a form that can be understood by anyone that is applying the treatments, including visitors and volunteers.

Supervision

(52) Nominated Supervisors and Managers should assess the level of risk and the experience of staff members when making decisions about the level of support that they will give staff members, students and contractors to apply the treatments that have been developed.

Section 11 - Placing WHS Risks on Risk Registers

(53) Categories of WHS risks, such as manual handling, which require regular and ongoing application of treatments

should be placed on a relevant Organisational Unit Risk Register by the end of the first quarter, each year. A minimum of the Top Five WHS risks, which impact upon each organisational unit, should be placed on each risk register.

(54) The WHS risks that are placed on these registers should be specific enough so they can be reviewed for effectiveness and broad enough to account for a range of WHS risks that are similar and can be treated in a similar way.

(55) List the Risk Owner and Action Owner (associated with specific risk(s) on the register as these staff members will be accountable for overseeing or actioning treatments. The WHS risks that are placed on these registers should not be too generic or 'high level'.

(56) The template for this register is accessible from Appendix C of the WHS Risk Assessment Forms.

Section 12 - Revisions Made to this Procedure

(57) The revision table includes revisions up until this document was migrated into the current policy platform. Any later changes will show in the Status and Details tab.

Date	Major, Minor or Editorial	Description
13 April 2018	Minor	Updated to align the procedure with the process for reporting and managing incidents, injuries, near misses and hazards within Riskware.
12 February 2020	Major	Broadened the definition of WHS risk to include risks to the Work Health and Safety Management System. The procedure has also been updated to reflect the University's new requirements which are associated with placing a minimum of five WHS risks on risk registers.

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

Section 13 - Further Assistance

(59) If any staff member requires assistance in understanding this Procedure, they should initially engage their Nominated Supervisor or Manager who is responsible for applying the University's WHSMS within their work area. Should further information or advice be required, staff should visit Service Central.

Section 14 - Associated Information

(60) 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	19th December 2023
Review Date	30th April 2024
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor and President
Approval Date	19th December 2023
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Angelle Laurence Chief People Officer
Responsible Manager	Angelle Laurence Chief People Officer
Enquiries Contact	Bernardine Lynch ER and Safety Committees and Policy Officer People and Capability