

Occupational Health and Safety Policy

1. PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) recognises its legal, ethical and moral responsibilities to prevent work related injury and illness.

This policy reflects VIT's commitment to promoting a positive, healthy and safe workplace culture by ensuring effective control of risk and the promotion of health. VIT promotes a culture of health and safety based on effective communication, collaboration and consultation. This approach is underpinned by legislative compliance, robust systems and procedures that are designed to, so far as is practicable to:

- identify, assess and control workplace hazards;
- reduce the incidence and cost of occupational injury and illness;
- identify and appropriately manage work and work practices which impact on OH&S;
- provide a rehabilitation system for workers affected by occupational injury or illness;
- consider the impact of changes to work practices and staffing on occupational health and safety; and
- promote a positive health and safety culture that contributes to the wellbeing of all Council members, employees, contractors, volunteers and other visitors.

2. AUTHORITY

The VIT's occupational health and safety and rehabilitation obligations arise under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)* ('OHS Act'), the common law duty of care and under Clause 65 of the *Victorian Institute of Teaching Enterprise Agreement 2016* ('the Agreement').

Clause 65 of the Agreement is annexed as **Appendix 1**

3. SCOPE

This policy is applicable to all VIT Council members, employees, contractors, volunteers and other visitors to VIT's site.

4. STATEMENT OF POLICY

VIT is committed to the provision of a safe and healthy work environment for all employees, volunteers, contractors and visitors through a commitment to action in line with relevant Workplace Health and Safety legislation, compliance codes and appropriate standards but equally to improve overall wellbeing of all who work with VIT, by:

- Providing an environment that promotes and supports the physical and psychological health and wellbeing of employees in the workplace in line with VIT's [Workplace Values and Behaviours Policy](#);
- Ensuring staff are appropriately trained and educated in the area of OHS in line with position accountability and responsibilities including individual obligations to personal safety;
- Reflecting OHS expectations within position descriptions, performance development and planning processes;
- Reporting on OHS performance targets and incidents at the organisational and branch level;
- Evaluating OHS performance through analysis of organisational data of best practice and benchmarking with industry peers;
- Providing facilities, equipment, resources and services to enable employees to perform their role safely;

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- Regularly communicating with staff in relation to OHS initiatives and programs that support a workplace health and safety culture;
- Ensuring OHS is an integral part of all VIT management systems and core operations; and

Encouraging a positive workplace culture that supports the safety and wellbeing of staff and other participants, contributes to a productive and effective workforce and strengthens the long-term health of VIT as an organisation. The benefits are manifest in lower absenteeism, lower voluntary staff turnover, greater productivity and team work and greater certainty in achieving VIT objectives.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The involvement of all Council members, employees, contractors and volunteers at every level is required to achieve health and safety objectives as follows:

THE VIT COUNCIL

- oversee legal obligations and the effective implementation of the OHS policies, systems and processes relating to employee health and safety
- ensure OHS remains a strategic priority for VIT in support of embedding a strong safety culture
- monitor the performance of OHS through key performance indicators and regular reporting.

THE CEO

- ensure legal obligations and the effective implementation of the OHS policies systems and processes relating to employee health and safety are met and maintained
- ensure OHS remains a strategic priority for the VIT in support of embedding a strong safety culture
- monitor the performance of OHS through key performance indicators and regular reporting
- ensure the effective implementation of the OHS Committee structure and related forums for employees to raise health and safety issues and have these issues addressed
- ensure the effective OHS training and education of staff through the allocation of sufficient resourcing and operational funding to support related activity
- ensure OHS roles and responsibilities within the organisation are effectively communicated and maintained via positions descriptions, performance development and planning discussions and management forums
- ensure the physical and psychological health and wellbeing of staff is promoted and supported through participation in programs and initiatives designed to enhance employee wellbeing
- embed a positive risk culture whereby employees are encouraged to discuss health and safety issues and concerns in a transparent and open manner.

DIRECTORS/MANAGERS/TEAM LEADERS

- ensure effective implementation of workplace health and safety practices in line with OHS policies, systems and processes, templates and checklists that support expectations and responsibilities of a director/line manager/team leader
- ensure branch procedures are in place for the systematic identification of workplace hazards; and assessment of their level of risk as well as implementation of controls to manage risks
- lead branch safety inspections and audits and investigate and report on all incidents, including near misses
- ensure staff are returned to the workplace from a physical or psychological injury in line with return to work plans
- prioritise OHS requirements within the branch to ensure a safety culture is being promoted at all times;
- report on OHS performance in line with key performance indicators
- ensure sufficient forums for employees to raise and discuss workplace health and safety issues in a transparent and open manner

- encourage staff to take accountability for personal health and safety
- participate in OHS training and education and ensure OHS representatives are also enabled to participate in training obligations as required
- ensure the physical and psychological health and wellbeing of staff is promoted and supported through participation in programs and initiatives designed to enhance employee wellbeing
- promote and act as a role model to support a positive risk culture in health and safety.

EMPLOYEES/VOLUNTEERS/CONTRACTORS

- assume individual accountability for personal health and safety including psychological wellbeing
- undertake tasks in accordance with relevant procedures and/or work instructions
- participate in health and safety consultative forums and contribute ideas to improving the health and safety
- where appropriate, participate in workplace health and safety training, programs and initiatives to embed a safety culture
- report all work health and safety breaches, hazards and incidents, including near misses, to the director/manager/line manager and assist with actions to reduce and eliminate risks.

PEOPLE AND CULTURE

- manage the ongoing development and maintenance of workplace health and safety practices in line with this OHS policy, the procedures, systems and processes, and resources that support line managers and employees in meeting their health and safety responsibilities
- lead the education process for:
 - departmental safety inspections and audits;
 - investigations and reporting of incidents, including near misses;
 - hazard identification and risk controls; and
 - Well-being initiatives.
- manage programs for employees remaining in the workplace or returning to the workplace after an injury
- report on OHS performance in line with key performance indicators
- facilitate, record and report on all OHS training and education requirements including maintenance of compliance training and refresher training needs
- ensure the physical and psychological health and wellbeing and safety of staff is promoted and supported through the development and implementation of programs and initiatives designed to enhance employee wellbeing and safety
- manage the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) as a key resource for employees and directors/managers/team leaders in support of work and life issues.

OHS COMMITTEE

- monitor the organisational health and safety risk and incident registers and report to stakeholders on progress
- support the OHS communication and education initiatives throughout VIT
- provide a mechanism to consult with the workforce and management
- promote OHS practices and behaviours across VIT
- support the investigation and resolution of any unsafe processes, practices and risks
- support Wellbeing initiatives
- support the CEO in discharging OHS initiatives.

6. RELATED LEGISLATION AND POLICY

- [OHS Committee Charter](#) (ECM Reference: 4964766)
- [Procedure for the Reporting and Management of Incidents, Hazards and Incident Reporting Charter](#) (ECM Reference: 5395884)

7. APPENDICES

APPENDIX	DOCUMENT NAME	DOCUMENT CODE
1	Clause 65 of the VIT Enterprise Agreement 2016	Full VIT Enterprise Agreement available via the VIT intranet

8. DOCUMENT CONTROL

DOCUMENT CONTROL DETAILS			
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This Document replaces / supersedes all previous documents that relate to the same or similar subject matter. This includes, but is not limited to, the following Documents

SUPERSEDED DOCUMENT	
Document name	N/A
Document code	N/A
ECM No. / Ref. No.	N/A

9. VERSION HISTORY

VERSION	CHANGE DATE	DESCRIPTION
0.1	6 May 2020 working version	Draft version went to ARMF Committee for endorsement
1.0	17 June 2020	Approved by VIT Council

VIT ENTERPRISING AGREEMENT 2016

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY AND REHABILITATION

65.1 Objectives

- 65.1.1** This Agreement acknowledges and supports the rights of Employees to work in an environment, which is, so far as is practicable, safe and without risks to health. The Parties are committed to the promotion of a joint and united approach to consultation and resolution of Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) issues.
- 65.1.2** The Agreement commits the Parties to improving health and safety with a view to improving workplace efficiency and productivity. This will be accomplished through the ongoing development, in consultation with Employees and their Health and Safety Representatives, of management systems and procedures designed to, so far as is practicable to:
- (a) identify, assess and control workplace hazards;
 - (b) reduce the incidence and cost of occupational injury and illness;
 - (c) identify and appropriately manage work and work practices which impact on OH&S;
 - (d) provide a rehabilitation system for workers affected by occupational injury or illness; and
 - (e) consider the impact of changes to work practices and staffing on occupational health and safety.
- 65.1.3 OH&S statutory requirements, including regulations and codes of practice, are minimum standards and will be improved upon where practicable.

65.2 OH&S consultation

- 65.2.1** Consultative mechanisms appropriate to the Employer will be established to address OH&S issues. Such mechanisms will be:
- (a) in accordance with the *Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004* (Vic);
 - (b) established in consultation with Employees and their Health and Safety Representatives; and
 - (c) consistent with the Employer's agreed issue resolution procedures and the rights and functions of Health and Safety Representatives, consistent with the *Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004* (Vic).
- 65.2.2** Where an OH&S committee is established at least half the members shall be Employees, including Health and Safety Representatives.
- 65.2.3** The OH&S committee must operate within the requirements of the *Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004* (Vic).
- 65.2.4** A CPSU Workplace representative may attend local OH&S committee meetings (by giving notice) from time to time.

65.3 OH&S training

- 65.3.1** Workplace training programs, including induction and on-the-job training will outline relevant details of OH&S policies and procedures.
- 65.3.2** The contents of OH&S training programs will outline the OH&S roles and responsibilities of Employees, managers and supervisors, OH&S policies and procedures, particular hazards associated with their workplaces, control measures applicable to each hazard, and how to utilise OH&S systems to identify hazards and instigate preventative action.

65.4 Designated Work Groups

- 65.4.1** The Victorian Institute of Teaching will review the Designated Work Groups (DWGs), and negotiate revised DWGs where appropriate through workplace CPSU/ management consultative structures.
- 65.4.2** The CPSU will be notified of vacancies for Health and Safety Representatives in DWGs where the majority of DWG Employees are eligible to be members of the CPSU.
- 65.4.3** Each elected Health and Safety Representative will be provided with reasonable access to facilities such as email, telephone, fax, office and computer access, where available. An

Employee will be granted reasonable time release or paid time (including time in lieu) to attend to their functions as a Health and Safety Representative, including but not limited to regularly inspecting workplaces (as defined by their designated work group), consulting with Employees in their DWGs, OH&S representatives and other persons involved in the organising of Employees health, safety and welfare.

- 65.4.4** The Employer will post and maintain current in each workplace the names and relevant contact details, including email where available, of elected Health and Safety Representatives for identified DWGs. Such circular shall be required to be posted on a notice board for the regular attention of all Employees working in the workplace.
- 65.4.5** To monitor the maintenance of effective OH&S structures and training delivery the parties will jointly establish a central register of DWG's and their Health and Safety Representatives. The register will be maintained by the Employer from information provided on a quarterly basis from the workplace.
- 65.4.6** Information from the updated register will be provided periodically (quarterly) in electronic format to the CPSU. The information provided will be in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2000* (Vic). Where possible, this information will include:
- (a) a description, including the location, of each DWG within The Victorian Institute of Teaching;
 - (b) the name of each elected Health and Safety Representative their workplace contact details and email address;
 - (c) the date the Health and Safety Representative was elected;
 - (d) a description of the training the OH&S representative has attended and the date of attendance;
 - (e) the name and contact details of the nominated management representative responsible for each DWG;
 - (f) details of the structure of OH&S committees, their meeting frequency and the name and contact details of the committee convener.

65.5 Bullying and violence at work

The Parties to this Agreement are committed to working together to reduce bullying and occupational assault so far as is practicable in the workplace.

65.6 Staff support & debriefing

- 65.6.1** The Employer will provide staff support and debriefing to Employees who have experienced a "critical incident" during the course of the work that results in personal distress. The Employer is committed to assisting the recovery of staff experiencing normal distress following a critical incident with the aim of returning staff to their pre- incident level of functioning as soon as possible.
- 65.6.2** A critical incident is defined as an event outside the range of usual human experience which has the potential to easily overcome a person's normal ability to cope with stress. It may produce a negative psychological response in a person who was involved in or witnessed such an incident.
- 65.6.3** Critical incidents in the workplace environment include, but are not limited to:
- aggravated assaults;
 - robbery;
 - suicide or attempted suicide;
 - murder;
 - sudden or unexpected death;
 - hostage or siege situations;
 - discharge of firearms;
 - vehicle accidents involving injury and/or substantial property damage;
 - acts of self harm by persons in the care of others;
 - industrial accidents involving serious injury or fatality; and
 - any other serious accidents or incidents.