



Health and Safety Guideline

HSG 2.2 Health and Safety Committees

1. Purpose

This document describes the purpose and functions of University Health and Safety and Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committees.

Effective communication, consultation and participation via Committee arrangements involving employers and workers is a key element to open and respectful understanding of health, safety and wellbeing issues impacting workers, and drives continuous improvement for the prevention of incident, illnesses and injuries.

2. Scope

This Guideline applies to all health, safety and wellbeing activities of staff, students, visitors (including volunteers and contractors), Council members, and other persons interacting with the University of Newcastle (workers); the operations of staff of University aligned Research Centres and controlled entities; and all activities conducted by or on behalf of the University of Newcastle on and outside of the University's campuses.

3. Guidelines

3.1. Establishing a Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee

A Health and Safety Committee (HSC) should be established to represent each College, Division and Region of the University. Committees may also be known as Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committees if they choose to consider broader wellness initiatives.

Each work group within a College, Division or Region should be represented on the Health and Safety Committee (HSC) by an employee representative of the work group.

The employee representative for a work group is to be elected by the members of the group, with all members entitled to participate in the nomination/election process. Nominees may choose to decline a nomination. All former elected representatives are eligible for re-nomination. The work group members and management representatives determine the

process for receiving nominations and ballot election if required. The work group will be offered assistance to complete their nomination and ballot process by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team.

Management Representatives of a College, Division or Regional HSC will be representative of the Work Groups within the College, Division or Region, and should facilitate the decision making process of the HSC, provide feedback on issues and monitor implementation of corrective actions.

The HSC composition should align with the University's policy on gender inclusive membership of University Committees.

All College, Division and Regional HSC members may undertake training as provided by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team. The number of Management Representatives should not exceed the number of Employee Representatives.

Wherever possible the Chairperson of the College, Division or Regional Health and Safety Committee should be an Employee Representative.

Each College or Division Health and Safety Committee should prepare a [Terms of Reference](#) which outline the operation of the Committee and include:

- the Committee size and breakdown of representation;
- the quorum for a meeting;
- meeting frequency and time;
- preparation of agenda items; and
- timing and distribution for circulating minutes.

3.2. University Health and Safety Committee

A Health and Safety Committee has been established for the University with each College, Division and Region represented by the Chairpersons of the College, Division and Regional Health and Safety Committees (or their delegate) and nominated Management Representatives. This Committee provides oversight of health and safety matters across the University and monitors the issues arising from the College, Division and Regional Committees.

The Chairperson of the University Health and Safety Committee reports periodically to the Executive Committee.

3.3. Functions of a Health and Safety Committee

The functions of University, College, Division and Regional Health and Safety Committees include:

- Involvement in workplace health and safety inspections of the relevant work areas;
- Promotion of workplace health and safety awareness within the relevant Work Groups represented on the Committees;
- Reviewing any proposed changes to the workplace or work processes which could affect health and safety for the represented Workers;
- Providing input into health and safety education and training plans for the University, College, Division or Region;
- Recommending corrective actions where hazards are identified or when the occurrence of incidents or near misses indicate that current risk controls are inadequate;
- Assisting with the review of health and safety documentation;
- Reviewing the outcome of investigations into workplace incidents, injuries, illnesses and near misses and making additional recommendations for corrective actions if necessary;
- Reviewing risk assessments of existing, new, or modified, systems of work, processes, equipment, substances, and plant;
- Following up on the implementation of health and safety improvements recommended by the Committee or from reports; and
- Provide input to health and safety action planning for the work area represented by the Committee e.g. University, College, Division or Region.

3.4. Committee Meeting Frequency

The University Health and Safety Committee should meet every two months. College, Division and Regional Health and Safety Committee meetings should be held, at a minimum of every 3 months, or more frequently depending on the risk profile of the College, Division or Region. Additional Committee meetings should be called if necessary to address immediate serious health and safety issues.

3.5. Meeting Agenda

An agenda should be prepared prior to a Health and Safety Committee meeting and should include the items listed in template [Health and Safety Committee Meeting Agenda](#).

New business items for the agenda should be submitted to the Chairperson prior to the Committee meeting, to be included in the agenda. Sufficient information should be provided

to Health and Safety Committee members for “New Business” items, to enable members to adequately prepare e.g. discussion with Workers prior to the meeting; reports or information on the topic.

The agenda should be issued to all members prior to the Health and Safety Committee meeting.

3.6. Meeting Minutes

Minutes of University, College, Division or Regional Health and Safety Committee meetings should be recorded by the nominated Secretary. The template [Health and Safety Committee Meeting Minutes](#) can be used for this purpose.

For each action raised the following information should be recorded:

- Member raising the issue;
- The date raised;
- Person responsible for the action;
- Target date by which the action will be completed.

If a target date exceeds 90 days, the item should be highlighted to the College or Division Health and Safety Committee at the next meeting.

Copies of minutes should be available to all University, College, Division and Regional Health and Safety Committee members and others on the Committee distribution list including the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team. Copies should also be made available to all workers in the College, Division or Region by posting on employee notice boards or local or University SharePoint and Teams sites.

3.7. Chair and Deputy Chair

The members of a Health and Safety Committee should elect a Chair and a Deputy Chair for a term of two (2) years. The Chair should have the experience and knowledge to be able to:

- Efficiently facilitate a meeting;
- Summarise decisions and ensure that actions and time frames are recorded;
- Ensure the Committee carries out its functions;
- Identify local issues that arise and make recommendations when they need to be resolved at a senior management level;
- Schedule the Committee meeting dates in consultation with Committee members;
- Ensure the replacement of a Committee member when a resignation of a Committee member is submitted; and

- Prioritise the items on the agenda and keeping control of time limits for discussion.

The Deputy Chair should perform the duties of the Chair in their absence.

3.8. Secretary

The members of a College or Division Health and Safety Committee should be supported by a Secretary, whose role includes:

- Seeking feedback from committee members prior to each meeting to identify matters arising from their Work Group that need to be included in the agenda;
- Preparing and circulating the agenda prior to each Committee meeting;
- Recording the minutes of the Committee meeting, preferably using the template [Health and Safety Committee Meeting Minutes](#)
- Reviewing and approving the minutes of each Committee meeting with the Chair prior to distribution; and
- Distributing minutes of Committee meetings.

4. Definitions

In the context of the Health and Safety Management System Framework:

Executive Committee	Consisting of the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellors, the Pro Vice-Chancellors, the Chief Operating Officer and the Chief Financial Officer.
Leader / Supervisor	Any member of the University who is responsible for supervising staff and/or undergraduate or postgraduate students and/or for leading research projects.
Worker	Includes an employee, conjoint, student on work experience, contractor, sub-contractor, and volunteer. A person is a worker if the person carries out work in any capacity for the University or another person conducting a business or undertaking, including work as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) an employee, or (b) a contractor or subcontractor, or (c) an employee of a contractor or subcontractor, or (d) an employee of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work in the person's business or undertaking, or (e) an outworker, or (f) an apprentice or trainee, or (g) a student gaining work experience, or (h) a volunteer, or (i) a person of a prescribed class.

5. Responsibilities

A comprehensive list of health, safety and wellbeing responsibilities is provided in Guideline [HSG 1.2: Roles and Responsibilities](#).

Specific responsibilities under this Guideline include:

Executive Committee

- The Executive Committee should ensure that appropriate processes, information and support is offered to University Health and Safety Committees to ensure that they operate as an effective forum for consultation with Workers on workplace health and safety matters.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team

- Attend College, Division and Regional Health and Safety Committee meetings regularly to provide direction and feedback on issues;
- Monitor Committee meeting frequency and report on key performance issues to the Executive Committee meetings; and
- Provide relevant reports for discussion at Committee meetings.

Workers

- Regularly engage with the employee representative for their Work Group on health and safety matters so the representative can raise the matter at the College, Division or Regional Committee meeting; and
- Read the College or Division Health and Safety Committee minutes for their Work Group when they are posted to keep informed on health and safety matters.

6. References & Related Documents

The following documentation is referenced in, or applicable to this Guideline:

[HSG 1.2: Roles and Responsibilities](#)

[Health and Safety Committee Terms of Reference \(FRM-EL02.02\)](#)

[Health and Safety Committee Meeting Agenda \(FRM-EL02.03\)](#)

[Health and Safety Committee Meeting Minutes \(FRM-EL02.04\)](#)

7. Amendment History

Version	Date of Issue	Approval	Section(s) Modified	Details of Amendment
1, 2, 3	August 2021	Manager Health and Safety	-	Original version with latest amendment HSG 8.2 Health and Safety Committees
4	July 2023	CPCO	All	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Renumbered from HSG 8.2 to HSG 2.22. Updated all content in all sections3. Added new/renamed Related Documents4. Added Amendment History5. Amended document control header and footer

8. Appendices

Nil