Work Health and Safety Audit Schedule

1 Purpose

To establish a systematic and consistent approach for auditing workspaces across the University of Southern Queensland.

2 Scope

This schedule must be read in conjunction with the Work Health and Safety Assurance and Compliance Procedure and is subordinate to it.

3 Schedule

The University's Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) Audit Framework applies a structured assurance model based on the Three Lines of Defence. These lines of defence do not operate in isolation; rather, they operate in a complementary and progressive approach to WHS assurance.

Typically, assurance activities begin with management controls (First Line), followed by central oversight (Second Line), and, where required based on Risk or compliance needs, independent audits (Third Line). Where Risks are significant, the assurance model may activate Third Line independent audits sooner, alongside ongoing First and Second Line controls and oversight, to strengthen assurance and compliance.

3.1 First Line of Defence - Management Control

Workplace Inspections

These inspections are performed by Schools, Centres, and Business Units (BUs) at regular intervals (annually or more frequently) depending on the Risks of the work and the workplace.

Inspections provide an opportunity to regularly review compliance with local safety procedures and identify areas for continual improvement.

3.2 Second Line of Defence - Central Oversight

Scheduled Internal Audits of WHS Processes and Risks

Workplace Safety Audits

These audits are conducted by the HSW team according to a planned schedule to assess compliance with safety legislation and regulations.

These audits provide an objective evaluation of the extent to which the University's WHS framework, guidelines, procedures and processes have been implemented and comply with statutory requirements.

Audit focus areas are determined by the HSW team based on university Risk profiles and analysis of the WHS incident and hazard data and trends.

Focus Area Deep Dives

These assessments are conducted by the HSW team and examine high or emerging WHS Risks and review University guidelines, procedures and processes to identify opportunities for improvement and reduction of Risk.

3.3 Third Line of Defence - Independent Audits

External Workplace Health and Safety Management System (WHSMS) Audits

As part of the University's internal audit plan, comprehensive audits of the University's Work Health and Safety Management System (WHSMS) are conducted by an external provider every three to five years.

Specialist External Audits

Periodically, the University may engage an independent specialist auditor or assessor to conduct an in depth review of a specific focus or priority area and/ or verify that internal audits accurately reflect the current status of WHS implementation.

WHS Audit Schedule

Audits and workplace inspections will be scheduled, where possible, to avoid conflicts with peak periods such as exams or intensive School/Centre activities.

The frequency of audits and workplace inspections is determined by the level of Risk associated with the activity, area or procedure, as determined by the HSW team.

Frequency considerations include:

- Results of previous audits
- Incident statistics and trends
- The significance of Risks identified in the areas to be audited

- Emerging hazards or issues.

Based on these considerations, University locations will be classified into three Risk levels (Low, Medium to High, and High). This classification will guide the scheduling and frequency of audits and inspections to ensure resources are allocated effectively and high-risk areas receive priority attention.

Table 1 provides a guide for applying the Lines of Defence based on the assessed Risk level, supporting the determination of appropriate assurance activities for each category.

Table 1 - Application of Three Lines of Defence based on risk classification

Line of Defence	Risk	Location	Frequency	Person/ group responsible
1	Low	Offices and teaching spaces/ lecture rooms and theatres	Once a year	BU/ users
2	Medium to High	Labs, Workshops, Kitchens, Cafes, Regulated Substances	Twice a year (once by the BU/users, and once by the HSW Team)	BU/ users and HSW Team
		Emerging High Risk Deep Dives	As required	HSW Team
3	High	Asbestos Register, Psychosocial and others	Every 3-5 years	Internal/ External Auditor

Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities within the WHS Audit Schedule are critical to ensuring effective assurance and compliance. Each role is assigned based on its capacity to influence Risk management and apply the appropriate line of defence within the assurance model.

- Operational leaders and supervisors form the First Line of Defence, apply management controls and conduct routine workplace inspections that directly address local Risks.

- The HSW team provides the Second Line of Defence through central oversight, conducting scheduled audits and deep-dive reviews with a focus on areas with medium to high-risk or emerging hazards.

- Independent auditors and external specialists comprise the Third Line of Defence and are engaged to deliver impartial assessment for high-risk areas or where objective impartial verification is required.

This structured allocation ensures responsibilities are proportionate to the level of Risk and aligned with the assurance model, delivering a layered approach that strengthens compliance, governance and continuous improvement.

Table 2 outlines the additional responsibilities required to implement and maintain the WHS Audit Schedule effectively.

Table 2 - Roles and responsibilities related to the WHS Audit Schedule

Role	Responsibilities
Deans / Directors	• Allocating time for required staff to contribute to and be involved in audits and inspections. • Allocating time and resources to ensure non-compliance rectification actions are completed in a timely manner. • Ensure corrective actions are implemented within the identified timeframes. • Communicating audit or inspection outcomes back to School/Centre forums (if relevant).
HSW Team	• Developing the three-year rolling Audit Schedule; including annual reviews. • Planning and scheduling of audits and inspections. • Managing the audit and inspection tools and registrations. • Providing awareness to workers regarding their obligations and duties for compliance. • Monitoring, and where necessary, assisting with closing of corrective actions. • Reporting statistics relating to WHS audits to relevant stakeholders.
Managers and Supervisors	• Provide the auditor(s) with evidence of current system and procedural practices in response to audit questions. • Appointing person/s responsible for completing actions from the audit or inspection.

	• Communicating the audit or inspection outcomes back to their area of the business. • Closing assigned improvement actions within the allotted time.
Auditees	• Participate in scheduled interviews and provide the auditor(s) with evidence of current system and procedural practices in response to audit/assessment questions.
Internal/external Auditor/Assessor	• Communicating objectives and outcomes, ensuring that the auditing/assessment process is transparent to the auditees. • Planning and scheduling audits and Focus Area Deep Dives. • Conducting audits/deep dives in line with the principles and methodology outlined in the procedure. • Development of an audit/assessment report including non-conformances and observations. • Consultation on compliance outcomes and improvements required.

4 References

Nil.

5 Schedule Information

Accountable Officer	Chief People Officer
Responsible Officer	Director (Health, Safety and Wellbeing)
Policy Type	University Procedure
Policy Suite	Work Health and Safety Policy
Approved Date	26/6/2026
Effective Date	26/6/2026
Review Date	26/6/2031
Relevant Legislation	

Policy Exceptions	Policy Exceptions Register
Related Policies	
Related Procedures	Work Health and Safety Assurance and Compliance Procedure
Related forms, publications and websites	
Definitions	**Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary**
	Risk The effect of uncertainty on objectives. University The term 'University' or 'UniSQ' means the University of Southern Queensland.
	Definitions that relate to this schedule only
Keywords	
Record No	25/134PL