

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Communication and Consultation Procedure



1 Purpose

To establish guidelines for effective communication and consultation regarding workplace health and safety (WHS) matters.

2 Scope

This Procedure applies to all Employees, Students, Contractors, Volunteers, Visitors, and University Members engaged in university-related activities. It covers all University Sites and Workplaces, including campuses, remote workspaces, fieldwork, and virtual environments, both within Australia and overseas. It applies to all activities managed or influenced by the University.

3 Procedure Overview

This procedure outlines the principles and practices for WHS communication and consultation to ensure a safe and collaborative work environment. It promotes proactive engagement, informed decision-making, and continuous improvement in WHS practices.

The procedure aligns with the legal obligations set out in the *Work Health and Safety Act and Regulations 2011 (Qld)* and the *Work Health and Safety Consultation, Cooperation and Coordination Code of Practice 2021 (Qld)*.

4 Procedures

4.1 Consultation Roles and Responsibilities

Effective WHS consultation relies on clearly defined roles and responsibilities across all levels of the University. This section outlines the specific duties of officers, managers, workers, and other stakeholders to ensure meaningful participation, compliance with legislative requirements, and continuous improvement in WHS outcomes.

Table 1. Consultation Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Consultation Responsibilities
Officers (e.g. Executives, Senior Leaders)	Ensure the PCBU complies with consultation duties through due diligence.

	• Confirm that effective consultation systems are established and operational. • Foster a culture of open communication and active worker participation in WHS.
Managers and Supervisors	• Lead day-to-day WHS communication with workers. • Address or escalate WHS issues raised by workers. • Ensure consultation occurs during changes to work, procedures, or equipment. • Promote feedback and engagement in WHS discussions.
Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs)	• Represent their work group in WHS matters. • Participate in consultation and issue resolution processes. • Share WHS information and outcomes with their work group.
Safety Consultative Forums (SCF)	• Recommend improvements and monitor consultation effectiveness. • Review and escalate WHS issues.
Workers	• Engage in consultation processes. • Raise WHS concerns and provide feedback. • Follow WHS procedures and contribute to a safe workplace.
Contractors and Other Duty Holders	• Cooperate and coordinate with the University and other Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking. • Share relevant WHS information and participate in joint consultation activities. • Ensure their workers are included in consultation processes.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) Team	• Provide subject matter advice on WHS consultation and communication. • Support the implementation of consultation mechanisms. • Liaise with regulators and ensure compliance with consultation requirements.
Students	• Participate in WHS induction and training relevant to their activities.

	• Report hazards, incidents, or feedback to appropriate Employees. • Follow WHS procedures and contribute to a safe learning environment. • Engage in consultation when involved in practical or research activities.
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Detailed information on roles and responsibilities can be found in the *Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Governance Procedure*.

4.2 Commitment to consultation

The University promotes a collaborative WHS culture by engaging employees in meaningful consultation, this may involve formal processes or informal discussions, ensuring Employees input is considered in decisions affecting physical and psychosocial health and safety.

4.2.1 When to consult with workers:

Consultation with workers should occur during:

- Identification of hazards and risk assessments
- Decision-making on risk elimination or minimisation
- Proposals for changes that may impact health and safety
- Development of procedures for resolving WHS issues
- Implementation or review of WHS policies and procedures

4.2.2 How to consult with workers

The following methods are employed to facilitate ongoing consultation and communication:

- Safety Consultative Forums (SCF): Establish SCFs to provide a forum for discussing WHS issues and making recommendations.
- Team Meetings: Include WHS discussions as a regular agenda item in team meetings to ensure ongoing consultation and feedback.
- Surveys and Feedback Forms: Use surveys and feedback forms to gather input from employees on WHS matters.
- Toolbox Talks: Conduct regular toolbox talks to discuss specific safety topics and gather feedback from employees.

4.2.3 Consultation with Students

The Student Senate facilitates two-way consultation between students and the University on WHS matters. It provides a formal channel for students to raise safety concerns and contribute feedback, while also supporting the dissemination of WHS information and initiatives to the student body. This ensures student perspectives are considered and communicated effectively in health, safety, and wellbeing decision-making.

4.2.4 Consultation with Other Duty Holders

University Members engaging other duty holders must also actively consult, cooperate, and coordinate with them—such as contractors, partners, and shared facility managers—whenever work activities overlap or may impact health and safety. To ensure effective collaboration:

- Identify shared responsibilities and potential risks early.
- Establish clear communication channels for WHS matters.
- Agree on consistent safety measures and procedures.
- Document consultation outcomes and responsibilities.

This proactive approach ensures all parties are aligned, risks are managed collaboratively, and legal obligations under the WHS Act are met.

4.3 Issue Resolution

The University follows a structured, compliant process to resolve health and safety concerns effectively and promptly. This process aligns with Part 5 of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)* and incorporates recent updates under the *Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2024 (WHSOLA Act)*. Steps outlined below (and in figure 1):

Step 1: Raise the Issue

- Any worker may raise a WHS concern with their supervisor, manager, or Health and Safety Representative (HSR).
- If no HSR is available, the concern can be raised directly with the PCBU (the University) or a nominated representative.

Step 2: Attempt Informal Resolution

- Parties involved should discuss the issue cooperatively to seek a timely resolution.
- If resolved:
 - The outcome must be documented in writing.

- The resolution must be communicated to all affected workers and HSRs.
- If not resolved:
 - Any party may request assistance from a suitable person with relevant expertise (e.g. engineer, ergonomist, psychologist) to help resolve the issue.

Step 3: Initiate Formal Issue Resolution

- If informal efforts fail, the formal issue resolution procedure is triggered.
 - UniSQ will follow the default procedure outlined in the WHS Regulation.
- All parties must:
 - Be notified of the issue
 - Meet or communicate to resolve the issue
 - Consider factors such as risk severity, number of people affected, and required control measures

Step 4: Request External Assistance (if unresolved)

- If the issue remains unresolved:
 - Any party may request Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) to appoint an inspector to assist or make a decision 3.
 - Alternatively, the matter may be referred to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC) for mediation, conciliation, or arbitration.

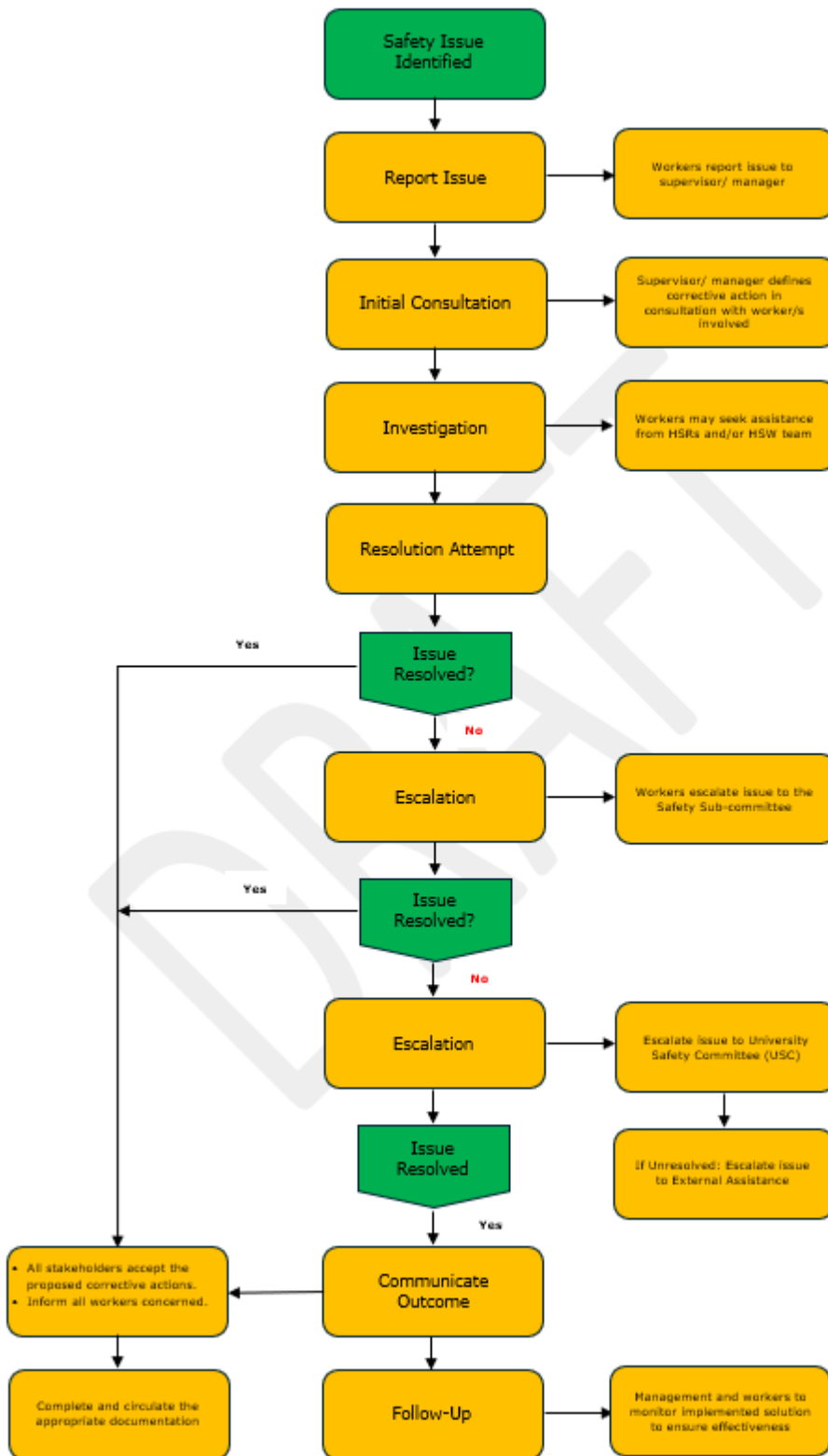


Figure 1: WHS Issue Resolution Flowchart

4.4 Communication

The University fosters a collaborative WHS culture by actively engaging employees in meaningful consultation. This may include both formal processes and informal discussions, ensuring that Employee input is considered in decisions affecting physical and psychosocial health and safety. Example of communications at UniSQ are:

4.4.1 Training and awareness:

Annual Mandatory WHS Training: Includes mandatory compliance training.

Ongoing awareness: WHS information is regularly distributed through emails and newsletters to ensure all employees are informed about safety issues, updates including policies, procedures, safety alerts, and lessons learned from incidents.

4.4.2 Incident Notices and Alerts:

Information for alerts and notices may come from internal or external sources such as incident or hazard reports, industry updates, sector-specific information, or regulatory bodies.

- **Alert:** An immediate notification requiring urgent action due to a real or potential threat to safety.
- **Notice:** An informational message that does not require immediate action but provides important updates or instructions.

4.5 Review and Continuous Improvement

The University is committed to regularly reviewing and enhancing its WHS consultation and communication processes to ensure they remain effective, inclusive, and compliant with relevant legislation.

5 References

Nil.

6 Schedules

This procedure must be read in conjunction with its subordinate schedules as provided in the table below.

7 Procedure Information

Accountable Officer	Chief People Officer
Responsible Officer	Director (Health, Safety and Wellbeing)

Policy Type	University Procedure
Policy Suite	Work Health and Safety Policy
Subordinate Schedules	
Approved Date	
Effective Date	
Review Date	
Relevant Legislation	Work Health and Safety Act 2011 Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (Qld) Work Health and Safety consultation, cooperation and coordination, Code of Practice 2021 Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003 Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Regulations 2014
Policy Exceptions	Policy Exceptions Register
Related Policies	
Related Procedures	Work Health and Safety Management System Procedure
Related forms, publications and websites	AS/NZS ISO45001:2018 Occupational health and safety management systems Health and safety representatives - Information for employers and company executives (worksafe.qld.gov.au) Health and safety representatives - Information for workers, and prospective and current HSRs and deputy HSRs (worksafe.qld.gov.au)
Definitions	Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary
	Employee A person employed by the University and whose conditions of employment are covered by the Enterprise Agreement and includes persons employed on a continuing, fixed term or casual basis. Employees also include senior Employees whose conditions of employment are covered by a written agreement or contract with the University. Health

	The WHS Act defines 'health' to include both physical and psychological health. This means that where the WHS Act imposes a duty in relation to 'health', PCBU's (person conducting business or undertaking) must manage risks to both physical and psychological health, so far as is reasonably practicable. Policy A high-level strategic directive that establishes a principle-based approach on a subject. Policy is operationalised through Procedures that give instructions and set out processes to implement a Policy. Procedure An operational instruction that sets out the process to operationalise a Policy. University The term 'University' or 'UniSQ' means the University of Southern Queensland. Worker Definition as per section 7 of the WHS Act, that is: A person is a worker if the person carries out work in any capacity for a person conducting a business or undertaking
Definitions that relate to this procedure only	
Communication The sharing of information through various channels to ensure all relevant parties are informed about WHS issues and lessons learnt. Consultation A process by which employers and employees discuss and exchange information on health and safety matters. HSR PCBU (Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking): An individual or organisation conducting a business or undertaking.	

	Reasonably Practicable Is defined in Subdivision 2, Section 18 of the <i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i> (Qld). Safety Management System Is the system to plan, implement, evaluate, review and audit the effectiveness of existing and future policies, procedures and work practices, and achieve compliance with relevant legislation.
Keywords	Safety Management System, communication, consultation, continuous improvement.
Record No	25/130PL

