OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY (OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR) POLICY

Approved by Council: 17 August 2011  
Revised by Council: 27 August 2014

Related documents

*Occupational Health and Safety Act (Victoria) 2004*

*Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007*

*WorkSafe Victoria, Officewise, a Guide to Health and Safety in the Office*

*Occupational Health and Safety Policy*

1. **Purpose**

The University of Divinity is committed to promoting and providing a healthy and safe working environment for staff at, and visitors to, the Office of the Vice-Chancellor (OVC) sites at 21 Highbury Grove, Kew and to the OVC Research staff located at the Centre for Theology and Ministry, 29 College Crescent, Parkville.

2. **Scope**

This policy applies to all workers, visitors and contractors engaged by the OVC when they visit the OVC at 21 Highbury Grove, Kew (the premises). This policy applies also to OVC staff of the Research Department located at the Centre for Theology and Ministry.

3. **Roles and responsibilities**

3.1 The Director of Administration (DA), as directed by the Vice-Chancellor, must provide a safe and healthy environment for OVC staff and for visitors to the premises, described in section 2 above.

3.2 The OVC will maintain an active Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Committee, and have an Occupational Health and Safety Representative, elected by the staff of the OVC. All staff, contractors, and visitors must be alert for risks to self and others, and have a duty of care to ensure that they perform in a manner that is not harmful to their own and others’ health and safety, and comply with this policy.

3.3 It is required that each College of the University of Divinity will adhere to and maintain a site-specific policy, the contents of which must comply with relevant legislation. Heads of Colleges will report to the OVC on Occupational Health and Safety matters through the annual College Information Collection and the Director of Administration will report same annually to the Risk Management and Audit Committee.
4. **Working outside of normal hours**

Staff working alone at the premises before or after the standard working hours of 9 am to 5 pm must ensure that all external doors are locked. The DA must ensure there is sufficient lighting to and at the car park.

5. **Fire precautions**

The OVC must have an emergency evacuation plan, and procedures must be located in central areas. The emergency evacuation system must be tested at regular intervals. Staff must be trained in the use of fire extinguishers at regular intervals by a licensed professional.

6. **Alcohol and drugs**

Staff, contractors and visitors must ensure that they are not adversely affected by alcohol or drugs while on the premises.

7. **Bullying and harassment**

The OVC is committed to providing an environment that is free from bullying and harassment.

8. **Office furniture and equipment**

Workstations, chairs and other office equipment must be set up as per WorkSafe Victoria recommendations.

9. **First aid**

A first aid kit must be available at the premises and its location clearly marked. At least two staff must hold a current first aid certificate.

10. **Toilets**

Toilets must be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

11. **Travel**

Before engaging in domestic, offsite, or international travel, staff must provide their Supervisor with their itinerary and contact details. Staff must not travel on OVC business to any country for which the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has issued a warning, without approval by the Vice-Chancellor.

12. **Noise**

Staff must not be exposed to excessive noise levels, as stated in the Noise Regulation published by WorkSafe Victoria.

13. **Smoking**

There must be no smoking on the premises.
14. **Temperature**

The OVC must supply climate control technology and have a procedure in place in the event of such technology malfunctioning on days of excessive heat or cold.

15. **Procedures**

The Vice-Chancellor may authorise procedures to give effect to the principles of this policy.
1. **Purpose**

These Occupational Health and Safety Procedures for the Office of the Vice-Chancellor (OVC) have been constructed in accordance with the OVC Occupational Health and Safety Policy, and adherence to them by staff, contractors, and visitors will enable a healthy and safe working environment to exist at the OVC.

2. **Scope**

These procedures apply to all the categories of people stated in section 2 of the policy.

3. **Roles and responsibilities**

3.1 Director of Administration

The Director of Administration (DA), as directed by the Vice-Chancellor, must provide a safe and healthy environment for staff, contractors, and visitors at the OVC. This includes:

a) Maintaining the workplace in a safe condition (such as ensuring fire exits are not blocked, emergency equipment is serviceable, and the worksite is generally tidy).

b) Providing staff, contractors, and visitors with adequate facilities (such as clean toilets, cool and clean drinking water, and hygienic eating areas).

c) Ensuring staff, contractors, and visitors have adequate information, instruction, training and supervision to work in a safe and healthy manner.

d) Monitoring and keeping records relevant to employees’ health and safety (such as records of ergonomics, first aid records and relevant medical information).

e) Employing or engaging people with the necessary qualifications or expertise to advise on health and safety issues affecting staff.

f) Consulting with staff, contractors, and visitors on matters that may directly affect their health, safety or welfare. Where the staff, contractors, and visitors are represented by a health and safety representative (HSR), the HSR must also be involved in the consultation.

g) Dealing with staff, contractors, and visitors and their health and safety representatives in resolving health and safety issues at the workplace.

h) Providing the staff, contractors, and visitors with information about the workplace health and safety arrangements, including the names of those to whom an inquiry or complaint can be made.

i) New employees must be informed in writing of the nature of the work and asked if they have any pre-existing injury or illness that may be affected by the work.
j) Staff and contractors must be informed in writing that failing to notify or hiding a pre-existing injury or illness which might be affected by the nature of the proposed employment could result in that injury or illness being ineligible for future compensation claims.

3.2 Occupational Health and Safety Representative

The OVC Occupational Health and Safety Representative, in consultation with the DA and the other member of the OH&S Committee, is responsible for all occupational health and safety issues including:

a) Maintaining the Hazard and Incident Tracking (HIT) Register.

b) Resolving all OH&S issues.

c) Ensuring the OVC complies with all government regulations.

The Occupational Health and Safety Representative, in collaboration with the DA, is also responsible for compiling lists of:

d) All resources, including plant, chemicals, personal protective clothing and equipment.

e) Potential hazards and risk controls including specific precautions required.

f) Legislation, standards and codes of practice.

3.3 Staff, contractors, and visitors

3.3.1 All staff, contractors, and visitors have a duty of care to ensure that they perform in a manner that is not harmful to their own and others’ health and safety, and comply with these procedures. All must be alert for risks to self and others, in areas such as:

a) Manual handling.

b) Dangerous goods/hazardous substances.

c) Plant.

d) Electrical safety.

e) Working at heights.

f) Ergonomics in the office environment.

3.3.2 All staff must ensure that:

a) Debris and waste resulting from work is removed regularly.

b) Materials, tools and waste must be located so as to reduce risks to health and safety prior to leaving the office daily.

c) Major pathways and emergency exits are kept clear.
3.3.3 All staff must report any hazard or incident to the Health and Safely Representative, who will update the HIT Register and who may carry out further investigation and reporting.

4. Working outside of normal hours

Staff working alone before or after the standard working hours of 9 am to 5 pm must ensure that all external doors are locked. The DA must ensure there is sufficient lighting to and at the car park. Maintaining sufficient lighting may necessitate tree trimming or adjustment to the angle of exterior floodlights.

5. Fire precautions

The Occupational Health and Safety Representative is responsible for ensuring that copies of the emergency evacuation plan are located in central areas and are maintained in good condition. The DA must ensure that staff, contractors, and visitors are aware of evacuation procedures and that signage for emergency exits is checked at regular intervals for battery replacement. The DA must ensure that new staff are aware of the operation of fire extinguishers and that all staff receive refresher training annually in the use of fire extinguishers by a licensed professional.

6. Alcohol and drugs

The OVC reserves the right to instruct anyone who is intoxicated to leave the premises. When alcohol is served at any OVC event, the DA must ensure that:

a) Food is provided.

b) Non-alcoholic drinks including water are also served.

c) Responsible drinking or drinking in moderation is encouraged.

d) Anyone who is intoxicated is refused service of alcohol.

e) Emergency services are contacted on 000 when there is violence or illness due to alcohol intoxication.

7. Bullying and harassment

All complaints of bullying must be forwarded to the DA and complainants must also refer to the Grievance Policy on the University website.

8. Office furniture and equipment

Workstations must be set up according to the following recommendations by WorkSafe Victoria:

8.1. Chair

a) Backrest height and back tilt are adjusted to fit the curve of the user’s back and allow a slightly reclined posture.

b) Seat height and angle are adjusted so that the user can sit with their feet flat on the floor, hips between 90 degrees and 120 degrees.
c) An adjustable-height footrest is supplied if required.

8.2. Desk/bench

a) If the desk is adjustable, the surface should be set just below the user’s elbow height.

b) If the desk is not adjustable, the surface is to be just below elbow height (e.g. chair raised slightly, foot rest supplied).

c) The desk must be large enough to fit the task requirements of the job.

d) The desk must be deep enough to allow the computer screen to be approximately at arm’s length away.

e) There must be adequate space under the desk to allow comfortable forward facing posture and ability to access and exit the workstation.

f) The desk corners and under desk space must be rounded, smooth and free of sharp edges (e.g. no keyboard or shelves under desk).

g) Items such as disk drives, files, rubbish bins and desk drawers are stored so that they do not interfere with available space under the desk.

h) Frequently used items on the desk are to be stored within easy reach (e.g. keyboard, telephone).

i) Large or heavy items are stored within close reach and not above shoulder height, or nearby where one has to stand to access them.

8.3 Computer

a) The keyboard must be close to the front edge of the desk allowing space for the wrists/forearms to rest on the desk surface (about 12 – 15cm).

b) The keyboard feet must be adjusted to position the keyboard as flat as possible on the desk.

c) Staff should touch type to avoid the need to look down at the keys.

d) The mouse must be positioned as close to the keyboard as possible.

e) The mouse must be as close as possible to the midline and staff should not hold the mouse when not in use.

f) The screen must be positioned at approximately arm’s length from the staff member’s seated position.

g) The screen must be positioned so one can look straight ahead and slightly down at the screen (top of screen level with or below eye level when the user is sitting upright).

h) The screen must be positioned directly in front of the user (or close to this position if a document holder or second screen is required).
i) The screen must be positioned to avoid reflections or glare from windows or lights (e.g. not facing or backing onto windows).

8.4. Telephone

a) The telephone should be placed within close reach on the side which is comfortable to use with other tasks and equipment.

b) If there is considerable telephone work, a headset must be provided.

c) The headset must be appropriate for the task (one or both ears) and comfortable to wear.

9. First Aid

9.1 There must be at least two staff who hold a current first aid certificate. The first aiders are responsible for ensuring that the first aid kit is well stocked.

9.2 First aiders should only provide assistance if it is safe to do so. The person who is injured or sick must consult a doctor after receiving first aid.

9.3 Workplace first aid facilities and arrangements include:

a) First Aid Officers’ names and contact details are published.

b) First aid kit(s) must be readily available.

c) Those who require first aid treatment should obtain it from a designated First Aid Officer.

d) First aid treatment is to be recorded on the Hazard and Incident Report and entered in the HIT Register. Biological waste is to be reported to a First Aid Officer for removal.

10 Toilets

Toilets must be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition by engaging a contract cleaner. Consumables are to be replenished regularly to ensure a continuing supply.

11 Travel

11.1 Domestic and Offsite Travel

Before travel, staff must provide their Supervisor with their itinerary and contact details.

11.2 International travel

11.2.1 Staff must not travel on OVC business to any country for which the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has issued a warning, without approval by the Vice-Chancellor.

11.2.2 It is advisable for staff travelling on OVC business to register with the nearest Australian diplomatic mission. This will enable Australian officials to provide appropriate advice if warnings are substantially upgraded or evacuation becomes necessary.

11.2.3 Before travel, staff must ensure that all required vaccinations are up to date and as with domestic travel, must provide their itinerary and contact details to their Supervisor.
12 Noise

Staff must not be exposed to excessive noise levels and the Noise Regulation states that the noise exposure limits are an 8 hour average level of 85 decibels and a peak noise level of 140 decibels at the staff’s ear position. In accordance with the Noise Regulation, a hierarchy or order of controls must be applied when fixing noise problems. These are:

a) Elimination of noise sources.
b) Substitution of quieter plant or processes or use of engineering measures.
c) Administrative measures.
d) Hearing protectors.

13 Smoking

As per the Policy, there must be no smoking in the building of the OVC.

14 Temperature

The optimum temperature is between 21 - 26°C. If the building temperature drops below 16°C, or reaches 35°C after consecutive days of extreme heat and climate control equipment fails, staff will be given the option of going home. On warm days, staff are encouraged to take frequent cool drinks and the DA must ensure that cool water is provided.