

Work Health and Safety Annual Return Guidelines

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) These Guidelines describe how to complete and submit an annual return from a Faculty, School, Division or Unit to their respective Executive Dean or Executive Director.

Scope

(2) These Guidelines apply to all management employees of Charles Sturt University (the University).

Background

(3) The purpose of using the Work Health and Safety Annual Return is twofold. Firstly, to enable senior executive staff to gain a clear insight into the performance of the work areas within their area of accountability, enabling leadership in addressing both positive and negative results and, secondly, in reducing the reporting workload placed upon work areas through a once yearly annual return, rather than supplying a range of individual reports.

(4) The timing of these returns is based on providing the required information to go into the Work Health and Safety (WHS) section of the University's Annual Report. This usually commences late November each year. The forms are available from the University's [Health, Safety and Wellbeing website](#) and also come bundled with safety management plan and WHS workplace inspection materials.

Section 2 - Glossary

(5) Nil.

Section 3 - Policy

(6) Refer to the [Work Health and Safety Policy](#).

Section 4 - Guidelines

Delegation of Responsibility

(7) The Vice-Chancellor through the [Work Health and Safety Policy](#) and the [Work Health and Safety Roles and Responsibilities Guidelines](#) has responsibility for ensuring health and safety standards are set and maintained. Responsibility for WHS is passed from the Vice-Chancellor through the Executive Deans and Executive Directors to Head of Schools and Unit Directors or Managers. To ensure that executive staff are kept informed in relation to health and safety issues within their area of accountability, the University has adopted a number of WHS performance indicators as measures that health and safety is being managed effectively.

Key WHS Performance Indicators

(8) Negative WHS performance indicators consisting of accident/incident data and workers' compensation claims information will be supplied to Faculty/Divisions and Units by the Division of People and Culture. Following this, material will be available to all relevant managers through the [Incident and Hazard Reporting System \(Protecht\)](#) Online WHS Management System.

(9) Key positive WHS performance indicators at the University consist of:

- a. Annual Safety Management Plan developed and communicated;
- b. workplace inspections completed twice annually;
- c. senior managers participate in at least two inspections of their workplaces each year;
- d. local action plan items completed within set/agreed time frames;
- e. staff and managers complete their WHS Induction within four weeks of commencement;
- f. staff complete their agreed WHS training requirements within set timeframes;
- g. evidence that local meetings are held at least four times per year (toolbox talk, staff meeting agenda item etc.);
- h. Site Emergency Plan (SEP) reviewed annually;
- i. Trial Emergency Evacuations completed annually;
- j. the number of risk assessments completed and/or reviewed for the reporting period; and
- k. the number of safe operating procedures/safe work method statements (SOPs/SWMS) completed and/or reviewed for the reporting period.

Compilation of Safety Management Plans

(10) Work areas are required to notify the Division of People and Culture once per year of the completion of their safety management plan. The preferred method is to include all WHS key performance indicator material, including safety management plan details into the [Annual Return form](#) that is sent to their Executive Dean or Executive Director for collating a consolidated response to go to the Division of People and Culture. The use of annual returns should decrease the reporting load placed upon units and provides executive staff with an overview of the WHS performance of their units. The annual return form is now bundled with the required inspection forms. It is also a good idea to forward copies of this documentation to the regional Health and Safety Committees where your work area has a presence.

WHS Consultations and Communication

(11) Employees usually have the greatest awareness of any gaps in workplace safety management and of hazardous work practices. Effective consultation with employees and their representatives is crucial to the success of WHS, and needs to be integrated into every stage of the workplace management system.

(12) Consultation allows for shared ownership of the process and prepares the way for successful implementation. Successful consultation needs to occur when:

- a. reviewing the current WHS management performance;
- b. developing, implementing and evaluating related programs, policies, procedures and management systems;
- c. identifying, assessing and controlling workplace risks;
- d. determining training needs;
- e. planning changes to, or introducing new work practices;
- f. designing and/or purchasing new equipment;
- g. refurbishing facilities or planning new facilities; and
- h. investigating incidents.

(13) The type of formal communication method to be established between management and staff to cover the consultation requirements of the [Work Health and Safety Act 2011 \(NSW\)](#) largely depends on the level of risk inherent in that work areas operations and the management style of the Senior Manager.

(14) In areas with intrinsically low levels of risk, such as office environments, the incorporation of WHS communication into their regular meetings should suffice. Work areas with higher levels of risk may wish to establish a WHS Group to assist management to control these risks and provide a formal consultation mechanism.

(15) An important element of successfully implementing WHS workplace inspections and the Safety Management Plan involves both meaningful consultation and effective communication aimed at achieving commitment from all areas and levels within each organisational area. Managers need to plan for how consultation will be achieved and how ideas and actions will be communicated.

WHS Induction and Training

(16) There is a legislative requirement for the University to provide both general and site- specific WHS information and training to all existing and new members of staff. A WHS Online Induction and Training program known as ELMO has been developed using external consultants and is deemed suitable to provide the information required by staff to understand and interact with the University's WHS Management System and with its policies, guidelines and procedures.

(17) This program enhances staff knowledge of work, health and safety, and provides a valuable information resource. The package also promotes the values of a safety culture and the University's commitment to providing a safe work environment that will be incident free. Completion of this program will satisfy the requirements of quality and record maintenance for audit purposes.

(18) The developed training program contains the following modules and components:

- a. Safe U at CSU;
- b. WHS for Managers;
- c. Fire and Emergency Procedures; and
- d. WHS Legislative Changes (not compulsory but recommended).

(19) The online training program will provide a base level of work health and safety induction for all staff and for those postgraduate and post-doctoral students working in laboratories or areas of risk. The program is designed to record those parts of the program viewed and the names and unit details of the users. This information will be electronically recorded within Alesco, the Human Resources Information System (HRIS). Site-specific inductions will still be the responsibility of the area manager or supervisor. A guideline on 'WHS Induction and Training', which provides details, including access information to the WHS Online Induction and Training program, is available from the [Health, Safety and Wellbeing website](#). This guideline also provides detail of the site-specific induction requirements for both permanent and casual staff.

(20) All staff newly appointed to continuing and fixed term positions of the University are required to complete all modules of the ELMO online induction program within one month of commencing duties at the University, including the modules noted in clause 18.

Emergency Preparedness

(21) Staff complete at least one emergency evacuation trial per year, inclusive of responses to false alarms.

Conduct of Workplace Inspections

(22) Managers / Supervisors of facilities that are shared need to arrange for the assignment of investigation responsibilities to ensure that duplication of effort does not occur. Using a joint team with members from each area, or rotating the responsibility for the conduct of the inspection between areas, are possible methods for managing shared facilities.

(23) Where workplaces are geographically large or where there are a large number of facilities, then it may be prudent to carry out inspections on the separate locations and combine them into a single report. This approach can be carried out over a number of months and still meet the recommended reporting schedule.

(24) The use of annual returns should decrease the reporting load placed upon units. The annual return form is now bundled with the required inspection forms. It is also a good idea to forward a copy of this documentation to your regional Health and Safety Committee.

Status and Details

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