

# Health and Safety Representatives Handbook

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## Definitions

[The University Glossary](#) and [WHS definitions register](#) apply to this handbook.

## Introduction

A Health and Safety Representative (HSR) is the key to communication and consultation on Work Health and Safety (WHS) matters by making it easier to exchange ideas and concerns about safety between a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (Employer) and Workers. Health and Safety Representatives raise and discuss WHS issues and concerns with Employers and/or Managers so they can work together and arrive at solutions to make the workplace safe.

The intent of this handbook is to provide information regarding the responsibilities of a HSR and the related ECU processes, to allow the HSR to undertake the role effectively.

### 1. Role, Powers and Functions of a Health and Safety Representative

Dealing with Work Health and Safety matters for an area is not solely the responsibility of the HSR. Workers are accountable for taking reasonable care for their own safety and health at work, and to avoid adversely affecting the safety or health of any other person at work through their actions or omissions. This includes responsibilities for reporting hazards, incidents and near misses.

Members of University Executive, Deans and Directors are responsible for managing WHS in their work area as outlined in the [WHS Resources, Accountability and Responsibility Guideline](#).

HSR's are a key contact point for consultation and to undertake key duties that support WHS at the University.

Key duties and responsibilities of HSRs include:

- Completion of workplace inspections as directed by the Local WHS Committee Chair.
- Representing their colleagues on WHS matters at quarterly Local WHS Committee meetings and undertaking the responsibilities of the role of Committee member as outlined in the [University WHS Consultative Committees Procedure](#).
- Assisting with incident investigations.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of WHS measures implemented by the organisation and providing feedback where relevant.
- Consulting with colleagues on WHS matters and providing advice where appropriate.
- Assisting with the resolution of potential hazards and risks in the workplace.
- Maintain the required Health and Safety Representative training including refresher training.
- Participating in annual Hazard Risk Register reviews initiated by the Local Committee.

Section 68 and subdivision 5 of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* (WA) outlines the full powers and functions of a HSR. These functions and powers are summarised in detail by Worksafe in the [Health and Safety Representatives Information Sheet](#).

## 2.0 Nominating as a Health and Safety Representative

### Requirements for nomination

To be eligible for nomination as a HSR, the Worker must be an ECU staff member and a member of the work group they are nominating to represent.

University Executive, Deans and Directors, supported by the Local WHS Committee and Chair, are responsible for ensuring Workers in their area are adequately represented on WHS matters through ensuring an adequate number of HSR's are elected, at least one per 50 workers.

### Nomination Process:

- The Local WHS Committee chair is responsible for seeking nominations for the vacant HSR roles. The process of seeking volunteers should be supported by Managers of the relevant areas.
- Nominations must be sought from the whole work area any time a new HSR role is created or becomes vacant (including at the expiry of an existing HSR term). A period of at least 2 weeks should be provided for staff in the work area to nominate for the role.
- Volunteers who wish to fill a vacant HSR role should Inform their Manager and the Local WHS Committee Chair they wish to be a candidate.
- If the number of volunteers for the HSR role equals the number of vacancies, an election does not need to be held and the candidate is taken to have been elected as a HSR for the work group once confirmed by the Local WHS Committee Chair.
- Where multiple applicants wish to apply for the same vacant HSR role, the University Executive member, Dean or Director, in consultation with the Local WHS Committee Chair, should consider if an additional HSR role can be created.
- Where multiple applicants wish to proceed with an application in a work area where an additional role is not being created, an election within the work area will need to be held to determine who will be appointed as per section 2.1 below.

## 2.1 Elections

Information and requirements for conducting elections of HSRs are available from Worksafe [here](#).

Where an election is required, the process will be conducted in accordance with these requirements by the local work group in consultation with the [People and Culture](#) team.

A template for hard copy ballot papers is available from Worksafe [here](#).

## 3. Required Steps to becoming a new Health and Safety Representative

Once a volunteer has been endorsed for a vacant HSR position by the Chair of their Local WHS Committee, or a HSR has been appointed by election, they must complete the below steps to formally become a HSR. The default term for a new HSR is 3 years.

### 3.1 Notification

A newly appointed HSR must notify:

- The People and Culture team by emailing [whs@ecu.edu.au](mailto:whs@ecu.edu.au) and including:
  - which School/Centre they are representing, and
  - the date of commencement which will also be considered the start of the 3-year term.
- The Workers in their Work Area of their commencement in the role to ensure that they are informed of the HSR appointment. Please copy [WHS@ecu.edu.au](mailto:WHS@ecu.edu.au) on any communications announcing the new HSR is commencing a new term for a work area.

Once this is completed, the staff member may begin acting as a HSR for their area but must still complete the training outlined below.

### 3.2 Training

A new HSR is required to undertake a 5-day training course within 3 months of taking up the role or as soon as practicable thereafter. Details of the courses organised by ECU People and Culture Team on campus (including course dates) through the preferred training provider are available [here](#).

This course can also be split into 3 days and 2 days between separate courses by contacting the [training provider](#) directly. If the HSR wants to complete a second term at the end of their initial 3 year appointment, they can re-nominate for the role and a [refresher course](#) should be completed once they are re-appointed.

Attendance on the ECU hosted course through the preferred training provider (Training Services Australia) will be centrally funded, Schools/Centres are required to cover the cost of attendance for any alternative course arrangements should the HSR request to attend a different course.

The HSR must inform [whs@ecu.edu.au](mailto:whs@ecu.edu.au) when they have completed a HSR course so the training can be recorded on the [central list of HSRs](#).

## 4. ECU WHS Committees

HSRs are required to join the Local WHS Committee to enable them to attend the committee meetings and be provided with relevant WHS information. The Local WHS Committee Chair will invite new HSRs to the committee after being advised of their nomination by the HSR. The Chair will also provide the new HSRs with information on when workplace inspections are required for the work area.

At ECU, Local WHS Committees meet at least quarterly and there are also additional University wide health and safety advisory groups and consultative committees. At least one HSR from the Local WHS Committee is required to be a member of the University WHS Committee (UWHSC) with one proxy. The Local WHS Committee Chair, in consultation with the Committee members, will determine who the representative and proxy for the UWHSC shall be.

Details of the Health and Safety Consultative Committees can be found by reviewing the University's [Health and Safety Consultative Committees Procedure](#).

## 5. Hazard Resolution

HSRs should follow the [ECU Hazard Resolution Procedure](#) as the first step to resolve hazards.

After completing their training HSRs also have the power to issue [Provisional Improvement Notices](#) (PIN) under the WHS Act 2020, however PINs should not be issued until consultation with People and Culture has occurred and following the University [Hazard Resolution Procedure](#). PINs are further explained to the HSR in the Health and Safety Representative training.

## 6. Removal of a Health and Safety Representative

The majority of the members of a work group may remove a HSR for the work group if the members sign a written declaration that the HSR should no longer represent the work group. The declaration should be provided to the Local WHS Committee chair and [WHS@ecu.edu.au](mailto:WHS@ecu.edu.au)

Prior to seeking removal and formalising a declaration, this should be discussed with the Local WHS Chair and People and Culture team.

## 7. ECU Policies and Procedures

Further information on WHS at ECU is available from the [Work Health and Safety](#) website.

Some of the key documents for Health and Safety Representatives to familiarise themselves with are:

- [Work Health and Safety Policy](#) – Outlines the University's commitment to WHS.
- [WHS Management System Guideline](#) – Outlines the framework that supports Health and Safety at ECU.
- [WHS Resources, Accountability and Responsibility Guideline](#) – Outlines the WHS responsibilities and accountabilities at ECU.
- [Online Riskware Incident Report form](#) – Used to provide notification of incidents and near misses occurring in the workplace.
- [Incident Reporting and Investigation Guideline](#) – Provides information in requirements for reporting and investigating incidents.
- [Hazard Resolution Procedure](#) - Includes details of the processes for reporting and resolving hazards at ECU.
- [Emergency and First Aid Response web page](#) – For information on first aid training, First Aid Officers, kits and defibrillators.
- [Workplace inspection website](#) – For information on the Workplace inspection guidelines and templates.
- [Riskware Information and login page](#) – This also includes a guide and information on how to use Riskware to complete workplace inspections.
- [Health and Safety Hazard Prompt Sheet](#) – A prompt on the types of hazards to consider for activities and when conducting risk assessments.

## 8. Resources and support for Health and Safety Representatives

### 8.1 Internal Resources and Information

In addition to raising WHS matters at Local WHS Committees and with their Local WHS Committee Chair, HSRs may also contact the ECU People and Culture team for further support on 6204 2302 or [WHS@ecu.edu.au](mailto:WHS@ecu.edu.au).

### 8.2 External Resources and Information

- WorkSafe provide an email information service designed specifically for Health and Safety Representatives. You can subscribe to this list [here](#).
- There is also useful information for HSRs on the [Department of Commerce - WorkSafe](#) website.

## Contact Information

For queries relating to this document please contact:

Document Owner	Chief Safety Officer, People and Culture
All Enquiries Contact	Work Health and Safety Team
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## Approval History

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