Procedure Title: **Work Health and Safety Risk Assessment Procedure**

Procedure Owner: **Chief Safety Officer**

This procedure supports the University to operationalise the *Work Health and Safety Policy* and must be complied with.

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1. INTENT

This procedure supports requirements of the Work Health and Safety (WHS) risk management framework outlined in the Work Health and Safety Hazard Identification and Risk Management Guideline.

The purpose of this document is to outline the procedure for completing WHS Risk Assessments and Risk Registers in order to identify hazards, assess the level of risk associated with them and identify Controls to eliminate or minimise the Risk so far as is Reasonably Practicable.

The process for conducting JSA's is not covered in this procedure. Please refer to the Job Safety Analysis Work Instruction for further information on this process.

2. ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

This procedure applies to All Workers and ECU Students.

3. DEFINITIONS

The University Glossary and the WHS Definitions Register apply to this procedure.

4. WHEN A WHS RISK ASSESSMENT IS REQUIRED

ECU Hazard Risk Register

4.1. A University level Hazard Risk Register must be developed and reviewed at the frequencies set out in the ECU Risk Acceptance Criteria. The ECU HRR should be informed by:

a. School/Centre HRRs outlined in section 4.4,
b. other operational Hazard Risk Assessments outlined in section 4.6, and
c. University incident data.

4.2. The Chief Safety Officer is responsible for developing and maintaining a current University HRR in consultation with stakeholders.

4.3. The Vice-Chancellor is accountable for approving the ECU HRR, following endorsement from the University Executive.

School / Centre Hazard Risk Registers

4.4. A HRR must be developed for each School and Centre and reviewed at the frequencies set out in the ECU Risk Acceptance Criteria. Where activities are common across Schools and Centres a combined HRR may be developed, for example local WHS Committees comprised of multiple Schools or Centres. HRR's may also be developed for other scenarios such as major projects including research projects.

4.5. Members of Chancellery, Executive Deans, Deans and Directors, supported by the Local WHS Committee Chair, are accountable for ensuring that the School(s) or Centre(s) within their span of control maintain a current HRR that identifies WHS Hazards, Risks and Controls associated with its activities, locations and equipment. The HRR must also consider Critical Risks and Controls where applicable.

Hazard Risk Assessments (HRA)

4.6. A HRA must be conducted:

a. To resolve a specific identified Hazard
b. When a WHS issue is raised
c. When commencing or changing an activity including:
d. Teaching activities (e.g., per Unit)
e. Research activities including clinical trials and grant applications
f. Purchasing new plant or equipment
g. Travel activities (e.g., study tours, fieldwork)
h. Events (e.g., Open day)
i. New projects (e.g., Infrastructure), and
j. Where a Job Safety Analysis (JSA) results in a residual rating of Substantial or above.

4.7. ECU Officers are accountable, and Managers and Supervisors are responsible for ensuring HRA's are conducted in their area of control in line with these requirements.

5. CONDUCTING A WHS RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1. ECU's Officers, Deans and Directors and the Risk Approver are accountable for the overall management of the Hazards related to the activities being undertaken and assessed within the HRA/HRA and for ensuring Risk Assessments are conducted as required.

5.2. Where Risk Assessments require the input of a number of stakeholders, there may be value in conducting a workshop session. It is recommended this approach be taken for the development and review of HRRs and may also be beneficial when conducting HRAs.

5.3. Risk Owners, and where relevant Workshop Facilitators, are responsible for completing the HRA or HRR in line with this procedure.

5.4. WHS Risk Assessments are conducted within Riskware and the information sheet Create a New Risk Assessment provides step by step information on how to conduct and record both HRRs and HRAs in Riskware.

Context

Scope

5.5. The Risk Owner is responsible for determining the scope of the assessment in consultation with the Risk Approver, including:
a. The objective of the Risk Assessment e.g., project/task/activity assessed
b. The effect and location (boundaries) of the Risk being assessed
c. The business unit(s) affected, and
d. Documents referenced including any legal and other requirements, previous incident reports, operating manuals, procedures, HRR.

5.6. Where a workshop is conducted to complete the HRR or HRA, the Risk Owner is responsible for also consulting with the Workshop Facilitator when developing the scope of the assessment.

Risk Assessment Team

5.7. The Risk Owner, in consultation with the Risk Approver and, where relevant, the Workshop Facilitator, is responsible for forming the Risk Assessment team who will participate in conducting the HRA or HRR. The team should include participants with knowledge and experience of the area, activity and/or equipment being assessed.

5.8. When conducting HRR's a workshop should be conducted with participants including, at a minimum:
a. Workshop Facilitator
b. Risk Owner tasked with managing the HRR on behalf of the School/Service Centre
c. Risk Approver or delegate for the activity/area/equipment being assessed
d. Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) that represent the work area, and
e. Participants with knowledge of the work area / activity / equipment/groups being assessed.

5.9. Work Health and Safety team members and technical professionals may also be included in the Risk Assessment team as required or may act as the Workshop Facilitator where requested.

5.10. Risk Assessment team members are responsible for:
a. Familiarising themselves with Risk Assessment process and any materials provided in advance of the assessment workshop, and
b. Committing to the time or duration required.

Workshop Preparation

5.11. Where a workshop is being conducted as part of the development or review of a HRA or HRR, the Risk Owner and, where utilised the Workshop Facilitator, is responsible for completing the following recommended preparation:
a. Arrange a suitable time and agree on duration of workshop.
b. Confirm Risk Assessment team.
c. Arrange a scribe if required. The scribe may record the output directly into Riskware.
d. Book and confirm a suitable venue with the required equipment.

e. Consider providing the following information, where applicable:
   - Current HRR or any relevant Risk Assessments
   - Existing procedures, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and manuals
   - Incident investigation reports and associated actions
   - Previous audit findings and associated actions
   - Legal non-compliance issues
   - Observed hazards and associated actions or trend report
   - Relevant changes to legislation, and
   - Occupational hygiene monitoring results

f. Arrange a work area or equipment inspection if all Risk Assessment team members are not familiar with the work area, activities or equipment that are the subject of the assessment. The aim of this inspection is to be confident all the main Hazards and most of the routes by which a major Incident could arise are identified.

Step 1: Introduction

5.12. The Risk Owner or Workshop Facilitator is responsible for commencing the workshop by reviewing the scope of the Risk Assessment and confirming it is understood by the team members. The expectations of the Risk Owner and Risk Approver should also be clearly explained and any amendments to the scope should be noted.

5.13. The roles of the team members and workshop facilitator (when used) should be explained as well as the actions planned following completion of the Risk Assessment. The method to be used should be discussed in as much detail as is needed for the team members to reach a common understanding of the process.

Step 2: Hazard Identification

5.14. The purpose of the Hazard identification step is to identify the Hazards (known as Risk Factors in Riskware) that could potentially result in a consequence in the work locations/ activities/ equipment and/or work group being assessed and describe the hazardous situation (risk description within Riskware).

5.15. Hazards can be identified by:
   a. Identifying and analysing tasks and activities including those where equipment is used
   b. Conducting inspections in work locations
   c. Consulting with workers, including HSRs and students
   d. Review of hazard and injury/illness information from Incident and Hazard reports
   e. Review of operational manuals for equipment where relevant
   f. Review of any safety alerts from industry and regulators or product recalls from design/manufacturers where relevant, and
   g. Review other approved (Live) HRAs and HRRs already conducted for the School/Centre locations available within Riskware.

5.16. The WHS Hazard and Risk Factor Prompt Sheet provides a checklist of hazards for consideration.

5.17. The following impacts should be considered:
   a. *Safety*: An injury that has occurred, or may occur, and/or damage or potential damage to equipment and property e.g., burn, pinch, graze, crush, fire, deformity etc.

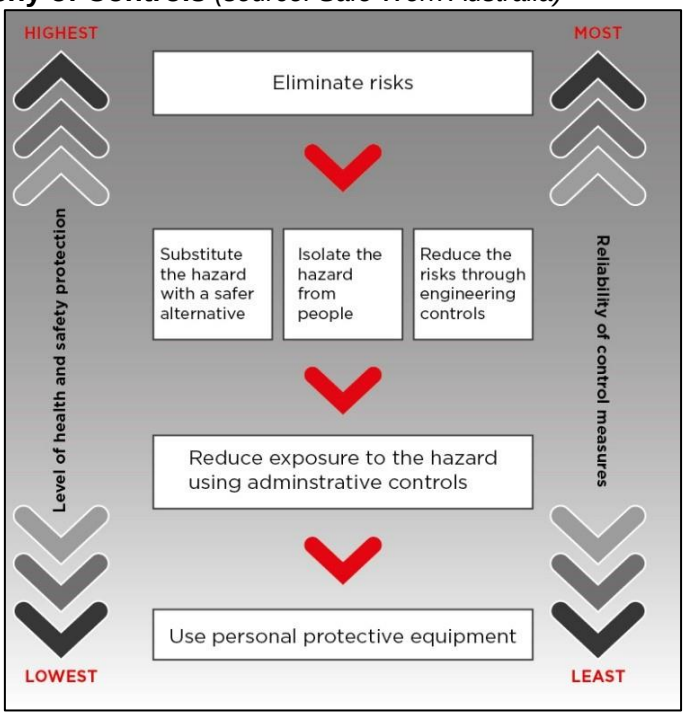
b. *Health*: Occupational health concern / disease / illness that has occurred, or may occur, due to immediate exposure (acute) or exposure over a period of time (chronic) e.g. sunburn, noise induced hearing loss, musculoskeletal damage, respiratory reaction to inhalation of fumes, Occupational Exposure Limit (OEL) exceeded etc.

5.18. When documenting Hazards and Risk descriptions, it is important to ensure:
a. The text in the Risk description is succinct, clear and contains enough information to sufficiently convey the hazardous situation and resulting consequence to any person that may need read it. Abbreviations and slang should be avoided.
b. The Hazard (Risk Factor) that best describes the situation is selected. There may be more than one and if this is the case choose the most prominent and provide the details of the others in the Risk description.
c. Consequences are sufficiently clear and specific enough to make a reasonable Risk Assessment.

Step 3: Identification of Existing Controls

5.19. For each Hazard and description, identify and record all existing Controls in place and categorise by Hierarchy of Controls as per Table 1 below.

Table 1: Hierarchy of Controls *(source: Safe Work Australia)*



Critical Risks and Controls

5.20. The ECU WHS HRR identifies the University's Critical Risk and Controls. Each Critical Risk and it's Critical Controls are outlined in the WHS Critical Risks and Controls Standard.

5.21. The Critical Controls must be considered as part of the review of existing Controls and, where not in place, they must be listed as proposed Controls, outlined in section 5.27 and work activities must commence until they have been implemented.

Controls for exposure to radiation, biosafety and hazardous substances

5.22. The RBHSC is the ECU's reference and referral point for all matters relating to the approval and purchase of radiation, biological and hazardous chemical materials, including Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and carcinogens, mutagens and teratogens.

5.23. Hazardous situations involving potential exposure to these hazardous materials should be controlled so far as is reasonably practicable, since meeting an Occupational Exposure Limit (OEL) is not an adequate form of risk management.

Control Effectiveness

5.24. Identified existing controls must be evaluated for effectiveness and recorded as either:
a. Fully effective
b. Partially effective
c. Ineffective

5.25. Where existing Controls are not considered fully effective, this must be taken into consideration when evaluating the current risk rating with additional controls proposed to increase effectiveness.

Step 4: Current Risk Rating

5.26. With the existing Controls in place, use the ECU Risk Matrix to evaluate each risk description:
a. Identify the level of Consequence aligned to the consequence descriptors
b. Identify the level of Likelihood of the Consequence occurring, and then
c. To determine the overall Risk Rating from the sum of the Consequence and Likelihood.

Step 5: Proposed Controls to Reduce Risk

5.27. If the current Hazard/Risk:
a. cannot be eliminated
b. is intolerable in line with ECU's Risk Appetite Framework Statement,
c. Is a Critical Risk and the required Critical Controls are not in place; or
d. existing Controls are evaluated as not fully effective,
further Controls should be identified to minimise the Risk so far as is Reasonably Practicable.

5.28. Emphasis and priority should be placed on those Risks evaluated above the established risk acceptance criteria threshold or are identified as Critical Risks as outlined in the WHS Critical Risks and Controls Standard .

5.29. When determining the availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or minimise the risk so far as is reasonably practicable, the following should be considered in consultation with impacted Workers:
a. Whether there is specific legislation related to the hazard that must be followed;
b. The existence of any relevant Codes of Practice, Guidance Notes or Australian Standards;
c. Industry standards and accepted practice in similar workplaces; and
d. Available information or advice from experts or consultants.

5.30. Proposed Controls should consider the Hierarchy of Controls and always aim to eliminate the Hazard as it is the most effective Control. If this is not Reasonably Practicable, minimise the Likelihood or Consequence of exposure to the Hazard by working down through the hierarchy.

5.31. Administrative Controls and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) are the least effective at minimising Risk because they do not control the Hazard at the source and rely on human behaviour and supervision. These Control measures should only be used:
a. there are no other practical to supplement higher level Control measures
b. as a short-term interim measure until a more effective way of controlling the Risk can be used, or
c. when Control measures available (as a last resort).

5.32. The use of PPE as a Control is limited to:
a. Reaching compliance with OELs or safe working conditions
b. When Controls that are higher in the Hierarchy of Controls are being developed and implemented
c. Tasks that are short in length
d. To supplement higher level Control measures, or
e. Where the use of higher-level Controls is inconsistent with the amount of Risk and cost.

5.33. Where ongoing measuring or monitoring of Controls is required, these programs should be documented. The data from these programs (once analysed and validated) may be used to re-evaluate the Risk Assessment.

5.34. For each proposed Control, the person responsible for implementing the Control must be assigned and the required due date must be determined.

Step 6: Residual Risk Rating

5.35. Considering that the proposed Control(s) as implemented, the risk must be re-evaluated using the ECU Risk Matrix to determine the Residual Rating.

5.36. If the Residual Rating is reduced to so far as is Reasonably Practicable and acceptable according to the ECU risk acceptance criteria, the work can commence once Controls are implemented.

5.37. Work must not commence / continue in work locations, activities, equipment and groups where Risks remain inadequately controlled or intolerable in accordance with ECU's Risk Appetite Framework Statement or where Critical Controls are not implemented for Critical Risks.

Step 7: Peer Review

5.38. The draft HRA must be reviewed by one or more subject matter experts with specific expertise or knowledge on the Hazards associated with the activity and location, as well as the activity supervisor, before it is submitted for approval.

5.39. The Peer Reviewer supports the Risk Assessment process, by using their technical knowledge and expertise to review, to the best of their ability, whether:
a. All Risk Factors (Hazards) for the activity are covered and clearly described

b. All existing Controls in place are documented and the Control effectiveness evaluation is accurate
c. Opportunities to reduce the Risk to so far as is Reasonably Practicable through implementation of additional proposed Controls are considered,
d. Critical Controls are in place for Critical Risks; and
e. Current and Residual Risk ratings are accurate.

5.40. The Riskware process steps to invite a subject matter expert to conduct a peer review and the process to complete a peer review are available from the following information sheets:
a. Invite a User to Peer Review a Risk Assessment Riskware Information Sheet
b. Complete a Peer Review Riskware Information Sheet

5.41. Schools and Centres may implement additional peer review requirements to ensure their area specific requirements are met.

Step 8: Risk Approval

5.42. Once Peer Review feedback has been received and incorporated; the HRA or HRR must be submitted to the Risk Approver for approval in line with the staff levels outlined in the ECU risk acceptance criteria.

5.43. The Risk Approver is accountable for reviewing the quality of the HRA prior to providing approval including ensuring:
a. All Risk Factors (Hazards) for the activity are covered in the assessment and included even if they are well controlled or considered low risk
b. Controls are in place to address the Hazards identified and they are effective, inspected and maintained
c. Critical Controls are in place for Critical Risks
d. The Control Effectiveness has been rated for each Control and, where Controls are rated as ineffective, actions are in place to address this
e. The current Risk Rating is accurate and acceptable in line with ECU's risk acceptance criteria
f. Opportunities to reduce the Risk to so far as is Reasonably Practicable through implementation of additional proposed Controls are considered, and
g. If a level of Risk is not within their appropriate staff level to accept the level of Risk in accordance with ECU's Risk Acceptance Criteria, escalating approval to the appropriate staff level.

The Riskware Information sheet Approve or Reject a Risk Assessment provides information on the process steps within Riskware.

Communication of Risk Assessment Outcomes

5.44. The Risk Approver and Risk Owner are accountable for ensuring the approved Risk Assessment is communicated to assessment team members and applicable stakeholders.

6. REVIEW

Reviewing of HRAs and HRRs

6.1. HRAs and HRRs should be reviewed:

a. When new Hazards are identified, equipment, activities or locations change or controls become ineffective,
b. Periodically in accordance with the ECU Risk Matrix Acceptance Criteria

Current Risk Rating	Review Period not exceeding
Extreme	One Week
High	Three Months
Substantial	Six months
Moderate	Twelve Months
Low	Periodically as required

c. When related legal or other requirements change, or
d. Where relevant Incident investigations identify new Hazards that haven't been captured or demonstrate that Controls are not fully effective.

6.2. The Risk Approver is accountable and Risk Owner responsible for ensuring HRA's and HRR's are reviewed in line with these requirements.

6.3. When undertaking a review, the following should be considered:
a. Whether all Hazards associated with the activity have been captured and remain current
b. Whether current Controls remain in place and effective including ensuring they are:
- Fit for purpose;
- Suitable for the nature and duration of the work; and
- Installed, set up and used correctly.

c. Risk ratings are appropriate for the current level of Risk
d. Whether there are additional opportunities to reduce the Risk to so far as is Reasonably Practicable through implementation of additional proposed Controls

6.4. The process for conducting HRA and HRR reviews within Riskware is documented in the Riskware information sheet Review a Risk Assessment or Risk Register.

Reviewing Progress of Proposed Controls

6.5. On a quarterly basis:

a. The University Work Health and Safety Committee will review and monitor the progress of proposed Controls outlined in the ECU Hazard Risk Register.
b. Local WHS Committees should review and monitor the progress of proposed Controls for:
- each School/Centre HRR, and
- HRAs relevant to the School/Centre where tasks are overdue.

6.6. The person responsible for implementing proposed controls is accountable for:
a. ensuring proposed Controls are implemented by the required due date, and
b. providing a regular update on the progress of proposed Controls as requested by the relevant WHS Committee Chair.

7. ARCHIVING RISK ASSESSMENTS

7.1. Where HRA's and HRR's are no longer current (Live) e.g., where the work activity is no longer undertaken, equipment has been removed or location no longer utilised, the Risk Approver is accountable and the Risk Owner responsible for archiving (closing) the Risk Assessment within Riskware.

7.2. Archived risks will still be visible and retrievable within Riskware by system administrators.

8. ACCOUNTABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Procedure Owner the Chief Safety Officer has overall responsibility for the content of these procedures and their operation.

9. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Legislation

Work Health and Safety Act 2020 (WA)

Standards

AS/NZS ISO 31000: *Risk Management: Principles and Guidelines*

Policies

Integrated Risk Management Policy
Work Health and Safety Policy

Operational documents and resources

ECU's Risk Appetite Statement Framework
Hazard Resolution Procedure
Health and Safety Hazard and Risk Factor Prompt Sheet
Incident Reporting and Investigation Guideline
Job Safety Analysis Work Instruction
Riskware information sheets:

- Create a New Risk Assessment
- Review a Risk Assessment or Risk Register
- Invite a User to Peer Review a Risk Assessment
- Complete a Peer Review
- Approve or Reject a Risk Assessment

Work Health and Safety Hazard Identification and Risk Management Guideline
WHS Critical Risks and Controls Standard

10. CONTACT INFORMATION

For queries relating to this document please contact:

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11. APPROVAL HISTORY

Procedure approved by:	Chief Safety Officer
Date procedure first approved:	May 2021
Date last modified:	December 2023
Revision history:	December 2023: V2.1: Updated to include review of control effectiveness. May 2023: V2.0: updated to include Critical Risks and Controls, ECU HRR and further detail on Reasonably Practicable requirements. May 2021: V1.0: new document combining previously separate Hazard Risk Assessment and Hazard Risk Register procedures.
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HPCM file reference:	HSMS/30