

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY



University
of Otago
ŌTĀKOU WHAKAIHU WAKA

Category

Health and Safety

Type

Policy

Approved by

Council

Date takes effect

12 December 2024

Last approved revision

12 December 2024

Sponsor

Vice-Chancellor

Responsible officer

Chief Operating Officer

Review date

12 December 2029



HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

PURPOSE

The health, safety and wellbeing of workers and students is of prime importance at the University of Otago. It is the University's intention to meet the legislative requirements, to strive for excellence in health, safety and wellbeing management, and to be a national leader within the tertiary sector.

ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

All University of Otago workplaces, workers, students, visitors and members of the public lawfully on University sites and any other locations where activities are undertaken by University of Otago representatives on behalf of the University.

CONTENT

1. It is the policy of the University to act in compliance with all of its obligations in relation to health, safety and wellbeing – including legislative requirements, applicable New Zealand standards and codes of practice, and any additional requirements to which it subscribes. By adhering to this policy, the University will, so far as is reasonably practicable, protect the health, safety and welfare of all workers, students, and others for whom it has responsibility.
2. This policy also reflects that health, safety and wellbeing is the responsibility of everyone, and that all staff, students, visitors and contractors play an important role in contributing to a healthy and safe workplace.
3. Within this policy, the University aims to effectively manage the risk of hazards arising from its facilities or activities. In particular, the University will:
 - a) Provide and maintain high standards of health, safety and wellbeing in the workplace.
 - b) Promote an organisational culture that adopts health and safety as an integral component of management philosophy.
 - c) Ensure we uphold University values and a culture that promotes workplace respect, where we believe that health, safety and wellbeing are paramount, and where bullying, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated.
 - d) Continue to evolve the University's Health and Safety Management System through a process of continuous improvement with a focus on managing health, safety and wellbeing risks. This will be achieved in consultation with workers and health and safety representatives with the objective to prevent workplace injury and illness.
 - e) Provide appropriate health, safety and wellbeing training for all staff, and disseminate health and safety information and instruction to all personnel in the workplace.
 - f) Ensure staff complete mandatory health and safety training applicable to their role.
 - g) Ensure we identify hazards and risks, and manage those risks by:
 - i. eliminating known and foreseeable hazards if it is reasonably practicable to do so; and
 - ii. minimising risks to as low as reasonably practicable using the hierarchy of risk control.
 - h) Require accurate reporting, notification and investigation of all injuries and incidents.
 - i) Provide prompt and effective work-based rehabilitation for all work-related injuries, and non-work injuries where appropriate and possible.
 - j) Provide the training and information necessary to ensure an appropriate level of competency in health and safety related matters.
 - k) Foster and encourage education in safe working practices for students who in turn will become workers when they leave the University.
 - l) Provide effective consultation processes for health and safety matters, and actively encourage participation of students, workers and their representatives, including union representation.
 - m) Provide emergency procedures and resources to respond to and recover from credible emergency situations.
4. All University of Otago workers have responsibilities under the legislation requiring that no action, or inaction, by the worker causes harm to themselves or any others in the workplace. In particular, the University of Otago requires all workers to:
 - a) Promptly report all incidents and injuries as soon as practicable after the event.
 - b) Participate in the health and safety management systems in operation within the University.
 - c) Promptly report to relevant health and safety staff any identified risks to the health and safety of staff, students, or visitors.
 - d) Actively participate in the rehabilitation for work related injuries/illnesses.
 - e) Complete, as required, any health and safety inductions, training, and education as deemed mandatory by the Vice-Chancellor and the Senior Leadership Team.

5. The University's health and safety performance will be monitored and reviewed by:

- a) University Council monthly reports and through Council's Health and Safety Committee.
- b) The Vice-Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor's Senior Leadership Team.
- c) Operational Health and Safety Committees.
- d) Annual review and continuous monitoring.
- e) External and internal audits.

Related policies, procedures and forms

Legislation

Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 and associated regulations

University

Occupational Health and Safety Management System and associated documentation

H&S Roles and Responsibilities

Asbestos Management Policy

Blood and Body Fluid Exposure Policy

Field and Off-campus Activities Policy

HSNO-Exempt Laboratory Compliance Policy

Health and Safety Approved Contractors Policy

Health and Safety of Children in the University Workplace Policy

Incident Reporting Policy

Ionising Radiation Safety and Compliance Policy

Laboratory Animal Allergen and Zoonosis Prevention Policy

Occupational Vaccination Policy

Permit to Work Policy

Rehabilitation Policy

Safe Boating Policy

SCUBA and Snorkel Diving Health and Safety Policy

Staff Critical Incident Policy

Testing of Portable Electrical Equipment Policy

Vehicle and Safe Driving Policy

Health and Safety Requirements for Walk-in Refrigerated Spaces

Procedure Laboratory Animal Allergen Prevention Guidelines

Stress and Mental Fatigue Guidelines

Testing of Portable Electrical Equipment (non-specialised) Guidelines

Vehicle and Safe Driving Guidelines

Code of Practice for Diving

Additional

ACC Accredited Employer Programme Agreement

Worker Participation Framework

Contact for further information

If you have any queries regarding the content of this policy, procedure, or guideline, or need further clarification, contact the Director, Health, Safety and Wellbeing, at andrea.mcmillan@otago.ac.nz

Keywords (for use in policy metadata)

Health, Safety, Welfare

VISION FOR HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

Foreword

As the Vice-Chancellor and Chancellor of the University of Otago, we are committed to fostering a safe, healthy, and supportive environment for all members of our University community. Our vision is to move beyond compliance with legislation to an environment where health, safety, and wellbeing are embedded into the fabric of our people, places and how we operate.

Our commitment

We are committed to a university where health, safety, and wellbeing are central to our culture and practices, and collectively we are committed to this vision and our continuous improvement.

Underpinning this are our strategic plans and frameworks that recognise the importance of our people, including the Pae Tata Strategic Plan to 2030, Vision 2040, and the Health and Safety Framework.

Our approach is guided by the principles of Te Pae Māhutonga, which emphasises autonomy and self-responsibility, leadership, cultural identity, healthy lifestyles, a safe physical environment, and participation in society.

Our vision

To support our people to achieve their best, and create an environment and culture that enable our staff and students to flourish and contribute meaningfully by prioritising wellbeing, embracing diversity and promoting a sense of community that values the physical, mental, spiritual and cultural health of all individuals, beyond the compliance requirements of health and safety.

Key pillars of our vision

1. Overall wellbeing

We aim to create an environment where the physical, mental, social, and emotional hauora of our students, staff, and visitors is embedded. This includes providing access to health initiatives, support for non-work-related injuries, and promotion of healthy lifestyles.

2. Leadership and governance

Strong leadership is essential for a mature safety culture. We are committed to visible leadership and governance, open communication, ongoing improvement and adaptation to new risks, alongside delivery of the necessary resources and support.

Our Health and Safety Governance Charter outlines the responsibilities of the Council in ensuring a safe and healthy university.

3. Positive health and safety culture

Our people are our strength. We strive to be a university that supports people to achieve their best; a university where health and safety is not just about preventing harm but also about enhancing the overall wellbeing of our community. This includes empowering our community to speak up, and fostering a no-blame culture in which reporting of incidents is expected, and everyone takes responsibility for their own health and safety.

4. Safe physical environment

Our campuses will be well maintained and designed to support safe working and learning environments. We will monitor, evaluate, audit, and improve our health and safety systems in accordance with learnings and changing legislation, as well as the needs of our community.

5. Community engagement and participation

We recognise the importance of our relationship with the wider community. We will work in partnership with contractors and community partners to actively manage risks and consider opportunities to improve outcomes. Our graduates will also be health and safety conscious.

Delivery

In order to achieve its health and safety objectives, the University will:

- Demonstrate a commitment to a Health and Safety Governance Charter – Kawenata.
- Implement a Health and Safety Management System created using the Health and Safety and Work Act 2015 and the ISO45001 International Standard for Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems.
- Work to strengthen its capability, capacity and culture to honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi across our health, safety, and wellbeing related frameworks, policies, procedures, systems, processes, and initiatives.
- Apply an integrated framework to underpin and contribute to the health and wellbeing of the University community.
- Adhere to an overarching Health and Safety Policy and suite of supporting policy documents.
- Define the health and safety roles and responsibilities within the University.
- Improve our health and safety practices through education and training, resource these practices to provide effective support, and assess risks proactively.

Conclusion

Vice-Chancellor


Our vision for health, safety, and wellbeing at Ōtakou Whakaihu Waka is ambitious and comprehensive. By embedding these principles into our culture and practices, we will create a university that not only meets but exceeds health and safety standards, ensuring an outstanding learning and working environment for all.

Vice-Chancellor _____


Date: 10 December 2024

Chancellor

Our vision for health, safety, and wellbeing at Ōtakou Whakaihu Waka has people at the centre of what we do and creates an environment where people are supported to achieve their best.

Chancellor _____


Date: 10 December 2024

HEALTH AND SAFETY GOVERNANCE CHARTER – KAWANATANGA

MISSION STATEMENT

As part of Pae Tata – Strategic Plan 2030, the University seeks to support its people to achieve their best within a community where staff and students flourish, diversity is respected, and individuals are encouraged to contribute meaningfully to our core values. In order to achieve this, the University will endeavour to foster a culture that prioritises the health, safety, and wellbeing of its community.

HEALTH AND SAFETY GOVERNANCE CHARTER – KĀWANATANGA

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Health and Safety Governance Charter is to outline the commitment and responsibilities of the University Council in ensuring a safe and healthy workplace, in compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA).

2. Scope

As the University's governing body, the University Council carries ultimate responsibility for the health and safety of all persons within the University community. This includes staff, students, visitors, and others on campuses or affected by work activities conducted by the University.

While the vision represents the Council's goal and commitment, this Governance Charter outlines the Council's approach to achieving the vision by overseeing the planning, delivery, monitoring, and review of health and safety matters at the University of Otago. This Charter addresses the expectations of the Council, while the duties of the other University health and safety officers are outlined separately in OHSMS Roles and Responsibilities.

3. The role of the Council

The Council is required to:

- Understand the nature of the operations of the business or undertakings of the University, in respect of health and safety, and of the hazards and risks associated with those operations.
- Strive to make health, safety, and wellbeing a fundamental part of the University's organisational management and development priorities, beyond legislative compliance.
- Lead and foster a culture that sets the direction for the management and performance of health, safety, and wellbeing, and demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement.
- Confirm that the University has appropriate policies and practices for health and safety in place and has effective measures to implement and review them.
- Ensure Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles are incorporated across the health, safety, and wellbeing frameworks and strategic direction.
- Ensure that a Health and Safety Committee is established, meets regularly, receives regular management reports, and reports directly to Council.
- Ensure there are appropriate processes for receiving and considering information regarding incidents, hazards and risks, and for responding promptly.
- Maintain effective mechanisms by which staff are consulted on health and safety, and understand their responsibilities in respect of managing risks to health and safety.
- Ensure appropriate resources and processes to eliminate or minimise risks to health, safety, and wellbeing are in place.
- Enable staff to appoint health and safety representatives and to empower these representatives to discharge their responsibilities.
- Ensure reviews and audits are undertaken to verify that the statutory obligations and policies of the University are being met.
- Support the ongoing development of up-to-date health and safety risk management plans.
- Exercise due diligence and comply with the University's health and safety policies, procedures and regulations, as well as relevant legislation.
- Assist the Health and Safety Committee in meeting its obligations in accordance with their terms of reference.

4. The responsibilities of the Council

Policy and planning

- Determine the health, safety, and wellbeing strategies, including statement of vision, values, and policy.
- Each member of Council will exercise due diligence to ensure that the University complies with its health and safety duties under the relevant health and safety legislation.
- Acquire and maintain up-to-date knowledge about health and safety matters.
- Hold management accountable for implementing the health, safety, and wellbeing strategies, and aligning other strategies with the health, safety, and wellbeing direction.
- Require management to provide staff with the training necessary to effectively implement and comply with the health and safety management system and their individual responsibilities.
- Set enterprise-wide annual health and safety objectives.
- Remain informed of overlapping governance policies and plans that play a part in the wider health and safety system, and ensure they are integrated and maintained.

Delivery

- Acquire personal knowledge and understanding of hazards, risks, and controls associated with the University's activities, relevant laws, and best practices.
- Ensure the health and safety system is fit for purpose, effectively implemented, regularly reviewed, and continuously improved.
- Ensure appropriate resources are available for the development, implementation, and maintenance of the systems.

Communication and engagement

- Foster open communication about health and safety matters.
- Communicate and engage in a manner that promotes a positive health and safety culture.
- Be notified of any incidents carrying a major risk to health, safety and wellbeing, any enforcement action taken against the University community, and any response taken in relation to these.

Monitoring and review

- Monitor performance via monthly health and safety reports.
- Outline clear expectations on what should be reported to the Council and in what timeframes.
- Establish an annual workplan for Council to review selected critical health and safety risks, and conduct annual deep dives to view operations in action.
- Receive an annual health and safety performance report including goal setting and achievements, policy reviews, significant events, corrective actions, and audit results.
- Identify areas for improvement.

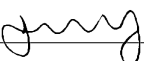
In discharging these responsibilities, the Council entrusts the day-to-day management of these core objectives to the Vice-Chancellor and the Senior Leadership Team.

5. Review

Without limiting its obligations to ensure it continues to meet its health and safety duties on an ongoing basis, the Council will conduct a review every two years to ensure their role and responsibilities, as outlined in the Charter, continue to best meet their health, safety, and wellbeing governance roles. The Council will also conduct its own performance appraisal over the same period in respect to its compliance with this Charter.

Vice-Chancellor 

Date: 10 December 2024

Chancellor 

Date: 10 December 2024

Health and Safety Committee (Council) terms of reference

1. To review and recommend to the University Council on all matters relating to health and safety, including related statutory compliance.
2. To ensure that the University Council is regularly provided information in order that its members:
 - a) Are kept up-to-date with knowledge of work health, safety, and wellbeing matters.
 - b) Maintain an understanding of the operations of the University, and generally of the hazards and risks associated with those operations.
 - c) Can be satisfied the University has in place, and is using, appropriate resources and processes:
 - i. to eliminate or minimise health and safety risks.
 - ii. for complying with its other Health and Safety duties and obligations.
 - d) Can be satisfied that the University has appropriate processes in place for receiving and considering information regarding incidents, hazards, and risks, and for responding in a timely way to that information.
 - e) Can verify the provision and use of the resources and processes referred to in paragraphs (c) and (d).