

WHS Guidelines For Extramural Environments

Scope & Definition

These guidelines are applicable to all personnel who conduct business on behalf of the School in extramural environments.

An extramural environment will be defined here as any work, study or research authorised by the University and done by staff, visitors, postgraduate or undergraduate students at sites other than those under the complete control of the University of Sydney. Examples include working at CSIRO facilities, hospitals and other research institutions. Attending a conference is not considered an extramural environment nor is working at a permanent field station owned by the University (such as Molonglo).

Responsibilities

WHS responsibility follows the organisational hierarchy. Senior managers or delegates of senior managers will have overall WHS responsibility for a particular extramural environment. The staff member and their area of responsibility will be listed on the School's [WHS website](#). If possible, the staff member's contact details will be listed at the extramural site.

Staff with overall WHS responsibility for extramural environments should receive training in risk management and then develop "formal arrangements" with the host institution as detailed below, and ensure that these arrangements are implemented. Depending on the formal arrangement, staff may be required to coordinate risk management activities and generate induction and training documentation as detailed below.

Personnel working in extramural environments should receive training in and abide by local rules, safe work practices and any reasonable directions given by supervisory staff. They should also participate in risk management activities when they are conducted.

Processes

Formal Arrangements

Before conducting work on behalf of the School in any extramural environment, a formal arrangement must be made with the host institution that details the risk management, induction, training and supervision responsibilities of each party.

The person with overall WHS responsibility shall ensure that the formal arrangement results in personnel receiving appropriate: (a) information regarding hazards and risks that are present; (b) safety measures to be adopted (eg local SOPs, suitable protective clothing and equipment etc), and (c) supervision and training before commencing work.

Risk Management

Risk management is the process of identifying, assessing and controlling risks in the workplace. Risk management should be performed on an annual basis or when new risks arise or existing risks change. Risk management is coordinated by the person with WHS responsibility and is performed with the people who normally carry out the activities being assessed.

The goal of risk management is to eliminate risks or, if this is not possible, to reduce risks to their lowest practicable level. There are five steps in the risk management process:

- 1) Identify hazards and hazardous jobs
- 2) Assign priority for each hazard and hazardous job
- 3) Assess the risks to find out what makes it hazardous
- 4) Control the risk or fix the problem using the WHS "[Hierarchy of Control](#)"
- 5) Evaluate periodically to check that WHS risks are being effectively managed

The School safety committee has developed a series of [guidelines](#) that recommend different ways to control the main hazards and risks in the School.

Documentation & Record Keeping

The risk management process (identifying, assessing and controlling risks) should be recorded in [Riskware](#), the University's risk management software.

Whilst many risks can be reduced it is often the case that most risks cannot be completely eliminated. Thus, before people commence work in a new environment, they need to be informed of the risks associated with their work and be given the relevant training which reduces the risk of accident or injury. This is best achieved by conducting inductions, which may include training in safe operating procedures (SOPs).

Induction and training documentation should be generated with reference to completed risk assessments. Training material and induction documentation should then be stored on the School's [WHS website](#) using standard School templates and formats.

Records of training and induction are to be submitted using the School's [helpdesk system](#).

Access

Access control should be used as a management tool to ensure that WHS processes and documentation are in place and that the level of access given is commensurate with the risk assessments and training undertaken. As a result, access to extramural environments should only be given after the relevant inductions and training have been completed.

After-hours access is a critical component to successful experimental research. When working after hours, the risk of incidents occurring may increase. Workspaces with after-hours access must ensure that any risks arising from such-access is included in the risk assessment, induction and associated training.

Information to assist in the assessment can be found in the School's [guidelines](#) on after hours access.