

WHS Guidelines For Laboratory & Technical Environments

Scope & Definition

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

Laboratories may be either teaching or research based. A technical environment is any place where the manufacture, repair or modification of plant, equipment or machinery takes place. Examples include workshops, technical repair areas and machinery sheds.

Responsibilities

WHS responsibility follows the organisational hierarchy. Senior managers have overall WHS responsibility for their area of management and influence. Senior managers may appoint WHS delegates to undertake WHS activities on their behalf but they (senior managers) still retain overall WHS responsibility. The School's [WHS website](#) contains a list of people with management and WHS responsibilities and their appointed WHS delegates.

WHS delegates for laboratories and technical environments should receive training in risk management then coordinate activities to ensure that WHS risks are properly identified, assessed and controlled. They are also responsible for generating induction and training material and keeping this material up to date.

Personnel working in laboratory or technical environments should complete the relevant inductions before commencing work and 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

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 overall 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 them 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](#) for the main hazards that are present in the School - these guidelines recommended ways to eliminate or mitigate common risks.

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 will 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 laboratories and technical environments will be controlled and only given after both a [general building induction](#) and a [laboratory/technical induction](#) have been completed and recorded. The person with WHS responsibility shall ensure that personnel receive 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.

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, laboratory/technical induction and associated training.

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