
Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to outline the basic principles that govern health, safety, and wellbeing operations at Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington (the University) and to convey to Staff Members and Students the responsibilities they have for the University to achieve excellence in health and safety practice.

The driving mechanism behind this Policy is the University’s Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy (currently under development).

2. Application of Policy

This Policy applies to Staff Members. It also applies to Students, independent contractors, adjunct and visiting scholars, interns, professors emeriti, and other persons at the University Precincts or participating in off-campus activities organised by the University.

Policy Content

3. Principles

3.1 The University is strongly committed to maintaining a healthy and safe environment (both in terms of physical and psychological wellbeing) for work, research, and study in accordance with its statutory obligations under the terms of the [Health and Safety Work Act 2015](#), [Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996](#), [the Education \(Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners\) Code of Practice 2021](#), and any other applicable laws and regulations.

3.2 To fulfil this commitment, the University strives to ensure that –

- (a) its policies and practices are legally compliant, consistent with the [Te Tiriti o Waitangi Statute](#), and respectful and responsive to diverse needs and abilities as required by the [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\) Framework](#);
- (b) its academic, professional, and student communities work together – in the spirit of kaitiakitanga (care and guardianship) – to develop and maintain a health-and-safety-wellbeing conscious institutional culture.

3.3 More specifically, the University’s health, safety, and wellbeing policy is to –

- (a) ensure that the University fulfills its primary duties of care defined under [Section 36 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#);
- (b) ensure members of its community actively engage in the development of and have easy and convenient access to health, safety, and wellbeing information (including information on how to respond to emergencies, and a process to report incidents);
- (c) ensure Staff Members and Students are provided with sufficient and suitable training and equipment (including protective personal equipment) to perform their tasks in a healthy and safe manner and kept informed about physical and/or psychosocial risks that can affect their health;

- (d) ensure Staff Members and Students have an understanding of Critical Risks and the controls and mitigants that can affect them;
- (e) ensure health, safety, and wellbeing matters are given priority consideration in operational planning and execution;
- (f) establish participatory mechanisms that inform decision-making at levels (including Te Hiwa- the Senior Leadership Team) such as a University Health and Safety Committee which meets regularly and is attended by faculty and business unit representatives;
- (g) encourage Staff Members and Students to report Incidents (including near misses) or concerns in a prompt manner;
- (h) ensure reported Incidents are carefully considered and used as a basis for risk mitigation, corrective action, and performance improvement;
- (i) continuously improve its health, safety, and wellbeing framework (including identifying new areas of risk), develop new procedures as needed, and set health and safety targets taking legal compliance as the minimum standard; and
- (j) provide prompt and effective return-to-work plans for staff returning to work following any work-related illness or injury, as well as non-work illnesses or injuries where possible.

Note: The University periodically engages with other organisations to work at or for the University. Managers responsible for relationships/contracts must consult, cooperate, and coordinate with the internal stakeholders and other organisations to ensure risks are identified and properly managed, be provided with this Policy, and have access to the University's health and safety website.

4. Responsibilities of Staff Members and Students

4.1 Members of the University Community are responsible for their own health, safety, and wellbeing and that of others who may be affected by their actions or omissions.

4.2 To fulfil their responsibilities, Members of the University Community must –

- (a) Perform all their tasks (including off-campus activities) in accordance with the requirements of this Policy;
- (b) Carry out their work, research, and study safely in accordance with relevant health, safety and wellbeing procedures;
- (c) Make themselves aware of the contents of this Policy and how it applies to their work, and remain up-to-date with any policy and procedure changes;
- (d) Undertake any health and safety inductions and training as required;
- (e) Ensure all appropriate personal protective equipment and other items provided for their safety are worn or used appropriately;
- (f) Not undertake activities/tasks or bring hazardous items and substances (such as weapons, machinery, tools, and equipment) to the University without obtaining written permission.

Note: More information on this could be obtained from Health, Safety, and Wellbeing team and Property Services.

- (g) Promptly report risks (including Critical Risks), hazards (including psychosocial hazards), incidents, near misses, and protocol breaches to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team using the [relevant reporting process](#) and, if necessary, to health and safety representatives; and

- (h) Work in partnership with the Health and Safety Team for the effective implementation and improvement of health and safety operations and associated procedures.
- 4.3 Members of Te Hiwa (Senior Leadership Team), Deans, Heads of Schools, Central Service Unit (CSU) Directors, Directors of Institutes and Centres, and relevant area managers must –
- (a) Take a proactive role in modelling, promoting, and supporting high standards of health, safety, and wellbeing practice;
 - (b) Monitor local health, safety, and wellbeing performance and take appropriate corrective action, where necessary;
 - (c) Establish area-specific health and safety management structures with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for risk areas;
 - (d) Ensure that persons with specialist knowledge complete risk assessments for activities and equipment as necessary (including risks associated with research);
 - (e) Ensure new or transferred staff receive a health and safety induction to the University and/or their work environment; and
 - (f) Participate in and promote active and constructive communication regarding health and safety matters.
- 4.4 Members of Te Hiwa must also ensure that managers in their areas of responsibility are compliant with their obligations identified in clause 4.3.
- 4.5 The Council and the Tumu Whakararae – Vice-Chancellor, who are the University's main governing body and chief executive respectively, have the responsibility of maintaining the University's health, safety, and wellbeing mechanisms, structures, systems, resources, policies, and practices to comply with the applicable health and safety laws and regulations.
- 4.6 On a day-to-day basis, the Vice-Chancellor may delegate authorities to relevant Staff Members in accordance with the [Delegations Statute](#).
- 4.7 The Vice-Chancellor has the authority to take whatever executive action is considered necessary to prevent harm to individuals and/or to the Members of the University Community. In exceptional circumstances, this may include summarily closing down the University Precincts and suspending operations.

5. Breaches

- 5.1 Any breaches of this Policy will be handled in accordance with the [Staff Conduct Policy](#) or the [Student Conduct Statute](#), as appropriate.

6. Definitions

In this Policy, unless the context otherwise requires:

Critical Risk	means Risk that could result in death, serious injury (physical or psychological), and/or serious illness (acute or chronic).
Hazard	means actual or potential sources of physical and/or psychosocial harm. According to WorkSafe New Zealand, “psychosocial hazard” refers to the design and management aspects of work and its social organisational context.
Health and Safety Representative	refers to representatives from across business units who participate in the ongoing processes for improving health

and safety at the University. The functions of the Health and Safety Representative are set out in the appendix to the Terms of Reference for the Victoria University Health and Safety Committee.

Members of the University Community	means Staff Members and Students, independent contractors, adjunct and visiting scholars, interns, professors emeriti, and other persons at the University's Precincts.
Off-campus Activities	means any work carried out by Staff Members or Students for teaching, research, or other activities/tasks while representing the University off-site from the University Precincts.
Health	refers to the following definition provided in the Constitution of the World Health Organisation: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity".
Incident	means any event resulting in, or having a potential for injury, ill health, damage, or other loss. (An incident may also be termed a near-miss, close call, or dangerous occurrence).
Risk	means the chance that an activity/task, event, or hazard happening will have an adverse impact on an individual's health, safety, or Wellbeing, and/or the University's ability to achieve its health and safety objectives and obligations.
Staff Member	means an employee of the University.
Student	means any person enrolled in a personal course of study at the University, or a person who is studying at the University under an exchange agreement with another institution and includes a resident in a Student Accommodation.
University Precincts	means all premises, grounds and buildings owned by, in possession of, or administered by the University.
Wellbeing	refers to the following definition provided by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO): "the fulfilment of the physical, mental, social, and cognitive needs and expectation of a worker related to their work".

Related Documents and Information

7. Related Documents

[Education \(Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners\) Code of Practice 2021](#)
[Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996](#)
[Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#)

[Delegations Statute](#)
[Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework](#)
[Risk Management Policy](#)
[Staff Conduct Policy](#)
[Student Conduct Statute](#)
[Te Tiriti o Waitangi Statute](#)

[Constitution of the World Health Organisation](#)
[ISO 45003:2021 Occupational health and safety management – Psychological health and safety at work – Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks](#)
[Victoria Risk Management – A Guideline for Managers](#)
[WorkSafe Guide: Psychosocial hazards in work environments and effective approaches for managing them](#)

8. Document Management and Control

Essential Record

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Sponsor	Toi Ohanga – Chief Operating Officer
Policy Owner	Director, Campus Operations

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21 November 2023	Tumu Whakarae – Vice-Chancellor	Full review. Major amendment.