

OBJECTIVE

This process aims to provide a clear framework within RMIT for:

- Consultation and communication of health safety and wellbeing (HSW) matters
- Staff and, where required, student and third-party representation on HSW matters

Consultation provides the opportunity for co-operative problem solving and improved outcomes for health and safety.

This process recognises the benefits of staff and student input and participation on health and safety matters at RMIT and aims to:

- Promote co-operation and communication between leaders and staff, and their elected health and safety representative, in managing and resolving workplace HSW risks,
- Ensure leaders are aware of HSW hazards and issues experienced by staff, students, contractors and visitors,
- Enhance decision making about HSW matters by gathering a wider source of health and safety ideas and knowledge,
- Support RMIT's commitment to HSW,
- Reduce the number and severity of HSW risks and hazards, and
- Strengthen the HSW culture within RMIT.

Consultation on HSW issues at RMIT occurs via elected Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs), Health and Safety Committees (HSCs), risk management processes and general systems of sharing information. The exact avenues for consultation may vary according to the local regulatory environment.

Note: The requirements for HSR's and consultation is only legislated in Victoria (as per the Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004) and Australia. Other jurisdictions can choose to follow these requirements, if local legislation does not exist.

BACKGROUND

SCOPE

This process applies to all RMIT Staff, Students and Third Parties globally.

WHAT MUST GO RIGHT?

The expected outcomes – known as 'what must go right' of this process are:

- Staff, students and/or third parties are consulted on issues affecting their HSW
- Consultation occurs before a HSW change to the work and learning environment is made
- Where HSRs are elected, they will be included in HSW related consultation in the first instance before staff and / or students.

PROCEDURE

1. Implementation

How to consult on health, safety and wellbeing

Consultation which is meaningful and enables staff and students to contribute to and have input for decisions about HSW, embraces the following steps:

Sharing information

- Provide relevant information in a timely, accessible and easily understandable way.

Taking views into account

- Consider the views of staff and/or students before making a decision and encourage staff and students to help shape the decisions about HSW matters.
- Allow time and the opportunity for staff/students to express views, ask questions, raise safety concerns and recommendations and be part of the problem-solving process.

Feedback

- Once views are taken into account, communicate back to staff and/or students the decision made and the reasons behind the decision.

When to consult

Consultation is required with elected HSRs*, staff and/or students, whose HSW is likely to be directly or indirectly affected by the following:

- Identifying hazards or risks in the work and learning environment (e.g. during workplace inspections, incident investigations, physical and mental wellbeing risk assessments);
- Making decisions on how to control risks;
- Making decisions about the adequacy of facilities for staff/student welfare (e.g. first aid, toilets, change rooms);
- Making decisions about processes to:
 - Consult with staff on health and safety matters;
 - Resolve health and safety issues;
 - Monitor staff and/or student health and workplace conditions; and
 - Provide information and training.
 - Determining the membership of any HSC (not just those required to be established after a request by the HSR);
- Proposing changes to:
 - The work and learning environment, including buildings;
 - Plant, chemicals, substances, equipment and other things used in the work and learning environment; and
 - The work or study performed at the work and learning environment which affects staff and/or students' HSW.

*NOTE – HSRs - The requirements for designated work groups is only legislated in Victoria (as per the **Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004**) and Australia. Other jurisdictions can choose to follow these requirements, if local legislation does not exist.

RMIT mechanisms for Health, Safety & Wellbeing consultation

Leaders must consult so far as reasonably practicable, with staff and/ or students who are likely to be directly affected by a health and safety matter.

Health and Safety Representatives (HSR)

Where there is an elected HSR*, consultation must include that person in the first instance, by undertaking the following:

- Providing the HSR with relevant information about the HSW matter that RMIT provides or intends to provide, to staff.
- Inviting the HSR to meet about a matter requiring consultation or agree to meet at their request.
- Giving the HSR a reasonable opportunity to express their views about the matter.
- Taking into account the HSR and staff views about the HSW matter.

If no HSR is elected, consultation should be with the staff directly.

*NOTE – HSR - The requirements for designated work groups is only legislated in Victoria (as per the **Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004**) and Australia. Other jurisdictions can choose to follow these requirements, if local legislation does not exist.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing processes that require consultation

Hazard and risk assessment and control

Health and safety risk management must be incorporated into all RMIT activities. Risk management is a process of identification of work and learning environment hazards, assessment of potential health and safety impact (including mental wellbeing), and the development of suitable control measures to effectively manage the risks.

Consultation and communication are vital at each stage of the risk management process, so far as is reasonably practicable. When College / Portfolios are developing and reviewing changes to local area risk assessment processes, consultation should involve elected HSRs for the DWG, staff/students and other persons who are undertaking the activity or are likely to be directly affected by the activities, hazards/risks, changes or decisions made.

All incidents in the workplace must be investigated and, where appropriate, actions implemented to prevent a recurrence of such an incident in accordance with the **HSW-PR10 - Incident Management and Investigation Process**.

Relevant information should be provided to HSRs, where applicable, and/or otherwise staff/ students about the incident investigation outcome. Consultation regarding future preventative actions must include the HSR(s), staff and/or students affected by the proposed actions.

Issue resolution

HSW issues should be raised and resolved in accordance with RMIT's **HSW-PR07-WI01 – HSW Issue Resolution Work Instruction**.

- Issue resolution requires consultation by the Employer Representative with the HSR of the designated work group (DWG) or the staff and/or students within the affected area.

Employer representatives

College / Portfolios are required to nominate Employer Representative/s (ER) for the purpose of resolving health and safety issues in accordance with the **HSW-PR07-WI01 - HSW Issue Resolution Work Instruction**.

Changes to the work and learning environment

Consultation is required firstly with the elected HSR*, so far as is reasonably practicable and then with staff/students for any proposed changes to the work and learning environment that may impact on the health and safety of staff and/or students.

Such changes may include:

- Minor modifications to the work and learning environment, maintenance and repairs
- Introduction of new equipment/machinery, substances and processes
- Work or study performed at the work and learning environment.

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Development of Health, Safety and Wellbeing processes & guidance material

The development of RMIT's health safety and wellbeing processes and guidance material must follow the **HSW-PR01 - GSM Management System Document Control** process. HSW processes and guidance material requires consultation with elected HSRs* before other employees.

*NOTE – HSR - The requirements for designated work groups is only legislated in Victoria (as per the Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004) and Australia. Other jurisdictions can choose to follow these requirements, if local legislation does not exist.

Maintain records of consultation

Details of health and safety consultation must be recorded and retained as evidence that consultation has occurred in accordance with RMIT Processes. The following template can be used as required; **HSW-PR07-TM01 Health & Safety Consultation Record Template**.

Retention of consultation records

All records associated with health and safety consultation must be retained for the following periods in accordance with **HSW-PR04 - HSW Records Management**:

- Minutes of meetings – 5 years
- Risk Assessments - for the life of the equipment, substance or process plus 5 years
- Copy of plans and correspondence containing recommendations – 5 years
- Consultation Record - 5 years

All records are to be retained by the local area.

Safety alerts

Safety Alerts are a method of communication used for staff, students and third parties to inform them of specific risks, hazards or incidents, which have occurred. The HSW Team is responsible for issuing and tracking safety alerts to reduce duplication of information. **HSW-PR07-RG01 – Safety Alert Register** tracks all issued safety alerts and who they were communicated to. All safety alerts will be saved in the HSW Team SharePoint page.

Health, Safety & Wellbeing moments

RMIT will endeavour to have a health, safety and wellbeing moment included as an agenda item in all meetings. HSW moments provide staff the opportunity to share a moment where they have improved, witnessed or experienced an HSW issue.

2. Responsibilities

Leaders (Senior and Operational)

- Ensure all matters affecting the HSW of staff and students within their area of responsibility are considered in consultation with the relevant HSRs and employees
- Ensure they participate actively in Committee meetings (where applicable), as the employer's representative, and to make decisions regarding any HSW recommendations formulated by the Committee and put forward for consideration by RMIT.
- Provide guidance to staff representatives and HSRs
- Ensure the release from the workplace of HSRs to fulfil their duties.

HSC Members

- As part of a HSC, ensure all staff are responsible for applying HSW considerations to daily tasks performed in the workplace
- As part of the HSC, be responsible for detecting hazards in your operational area of control and within your level of authority and taking prompt remedial action
- As part of the HSC, be responsible for the safety of yourself, fellow staff, students, contractors, volunteers, visitors, clients and all property & equipment used at RMIT.

3. Definitions

Defines any key terms and acronyms relating to the process where they apply.

Term / acronym	Definition
DWG	Designated Work Group: A group of employees of the employer at one or more workplaces. The particulars of the DWG are determined by negotiation between the employer and the employees and should take into account the number of employees, the location and the types of activities conducted in the workplace. A DWG is formed for the purpose of electing a HSR.
Employer Representative (ER)	Employer Representative: A person nominated by the employer to make decisions on behalf of the employer to resolve health and safety issues
HSC	Health and Safety Committee
HSR	Health and Safety Representative: An employee who is a member of the DWG and elected by its members to represent them in relation to health and safety matters, risks, or concerns.
HSW	Health Safety & Wellbeing
Operational Leaders	Any staff member of RMIT who: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plans, organises or supervises the activities of other staff, contractors, students or visitors on behalf of RMIT; or• Designs or organises the design, maintenance or refurbishment of facilities on behalf of RMIT

This includes all managers, senior accountants, senior administrators, course coordinators, team leaders, industry fellows, research fellows, teachers, senior educators and lecturers.

Reasonably Practicable	Regard must be had to the following matters in determining what is (or was at a particular time) reasonably practicable in relation to ensuring health and safety: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The likelihood of the hazard or risk concerned eventuating;• The degree of harm that would result if the hazard or risk eventuated;• What the person concerned knows, or ought reasonably to know, about the hazard or risk and any ways of eliminating or reducing the hazard or risk;• The availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or reduce the hazard or risk; and• The cost of eliminating or reducing the hazard or risk.
Senior Leaders	This includes leaders within schools and department, and includes senior school managers, heads, deans and their deputies, program director, assistant directors, discipline heads, senior managers, professors and associate professors.

4. Supporting Documents

Lists the supporting and related Processes and Guidance Material, Legislative references, Australian and International Standards etc. that may be useful references for process users

- HR - HSW-PR01 - GSM Management System & Document Control
- HR - HSW-PR04 - HSW Records Management
- HR - HSW-PR07-WI01 - HSW Issue Resolution
- HR - HSW-PR07-TM01 - Health and Safety Consultation Record Template
- HR - HSW-PR07-TM02 - Safety Alert Template
- HR - HSW-PR07-RG01 - Safety Alert Register
- HR - HSW-PR08 - Health & Safety Committees, HSRs & DWGs
- HR - HSW-PR08-RG01 - Register of Health and Safety Representatives & Health and Safety Committees
- HR - HSW-PR10 - Incident Management & Investigation
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (VIC)