

OBJECTIVE

To provide information and guidance to RMIT staff on Designated Work Groups (DWGs).

BACKGROUND

SCOPE

This process applies to all RMIT staff.

Note that this process will be applicable in Victoria, Australia only; however, it does not restrict other campuses adopting a similar process.

WHAT MUST GO RIGHT?

The expected outcomes – known as ‘what must go right’ – will be that:

- Designated Work Groups (DWGs) are established when requested
- Staff have an effective forum to raise and address unresolved HSW issues.

PROCEDURE

1. Designated Work Groups (DWGs)

DWGs will be established and / or reviewed within the RMIT organisation structure when a request is received from a staff member or when organisational changes require it. Senior Leaders and staff should utilise **HR - HSW-PR51-TM01 - DWG Negotiation Letter** when this occurs.

In establishing a DWG, the following must be considered:

- The best way of grouping staff to ensure the best interests of all staff members are represented and the HSR is accessible to staff
- The number of HSRs (which must be at least 1) for each DWG
- The number of Deputy HSRs (DHSRs) if any, for each DWG

The **OHS Act** allows for more than one HSR and DHSR per DWG. When deciding to have more than one HSR and/or DHSR for a DWG the following factors should be considered:

- Overtime or shift work arrangements where staff may not have access to the HSR where there is only one for the DWG
- The number of staff involved in the work area
- The nature of work in the DWG
- The location and areas where each type of work is performed
- The nature of hazards in the work area

Negotiations for the composition of the DWGs must commence within 14 days of receiving the request. Where agreement cannot be reached, seek assistance from the HSW Team, who will approach WorkSafe where required.

The composition of DWGs may be varied at any time by negotiation between RMIT, staff and HSRs. Where parties agree to vary DWGs, the impacted staff must be notified, in writing, of the variation (**HR - HSW-PR51-TM01 - DWG Negotiation Letter**). This must be done by a Senior Leader.

HSRs and DHSRs are not responsible for managing health and safety within their DWGs. The responsibilities for the management of health and safety must be assigned within RMIT’s management structure.

The OHS Act prohibits any coercion in the negotiations to establish a DWG.

Establishment of Designated Work Groups & Electing Health and Safety Representatives

Upon request, Area is required to establish DWGs and to organise the election of HSRs to represent the staff within the named DWGs.

The names and contact details of all HSRs and DHSRs must be displayed in a prominent position in the work and learning environment. Display may be in digital format.

Negotiating DWGs:

Step	Action	Responsibility	Recommended Timeframe (Working Days)
1	Use the DWG Negation Letter (HSW-PR51-TM01) to write to all members of the affected DWG(s) outlining the need to establish/renegotiate the DWG(s). Provide general information on DWGs and state the particulars of the proposed new structure. Ask for comment and feedback to be received within 14 days.	HSC Chairperson/Secretary	Within 14 days when requested by a staff member.
2	If feedback demonstrates a lack of agreement on the proposed structure, contact the HSW Team for assistance in the DWG options and asking DWG members to vote on the options within 7 days	HSC Chairperson/Secretary	Within 7 days after feedback period
3	If agreement on the composition of DWG(s) is not reached contact the HSW Team	HSC Chairperson/Secretary	As soon as practicable
4	Advise all members of the DWG(s) and the HSW Team in writing of outcome of negotiations and the new DWG structure	Senior Leader of the DWG	Within 7 days of the outcome
5	If re-negotiation of DWG(s) has created vacancies for HSR(s) follow the information in HR-HSW-PR08 – Health and Safety Representatives	HSC Chairperson/Secretary	Commence election process with 7 days

2. Records

All records relating to HSRs, DWGs and HSCs are to be maintained as detailed in **HR - HSW-PR04 - HSW Records Management**.

3. Responsibilities

Senior Leaders

- Supporting the role of the HSC by way of allocating the required resources.
- Ensure their active participation in HSC meetings, as RMIT’s representative and to make decisions regarding any HSW recommendations formulated by the Committee and put forward for consideration by RMIT.
- Providing guidance to staff representatives and HSRs

- Ensuring the release from the work and learning environment of staff representatives to attend Committee duties.
- In writing, notify affected staff of any changes to their DWG's

Health and Safety Committee Members

- Ensure all staff are responsible for applying HSW considerations to daily tasks performed in the workplace
- Responsible for detecting hazards in their operational area of control and within their level of authority and taking prompt remedial action
- Responsible for their personal safety, safety of fellow staff, students, third parties, volunteers, visitors and all property & equipment used in the workplace.

Health Safety & Wellbeing Team

- Responsible for maintaining **HR - HSW-PR08-RG01 - Register of HSRs & HSCs** after being notified of election results.
- Provide HSRs/DHSRs and HSCs with HSW advice and assistance when required

4. Definitions

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

Term / acronym	Definition
Area	College / School or Portfolio
DHSR	Deputy Health and Safety Representative
DWG	Designated Work Group
HSC	Health and Safety Committee
HSR	Health and Safety Representative
HSW	Health, Safety and Wellbeing
The OHS Act	Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
Senior Leader	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.

5. Supporting Documents

- HR - HSW-PR08 – Health and Safety Representatives
- HR – HSW-PR50 – Health and Safety Committees
- HR - HSW-PR08-RG01 - Register of HSRs & HSCs
- HR - HSW-PR07 - Consultation & Communication
- HR - HSW-PR07-WI01 - HSW Issue Resolution
- HR - HSW-PR07-FC01 - HSW Issue Resolution Flowchart
- HSW-PR04 - HSW Records Management.
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (VIC)