



OH&S Responsible Officers at UTAS

At UTAS we take seriously our responsibility to ensure a healthy and safe learning and working environment for staff, students, visitors, contractors and others. Please read this leaflet and keep it for future reference as it summarises your health and safety responsibilities.

The University is a workplace and is covered by Tasmania's health and safety laws. As a designated Responsible Officer, under those laws you have a responsibility to ensure that activities within your work area are conducted in a safe manner. A failure to fulfil your obligations could lead to a criminal prosecution and/or fine.

While the responsibilities outlined below may at first appear demanding, there is help readily available. Strategic Human Resources, School/Section Safety Representatives, designated Accountable Persons and the UTAS' policy and procedural framework all form part of a structure and program already in place to assist you in meeting your OH&S responsibilities.

What do I need to do?

- Acknowledge your responsibility for Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) within your area of delegated authority as outlined in UTAS' OH&S Policy. Familiarise yourself with UTAS OH&S Policy and Procedures framework and ensure compliance within your work area.
- Ensure that appropriate OH&S role models are provided for staff and students.
- Ensure that teaching/supervisory staff are aware of their OH&S responsibilities, especially towards students.
- Ensure that jobs/tasks/projects have been reviewed to identify and assess risks to the health and safety of those involved.
- Ensure that suitable risk controls are chosen and established within agreed time frames; these will include training, adequate supervision and adoption of safe operating procedures.
- Ensure that staff, students, visitors and contractors within your designated work area are advised of UTAS' OH&S requirements and provide relevant information as necessary. This may include OH&S induction, instruction or specific OH&S training.
- Address OH&S issues that are brought to your attention and consult with those affected.



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- Refer OH&S issues that are beyond your control to more senior managers taking interim action to reduce risk as considered necessary and practical.
- Ensure that OH&S inspections are completed on a regular basis and keep OH&S records.
- Ensure that OH&S is an agenda item on staff/management meetings.

If I'm head of a non-technical School/Section, do I need to act?

Yes, you do. Of course those more technical areas that involve chemicals or hazardous activities such as diving and field trips have more regulated activities and there are a number of specialist policies and procedures designed to assist in managing those risks. However, at UTAS injuries arising from manual handling activities, slips and trips, stress related illnesses and poor ergonomics/computer overuse are our most frequent and costly injuries.

Are there policies/procedures that all Responsible Officers need to address?

Yes, there are a number of common issues that impact all areas across UTAS. These are summarised below:

- Most positions involve some manual handling such as loading your car for travel, carrying papers, moving books or office supplies. All staff involved in such tasks need to undertake manual handling training and to reduce manual tasks where possible. The **Manual Handling Policy and Procedures** provides additional information.
- Staff who use screen based equipment need to comply with the **Screen Based Equipment – Guidelines for Use** and the **Prevention of Occupational Overuse Syndrome Policy**. Appropriate ergonomic equipment should be supplied and assessments undertaken.
- Many UTAS staff drive a vehicle for work related purposes. You need to ensure that those staff comply with the **Driving Authorised Vehicles Policy** and complete the **Driver Medical Disclosure Form**.
- Staff wishing to work from their home base and where it is desired and practical, must first obtain your approval. They will need to comply with the **Working from Home Policy** and complete the **Work from Home Agreement** and **OH&S Working from Home Report**.



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- Each School/Section needs to conduct regular **Workplace Inspections** to ensure compliance with statutory obligations.
- Support the rehabilitation of injured staff as outlined in the **Rehabilitation of Injured Employees Policy**.
- When planning for new equipment, new experimental works, new work systems or new work environments you need to assess the OH&S implications. The **OH&S Purchasing Policy** and **OH&S Pre-Purchase Checklist** should be reviewed when purchases are being considered.

What are some of the typical hazards or hazardous jobs at UTAS?

- Keyboard work for extended periods with no breaks,
- Activities involving lifting or carrying materials or equipment,
- Working in a stressful environment,
- Trip hazards such as boxes in walkways, uneven surfaces and trailing electrical cords,
- Driving long distances between campus locations and to and from fieldwork,
- Dealing with clients who may become aggressive/violent,
- Working with animals,
- Using a hazardous substance for cleaning or in a laboratory,
- Working with sources of ionizing radiation,
- Working with sharps,
- Working with machinery.

Who has budgetary responsibility for the cost of implementing changes to the workplace or the purchasing of equipment that is needed to address identified OH&S issues?

The School/Section is responsible for providing and maintaining the workplace in order that staff, students, visitors and contractors are not exposed to hazards. Therefore, the financial responsibility rests with the School or Section. If funds are not available within the School/Section referral needs to be made to the relevant Faculty/Division.

How can I personally meet all of the many OH&S legislative obligations?

At UTAS the OH&S Policy and Procedures framework (available at <http://www.admin.utas.edu.au/hr/ohs/ohs.html>) has been developed to assist you to fulfill your OH&S responsibilities. You do not need to personally undertake these activities. However, you *do*



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need to ensure that accountable persons in your area are aware of their OH&S responsibilities, that they have received appropriate training and that systems are in place to address risks relevant to your School/Section.

Does UTAS have an OH&S Audit program and if so, what do I need to do?

Yes, the University requires all Responsible Officers to complete an OH&S Self Assessment Questionnaire. This questionnaire has been developed to assess each School/Section's compliance with the University's OH&S policy and procedural framework. The completed questionnaires will then be used as the basis for auditing each area. A report on levels of compliance is then provided to the University's OH&S Committee and Council. Schools/Sections that are considered to have high risk activities will be subject to more extensive audit processes.

Need Further Assistance?

If you need help, please contact OH&S on the following numbers:

Hobart: 62 267509

Launceston and Cradle Coast: 63 243275

Or via email:

Pip.Rose@utas.edu.au

Rodney.Teague@utas.edu.au