Incident and Hazard Reporting and Investigation Procedures

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1. Governing Policy

Work Health and Safety Policy

Work Health and Safety Management System

2. Purpose

This procedure documents the University's requirements for reporting, investigating and responding to incidents, near misses and hazards that arise from conducting work, study, research or related activities for the University.

3. Scope

This procedure applies to all University workers, students, contractors, visitors and other people. It applies in all places where work for the University is conducted including University controlled entities.

4. Definitions

Incident	An unplanned event that causes or contributes to an injury or causes ill health to people, damage to property, plant, equipment or the environment.
Corrective action	Planned action(s) or controls to eliminate or minimise the potential for a hazard to cause harm to a person, property or the environment. Action or control to mitigate a reoccurrence of an accident/incident, near miss or hazard.

ABN: 65 542 596 200 CRICOS No: 00114A

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FlinSafe	The University's online safety data management system for reporting accidents/incidents, near miss, hazards, and recording corrective actions. See FlinSafe information.
Hazard	A situation, thing or an environment that has the potential to cause harm to a person or damage to property or equipment.
Hierarchy of Risk Control	Ranking the ways of controlling risks, from the highest level of protection and reliability to the lowest. This includes Elimination, Substitution, Engineering, Isolation, Administration and Personal Protective Equipment.
Notifiable incident	Is defined by Work Health and Safety Act 2012. Is a serious incident that by law must be reported to the relevant Regulator. It Includes: • the death of a person • the serious injury or illness of a person • a dangerous incident. Specific incidents that fall under this definition can be found in Report an incident, near miss or hazard.
Near miss	An event that could have resulted in injury or damage to property, plant, or the environment, but did not.
PCBU	A person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) covers a broad range of modern work relationships and business structures. These include someone operating a business or undertaking for-profit or not-for-profit, whether alone or with others. The definition of a PCBU focuses on work arrangements and the relationships involved in carrying out that work. In the context of the University working with other PCBUs this may include University controlled entities, landlords, tenants, co-tenants and host organisations of students undertaking work integrated learning placements and other collaborators.
Reasonably practicable	That which is reasonably able to be done to ensure the health and safety of workers and others, taking into account: • the likelihood of the hazard or risk occurring • the degree of harm that might occur • the knowledge of the hazard or risk and the ways of eliminating or minimising the risk • the availability and suitability of controls to eliminate or minimise the risk, and • the cost associated with controls including whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk.
Severe or significant incident	An incident that is not a notifiable incident and based on risk assessment has an actual or potential result of major or above as ranked in FlinSafe.
Worker	A person who carries out work in any capacity for the University including academic and professional staff, contractors and sub-contractors and their employees, labour hire company employees, academic affiliates, trainees, persons gaining work experience and volunteers.

Workplace	A place where work, study or research is carried out for the University and includes any place (including vehicles, vessels, or field work) where a worker goes, or is likely to be, while working, teaching, studying, or undertaking research.

5. Immediate Incident Response

Where it is safe to do so workers, students and others should:

a. Take appropriate immediate action to ensure there is no danger to themselves or others and to minimise the risk of further injury or damage.

b. Determine if emergency services are required, and if so, call 000.

c. Provide or seek First Aid treatment or other emergency assistance and call Security.

d. For notifiable incidents, ensure that the area is not disturbed, where possible, other than to render assistance and make the area safe to prevent a further incident (see Notifiable incidents).

e. For emergency situations such as fire, flood, chemical spill refer to the University Emergency Response Procedures.

6. Notifiable Incidents

a. Notifiable incidents must be reported **immediately** to University Security and the WHS Unit via Associate Director, WHS (or delegate) who will notify senior management. The Associate Director, WHS (or delegate) is responsible for notifying the relevant Regulator as legally required.

b. The person responsible for managing or controlling the workplace where a notifiable incident has occurred must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the site where the incident occurred is not disturbed, including any plant, chemical, substance, structure or thing associated with the notifiable incident, until an inspector arrives at the site or any earlier time that an inspector directs.

c. Workers may take action:

   i. to assist an injured person

   ii. to arrange to have a deceased person removed

   iii. to make the site safe or minimise the risk of a further notifiable incident

   iv. for which an inspector or the Regulator has given permission.

   See Notifiable Incident Flow Chart for details.

d. Notifiable incidents, as well as being reported to the Regulator, must be reported in FlinSafe. The same process of investigation, collecting data, setting of corrective actions and sign off will occur.

e. Any corrective actions, Improvement or Prohibition notices issued by the Regulator must also be included in the FlinSafe report.

f. The WHS Unit will lead the investigation for all notifiable incidents.

g. Some incidents may require reporting to other Regulators such as Safe Work (equivalent in each relevant jurisdiction), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), The Office of the Technical Regulator (OTR) or other State and Territory Authorities.

7. Reporting of an Incident or Near Miss

a. Workers and students, visitors, contractors and others must:

   i. report all incidents or near misses to their manager or supervisor, topic coordinator or other relevant University staff member as soon as is reasonably practicable after they occur

   ii. complete a report in FlinSafe within 24 hours of the incident occurring or as soon as reasonably practicable

   iii. ensure that immediate corrective action(s) taken to make the situation safe or to provide assistance are recorded

b. Where workers, students or others are unable to report the accident/incident in FlinSafe due to their injury or lack of access to FlinSafe, arrangements must be made for their supervisor or relevant University staff member to complete the report on their behalf.

c. Once the incident or near miss has been entered into FlinSafe, the relevant College/Portfolio senior managers and the person's immediate supervisor/manager or relevant topic coordinator will receive a notification email. This will trigger the investigation process where corrective actions/controls will be identified and implemented.

d. Where a staff member has been injured the Return to Work Coordinator will make contact to identify if further assistance is required.

8. Initial Investigation

a. The manager/supervisor, topic coordinator or delegate is responsible for the initial investigation of a work-related accident/incident or near miss, which occurs in their area of responsibility or to the people they manage/supervise.

b. Where possible, investigations should be undertaken in consultation with the person(s) who were involved in the incident or near miss. This should include, where possible, with the agreement of the worker, the relevant Health and Safety Representative (HSR).

c. An investigation should begin as soon as possible, after the medical needs of any injured people have been met, the area is made safe, and the incident reported.

d. The University maintains a 'no blame' reporting and investigation system focusing on prevention, non-recurrence and positive recovery.

e. Where practicable, nothing at the site should be disturbed until after completion of the investigation, other than what is necessary to make the area safe, prevent further injury, loss or contamination, or damage to plant or property.

f. Clean up and restoration of the site should only occur once it has been confirmed that the incident is not notifiable and/or the regulator does not need to attend.

g. Where appropriate, photographs and/or video should be taken, and plant and equipment held for subsequent testing or examination.

h. Where possible the initial investigation should be completed within 7 days of the incident being reported, although complex incidents may take longer to investigate.

9. Secondary Investigation

a. WHS Unit staff are responsible for undertaking a secondary investigation of the incident or near miss. This includes collecting all relevant facts and evidence, the findings of which must be recorded in the secondary investigation section in FlinSafe.

b. The investigation should look at all possible causes or reasons why a hazard/risk was present and the findings, including identified root causes, must be recorded.

c. The purpose of all investigations is to establish an accurate picture of what occurred, by:

   i. examining the scene of the incident/near miss, where this is reasonably practicable to do so

   ii. obtaining information by interviewing people involved, including any witnesses

   iii. reviewing background information including documented risk assessments and safe work procedures

   iv. examining and providing any further evidence from photographs, video or plant and equipment held for subsequent testing

d. Any additional supporting documentation must be included with the FlinSafe Report.

e. The secondary investigator should take a risk management approach and look to identify where controls failed and what can be done to prevent a recurrence. This should be entered into FlinSafe as a corrective action(s).

10. Corrective Actions

a. Corrective actions must identify what planned actions or controls are required to eliminate or minimise the potential for a recurrence of an incident or near miss.

b. The WHS Unit, where possible, should identify corrective actions/controls in consultation with the supervisor/manager, the person involved in the incident/near miss, the Health and Safety Representative (HSR) for the area, and other relevant worker, as appropriate.

c. Where the corrective action relates to a building or infrastructure issue, a Service One request should be submitted and a record of the Service One number should be recorded in the FlinSafe report if it is associated with an incident or near miss. Where a site does not use the Service One system, then a request to the appropriate maintenance system should be submitted and recorded.

d. Corrective actions should be selected in accordance with the Hierarchy of Risk Control in the University's WHS Risk Management Procedures, implementing the highest level of control where reasonably practicable to do so.

e. The recommended corrective actions must demonstrate that risks to health and safety are eliminated, or where that is not reasonably practicable, are minimised. The action priorities are assigned to be implemented in a timely manner and in accordance with the required priority to control risks. See University's WHS Risk Management Procedures.

f. Depending on the outcome of the investigation, both short and long-term corrective actions may be required, and these should be assigned to the person responsible for completing them via FlinSafe.

11. Monitoring and Review of Corrective Actions

a. The manager or supervisor responsible for the area where an incident or near miss has occurred must:

   i. track and monitor the implementation of the agreed corrective action

   ii. monitor and evaluate the corrective actions for effectiveness, in consultation with workers in the affected area and any other relevant stakeholders to ensure any remaining risk has been controlled as low as reasonably practicable

   iii. undertake a risk assessment if new hazard(s) are identified.

b. When the manager or supervisor is satisfied that the corrective actions identified have been completed and are suitable, they should ensure that the corrective action is marked as complete in the FlinSafe.

c. Overdue corrective actions are reported and monitored via the University / College Health and Safety Committees and Council.

12. Closure of Incident and Data Analysis

a. After the incident/near miss has been investigated, relevant information collected and all identified corrective actions are completed and closed-off by the responsible person, a member of the WHS Unit team will review the information and, if satisfied that the risk has been managed to as low as reasonably practicable, will sign off and close that record in FlinSafe.

b. The WHS Unit is responsible for analysing the University-wide incident/near miss data to identify any recurrent trends that might allow preventative strategies to be developed.

c. Incident/near miss data is reported on a quarterly basis to relevant University Health and Safety Committees and University Council as set out in the University WHS Performance Measurement and Reporting Procedures.

13. Other Organisations (PCBU) and Contractor Reporting

a. Where there is a shared health and safety duty with another organisations (PCBU) then all parties must consult, cooperate and coordinate activities, so far as is reasonably practicable, when an incident, near miss or hazard is identified.

b. The organisations (PCBUs) must be informed via their respective incident reporting process and shared information about the investigation findings and required corrective actions must be reported and recorded in FlinSafe.

c. Contractors who have an incident or near miss or identify a hazard whilst conducting work for the University are required to report these to their Supervisor and University contact.

d. Incidents or near misses must also be formally reported to their employer and to the University via FlinSafe. Further information can be found via the Contractor Safety.

14. Other Post Incident Actions

14.1. Counselling

University staff and students involved in a work-related incident that are identified as being psychologically hazardous/stressful will be offered counselling. The WHS Unit will lead coordination of this.

14.2. Debriefing

Where a serious or significant incident has had an impact on, or caused concern amongst workers, students or others in the workplace, the supervisor, manager or Associate Director, WHS, may seek to conduct a debriefing to explain:

a. the outcome of the incident

b. the outcome of the investigation

c. any corrective actions/control measures that have been or will be taken.

15. Hazards – Reporting and Investigation

a. Where hazards can be fixed immediately to provide a safe outcome and in a way that poses no danger to anyone, this should be done (e.g. wipe up of spill, remove cables from floor).

b. Where the hazard cannot be fixed immediately, workers and students should notify the supervisor/manager of the area.

c. Workers and students must report any hazards that pose a risk to personal health or safety of which they have become aware.

d. Hazards that are related to building or infrastructure and are not related to an accident/incident can be reported directly on Service One.

e. All other hazards should be reported in the hazard section of the FlinSafe system.

f. Workplace inspections, audits and other risk management processes can also be used to identify hazards.

g. Hazards should be eliminated where possible. Where a hazard cannot be eliminated, the identified corrective actions should be in line with the Hierarchy of Risk Control as outlined in WHS Risk Management Procedures.

h. All hazards reported in FlinSafe must, where reasonably practical to do so, have relevant corrective actions assigned to a responsible person.

i. When identified corrective actions have been completed, they must be marked as complete in FlinSafe by the person assigned the corrective action.

j. Open and overdue corrective actions should be tracked and reported on by the relevant College / Portfolio as required to ensure effectiveness and completion.

16. Responsibilities

Portfolio Heads and Vice-Presidents and Executive Deans of College	a. Ensure that: i. incidents, near misses and hazards are managed effectively and reporting requirements are met ii. information on the University's incident and hazard reporting and investigation procedures is incorporated into the induction process iii. managers and supervisors understand the requirements for reporting and investigating incidents, near miss and hazards iv. resources required to implement corrective actions are available and these actions are afforded appropriate priority.

Managers and Supervisors (including supervisors of students)	b. Ensure that: i. workers, students and others under their supervision are aware of this procedure, including the need to report as soon as practicable via telephone or email to the area manager / supervisor when an accident/incident has occurred resulting in injury or a risk to safety remains ii. all incidents are formally reported in FlinSafe within 24 hours or as soon as possible of the accident/incident occurring iii. complete the initial investigation of the WHS Incident report in FlinSafe iv. notifiable incidents are reported to Security and the WHS Unit via the Associate Director, WHS (or delegate) immediately v. undertake investigation of any reported incident or near miss in consultation with the worker involved and, where reasonably practicable to do so, with the relevant Health and Safety Representative (HSR) of the area vi. apply a risk management approach to the findings of all incident/near miss investigations vii. recommended corrective actions are implemented, monitored, tracked and reviewed for effectiveness viii. maintain and manage the privacy and confidentiality of personal and health information relating to an injured person.
Work health and Safety Unit	c. Make sure corrective actions are completed and close the incident/near miss report once satisfied that the risk has been reduced to as low as reasonably practicable. d. Analyse incident/near miss data and where relevant develop preventative strategies. e. Report incident/near miss data quarterly to University Council and Health and Safety Committees.
Workers, students, and others (including contractors)	f. Report all incidents, near miss or hazards to their manager or supervisor, topic coordinator or other relevant University staff member with 24 hours or as soon as is reasonably practicable. g. Report notifiable incidents immediately to their manager or supervisor. h. Complete a WHS incident/near miss or hazard report on FlinSafe.

17. Related Procedures and Links

Emergency Management Procedures FlinSafe information

Incident flowchart

Report an incident, near miss or hazard

Work Health and Safety Management System Work Health and Safety Policy

Work Health and Safety Risk Management Procedures

Approval Authority	Vice-President (Corporate Services)
Responsible Officer	Director, People and Culture
Approval Date	31 March 2026
Effective Date	31 March 2026
Review Date*	
Last amended	2029
CM file number	CF18/152
* Unless otherwise indicated, this policy or procedures still apply beyond the review date.	

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ABN: 65 542 596 200 CRICOS No: 00114A

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