

The University of Sydney
OHS Consultation Statement

Foreword

The NSW Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 and OHS Regulation 2001 require that employers document their OHS consultation arrangements in the form of a "consultation statement". The University of Sydney is committed to complying with this legislation and providing a healthy and safe environment for University staff, students, contractors and visitors.

A further requirement of the legislation is that the OHS arrangements be concluded after consultation on the matter with employees. To this end, a discussion paper canvassing various consultation options was put to the Central OHS Committee in March / June 2001. A Working Party of the Central OHS Committee was formed to consider the viability of the various consultation options. This Working Party had representation from each of the academic colleges and administrative groups in the University. An OHS risk management (**ohsrm**) Program was subsequently devised, based on the recommendations of the Working Party. The draft **ohsrm** Program was publicised throughout the University for comment and in the absence of negative feedback, was formally introduced in February 2002. The Program provides a "systematic" approach to managing OHS risks, as required by the legislation. OHS consultation is built into the **ohsrm** Program as a required element in each of the "risk management steps".

Statement

The OHS consultation arrangements at the University of Sydney fall into the generic category of "other agreed arrangements", as described in the NSW Code of Practice on OHS Consultation. The primary medium for consultation is direct dialogue between supervisors/managers and their subordinate staff. Consultation at this level is fundamental to the successful management of OHS risks.

Consultation on OHS issues must be meaningful and effective to allow each member of staff to contribute to decisions that may affect their health, safety and welfare at work. All employees will be given the opportunity to express their views and contribute in a timely manner to the resolution of OHS issues that affect them. These views will be valued and taken into account by those making decisions.

Each manager and supervisor is required to consult with their subordinate staff whenever:

- the risks associated with workplace activities are being assessed and decisions are being made about the control of these risks, and;
- changes are proposed to the facilities, equipment, substances or systems of work.

This direct form of OHS consultation is consistent with the University's OHS Policy and Guide for Staff, which not only makes a commitment to providing a healthy and safe environment for University staff, students and visitors, but also clearly assigns responsibilities for achieving this.

In addition to the primary method of consultation, the University of Sydney has a network of workplace OHS Committees constituted in accordance with the Code of Practice on OHS Consultation. These Zone OHS Committees provide a secondary mechanism for consultation on OHS issues whenever there is a breakdown in consultation in the normal line of management. Each Zone Committee is represented on the Central OHS Committee which oversees the University's OHS program.

References on-line

OHS Policy & Guide for Staff: <http://www.usyd.edu.au/ohs/policies/ohs/policy.shtml>

ohsrm Program: http://www.usyd.edu.au/ohs/ohs_manual/ohsrm.shtml

OHS Committees: http://www.usyd.edu.au/ohs/ohs_manual/OHS_consult.shtml

OHS Consultation Code of Practice: http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/CCD5959C-3BBD-41CD-94F8-48B63EF59AAA/0/cop_ohsconsult_311.pdf