



Worker Participation Framework 2025

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Health, Safety and Wellbeing

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TITLE: Worker Participation Framework 2025
OHSMS REF: Communications and Work Participation

Contents

1. Executive summary 2

2. Introduction and background..... 3

3. DHSO Requirements..... 4

 4a. DHSO Job Description..... 4

 4b. DHSO Time Allocation 4

 4c. DHSO Training..... 4

4. Health and Safety Representatives Requirements 5

 5b. Health and Safety Representative Worker Groups and Numbers 5

 5c. Election Nomination Process..... 7

 5d. Health and Safety Representative Training Requirements..... 7

5. University Provisional Improvement Notice (PIN) process 8

6. Health and Safety Committees..... 9

 7a. Legislative Requirements 9

 7b. Current Structure 10

Appendices..... 11

 Appendix 1: Schedule 2 High-risk sectors or industries (schedules from 2016 Regulations) 11

 Appendix 2: Worker participation practices 12

 Appendix 3: Revised Departmental Health and Safety Job Description 16

 Appendix 4: Revised Health and Safety Representative Position Description..... 20

 Appendix 5: Provisional Improvement Notice Flowchart 22


 Appendix 6: Committee Organisation Structure..... 1

 Appendix 7: Health & Safety Committee (Council)..... 1

 Appendix 8: Health and Safety Committee (Operations) 2

 Appendix 9: Hazardous Substances & Radiation Committee 3

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	TITLE: Worker Participation Framework 2025 OHSMS REF: Communications and Work Participation

1. Executive summary

This document is the agreed Worker Participation Framework following consultation and modification of the Departmental Health and Safety Officer (DHSO) positions across the University. Previous frameworks have included Departmental H&S Administrators (DHSA) however, this did not provide consistency of service in meeting department's needs, thus the DHSA position has been disestablished.

This version of the framework reinstates the DHSO role across all departments. There are minor changes to the DHSO position description. Time allocation for the DHSO role is under pressure in the current operating environment and a recommendation is made to confirm time allocations and to centrally hold this information.

Revision History

Version	Description	Endorsement	Date:
6	Reverted from Departmental H&S Advisors back to Departmental H&S Officers, one for each department, either through DSA positions or positions within the Departments. Training programme rolled out and list of DHSOs established.	Acting COO (Jared Hayes)	6 August 2025
5	Delegation of future responsibility to the COO and endorsement of changes	Vice-Chancellor (Grant Robertson)	7 October 2024
4	Last approved revision Remove DHSAs	Vice-Chancellor	2019
3	Framework revised – introduction of DHSA/DHSO	Vice-Chancellor & Council	2017
2	Reviewed 2006/2008	Vice-Chancellor	2008
1	Original framework	Vice Chancellor	2004

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OHSMS REF: Communications and Work Participation

3. DHSO Requirements

4a. DHSO Job Description

The DHSO positions currently exist within each department, have a job description, and are required by the Agreement to have a time allocation to complete the related tasks. The working group reviewed the job description (appendix 3). In summary, the changes to the job description reflect the legislative requirement that the organisation, and hence the Line Managers, and not the DHSOs, remain responsible for health and safety in the department. The role of the DHSO remains pivotal in the University’s health and safety system as the backbone to document and communicate core health and safety requirements, such as the hazard/risk register, incident reporting, recording training and requirements, and so on.


4b. DHSO Time Allocation

Time allocation has been a requirement of the DHSO position within the Employee Participation Agreement since 2006. The annual H&S review completed by DHSOs reflects that the time allocation is not always specific or clarified with the DHSO incumbents. In returns for the 2016 year, for example, 76% of DHSOs had their duties included within their job descriptions, and only 20% had a time allocation to complete the DHSO tasks. Obviously, for work-related duties to be completed, resources – including time – must be available. Hence, we are recommending that the time allocation be retained as a part of the DHSO requirements.

4c. DHSO Training

The central HSW team does provide a DHSO training programme with annual updates. To fulfil their role, DHSOs must complete this training, and any annual updates as requested.

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	TITLE: Worker Participation Framework 2025 OHSMS REF: Communications and Work Participation

4. Health and Safety Representatives Requirements

The purpose of elected Health and Safety Representatives is defined in the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 as:

Functions of health and safety representatives Schedule 2, Part 1, Section 1

The functions of a health and safety representative for a work group are—

- (a) to represent the workers in the work group in matters relating to health and safety:*
- (b) to investigate complaints from workers in the work group regarding health and safety:*
 - (c) if requested by a worker in the work group, to represent the worker in relation to a matter relating to health and safety (including a complaint):*
- (d) to monitor the measures taken by the PCBU that are relevant to health and safety: (e) to inquire into anything that appears to be a risk to the health or safety of workers in the work group arising from the conduct of the business or undertaking:*
- (f) to make recommendations relating to work health and safety:*
- (g) to provide feedback to the PCBU about whether the requirements of this Act or regulations are being complied with:*
- (h) to promote the interests of workers in the work group who have been harmed at work, including in relation to arrangements for rehabilitation and return to work.*

For the purposes of the University of Otago, the working group further defines the Health and Safety Representative’s functions as:

- i) to work with the DHSOs within their work area to create a positive, engaged environment towards health and safety.
- ii) to attend training as agreed between the University of Otago and the representative.

5b. Health and Safety Representative Worker Groups and Numbers

The working group proposes the following worker groups and Health and Safety Representatives. Worker groups are required to be of a similar work environment and potential hazard exposure.

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Work are/worker group	Number of H&S Reps
Humanities	1 Professional
	1 Academic
Commerce	1 Professional
	1 Academic
Sciences	2 Professional
	2 Academic
Health Sciences	
Dentistry	1 Academic
	1 Professional
School of Medicine	1 Academic
	1 Professional
Biomedical Sciences	1 Academic
	1 Professional
UoO (Christchurch)	1 Academic
	1 Professional
UoO (Wellington)	1 Academic
	1 Professional
Pharmacy	1 Academic
	1 Professional
Physiotherapy	1 Academic
	1 Professional
Divisional Office/Bioethics	1 Academic
	1 Professional
Academic Division	
Academic Services	1 Professional
Distance teaching, HEDC, QAU, Pacific Development, Summer School, First-year experience	1 Professional
Admissions and Enrolments	1 Professional
Library	2 Professional
Other	1 Professional
Operations	
ITS	2 Professional
CaCLS	1 Professional
PSD/Campus Development	2 Professional
H&S, Sustainability, Risk Office	1 Professional
Human Resources	1 Professional

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	TITLE: Worker Participation Framework 2025 OHSMS REF: Communications and Work Participation

6. Health and Safety Committees

The University has established committees and various reporting lines (see Appendix 6 for the University’s Committee Organisation Structure). The working group consider the continuation of the committee structure critical for worker engagement and recommend that the committees follow the Health and Safety at Work Act prescribed format.

7a. Legislative Requirements

Section 66 of the Health and Safety at Work Act outlines the requirements for Health and Safety Committees. The requirement for a committee is at the request of workers to the Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU)

The Health and Safety at Work Act (Worker Engagement, Participation, and Representation) Regulations 2016 subpart 4, Health and Safety Committees sections 28 and 29, outlines the requirements for Health and Safety committees formed under the legislation.

Subpart 4-Health and safety committees

28 *Membership of health and safety committees*

- (1) *The PCBU who establishes a health and safety committee for a workplace (or part of a workplace) and the workers at that workplace (or their representatives) must agree on the members of the health and safety committee.*
- (2) *However, -*
 - a) *One of the members appointed by the PCBU to the committee must be authorised by the PCBU to make decisions on behalf of the PCBU on health and safety issues; and*
 - b) *At least half of the members on the committee–*
 - i. *Must be workers and must represent the workers at the workplace;*
and
 - ii. *Must not have been nominated by the PCBU.*

(3) *Each health and safety representative is eligible to be a member of the health and safety committee.*

29 *Meeting requirements for health and safety committees*

A health and safety committee must meet–

- a) *Regularly at the times agreed by the members of the committee; but at least once every 3 months; and*

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Schedule 2 High-risk sectors or industries (schedules from 2016 Regulations)

Schedule 2 High-risk sectors or industries

r 5(1)(d)


ANZSIC classification code	High-risk sectors or industries
A02	Aquaculture
A03	Forestry and logging
A04	Fishing, hunting, and trapping
B06	Coal mining
C11	Food product manufacturing
D28	Water supply, sewerage, and drainage services
D29	Waste collection, treatment, and disposal services
E30	Building construction
E31	Heavy and civil engineering construction
E32	Construction services

Schedule 3 Types of work or sectors excluded from high-risk sectors or industries

5(1)(e)

ANZSIC classification code	Sector or industry	Work type/sector excluded
A02	Aquaculture	
A0203		Onshore aquaculture
A03	Forestry and logging	Forest product gathering, which comprises— Kauri gum digging Native orchid gathering Pine cone gathering Resin gathering Mushroom gathering
A04	Fishing, hunting, and trapping	Hunting or trapping of certain non-New Zealand species, which comprises— Turtle hunting Buffalo hunting Crocodile hunting Dingo hunting or trapping Kangaroo hunting Snake catching
C11	Food product manufacturing	
C117		Bakery product manufacturing when carried out in the home
C1174		Bakery product manufacturing (non-factory-based)
E32	Construction services	Curtain installation Fly wire screen installation

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Appendix 2: Worker participation practices

From HSWA, accurate as of 1 March 2017 reprint:

Worker participation practices

- 61 Duty to have worker participation practices**
- (1) A PCBU must have practices that provide reasonable opportunities for workers who carry out work for the business or undertaking to participate effectively in improving work health and safety in the business or undertaking on an ongoing basis.
 - (2) In complying with subsection (1), the PCBU must—
 - (a) comply with prescribed requirements relating to worker participation, including requirements relating to a particular industry, sector, or kind of workplace;
 - (b) take into account any relevant approved code of practice.
 - (3) In this section, **reasonable opportunities** means opportunities that are reasonable in the circumstances, having regard to relevant matters, including—
 - (a) the number of workers working in the business or undertaking; and
 - (b) the number of different workplaces of the business or undertaking, and the distance between them; and
 - (c) the likely risks to work health and safety in the business or undertaking and the level of those risks; and
 - (d) the nature of the work that is performed and the way that it is arranged or managed; and
 - (e) the nature of the employment arrangements or contracting arrangements, including the extent and regularity of employment or engagement of temporary workers; and
 - (f) the willingness of workers and their representatives to develop worker participation practices; and
 - (g) in relation to employers and employees, the duty to act in good faith as required by section 4 of the Employment Relations Act 2000.
 - (4) A person who contravenes subsection (1) commits an offence and is liable on conviction,—
 - (a) for an individual, to a fine not exceeding \$20,000;
 - (b) for any other person, to a fine not exceeding \$100,000.

Compare: 1992 No 96 s 19B

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OHSMS REF: Communications and Work Participation

Subpart 2—Health and safety representatives and health and safety committees

Election of health and safety representatives

62 Election of health and safety representatives

- (1) A worker who carries out work for a business or undertaking may notify the PCBU that the worker wishes 1 or more health and safety representatives to be elected to represent workers who carry out work for that business or undertaking.
(2) Subject to subsection (4), if a PCBU receives a notification under subsection (1), the PCBU must initiate the election of 1 or more health and safety representatives to represent workers who carry out work for that business or undertaking, within the time prescribed by regulations.
(3) A PCBU may, on the PCBU's own initiative, initiate the election of 1 or more health and safety representatives to represent workers who carry out work for that business or undertaking.
(4) A PCBU is not required to initiate the election of 1 or more health and safety representatives, if the work of the business or undertaking—
(a) is carried out by fewer than 20 workers; and
(b) is not within the scope of any high-risk sector or industry prescribed by
(5) A PCBU who seeks to rely on subsection (4) to refuse a worker's request for the election of 1 or more health and safety representatives under subsection (1) must give written notice to that effect within a reasonable time to that worker.
(6) The PCBU's obligation to hold an election in response to a worker's request for the election of 1 or more health and safety representatives under subsection (1) applies only in relation to holding an election for the work group to which that worker belongs.
(7) A person who contravenes subsection (2) or (5) commits an offence and is liable on conviction,—
(a) for an individual, to a fine not exceeding \$5,000;
(b) for any other person, to a fine not exceeding \$25,000.

Compare: Model Work Health and Safety Act (Aust) s 50

63 Requirements for conducting elections

An election for 1 or more health and safety representatives (whether following the request of a worker or on the initiative of the PCBU under section 62) must comply with any prescribed requirements.

Compare: 1992 No 96 s 19V; Model Work Health and Safety Act (Aust) s 61(2)

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OHSMS REF: Communications and Work Participation

Determination of work groups

64 Determination of work groups

- (1) If a worker makes a request or the PCBU initiates the election of a health and safety representative under section 62, the PCBU must determine 1 or more work groups, in accordance with either subsection (2) or (3).
(2) Unless a PCBU determines otherwise in accordance with subsection (3), a work group comprises all the workers in the business or undertaking.
(3) A PCBU may determine 1 or more work groups if the PCBU considers that the work group described in subsection (2) would be inappropriate having regard to the structure of the business or undertaking.
(4) If subsection (3) applies, the PCBU must—
(a) ensure that the workers are grouped in a way that—
(i) most effectively enables the health and safety interests of the workers to be represented; and
(ii) takes account of the need for a health and safety representative to be accessible to the workers that he or she represents; and
(b) have regard to any prescribed requirements.
(5) Two or more PCBUs may, by agreement, determine 1 or more work groups that comprise workers who carry out work for any PCBU who is party to the agreement (a multiple PCBU work group arrangement)—
(a) in accordance with subsection (3); and
(b) subject to any prescribed requirements.


Compare: Model Work Health and Safety Act (Aust) s 51(1), (2), (3)

65 Determination of numbers of health and safety representatives for work groups

- (1) If section 64(2) applies, the PCBU must determine the number of health and safety representatives who may be elected for that work group in accordance with the prescribed minimum ratio of health and safety representatives to workers.
(2) If section 64(3) applies, the PCBU must determine the number of health and safety representatives who may be elected for that work group in accordance with any prescribed requirements.

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Appendix 3: Revised Departmental Health and Safety Job Description

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO
Te Whare Wananga o Otago
REVISED JOB DESCRIPTION 2024

JOB TITLE: Departmental Health & Safety Officer (DHSO)
TIME ALLOCATION:
DIVISION:

PRIME FUNCTION OF THE DHSO POSITION

The Departmental Health & Safety Officer promotes Health & Safety management practices and assists with implementing University Health & Safety policies in the department in support of the Head of Department/Line Manager.

The HOD/Line Manager maintains ultimate health and safety responsibility within their area of control.

MAIN OBJECTIVES

- Manages, regularly reviews, and audits the department risk profile against the ISO45001 critical risk framework for the University.
- Ensures Head of Department and all staff are kept up to date with relevant Health & Safety policies.
- Completes Health & Safety inductions for new staff.
- Liaises with Health, Safety and Wellbeing team on behalf of department.
- Maintains the Vault system (online IT system for health and safety).
- Encourages reporting of events by all staff and students.

KEY TASKS

Hazard/Risk Management:

- Has an understanding of the University critical risk register and how that impacts their Department.
- Identifies and researches practicable steps to eliminate or minimise hazards or risks.
- Reports on hazard management progress and refers significant hazards that require additional control to the HOD/Manager.

Event reporting and investigation:

- Performs incident investigations as per Health & Safety policy and reports any findings to the HOD/Line Manager and to the Health & Safety Team.

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Property Services

BUDGETARY RESPONSIBILITY Nil

RELATIONSHIPS

Directly responsible to: Head of Department/Manager

Supervision of: NA

Functional relationships:

- University Health, Safety and Wellbeing team
- University Emergency Response Team, Emergency Wardens and First Aiders
- H&S Representatives
- DHSO network
- Departmental staff
- Property Services

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Department hazards and registers are effectively managed and documented.
- All reasonably practicable steps have been taken to eliminate or minimise hazards/risks.
- A departmental Health & Safety structure is in place and operating effectively.
- Additional support and expertise is sought for the management of hazards as required.
- The department complies with University Health & Safety policies and procedures.
- Reporting of accidents/incidents is timely and meets compliance requirements.
- Staff are informed, educated, and inducted to Health & Safety.
- Registers are maintained and up to date.
- Non-compliance is reported and managed.
- The HOD/Manager is kept fully informed of any issues as they arise, so that they can fulfil their Health & Safety responsibilities.
- DHSO has completed and central HSW training programme and updates.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

- Knowledge of New Zealand Health & Safety related legislation is desirable.
- Ability to analyse, interpret, and summarise information effectively.

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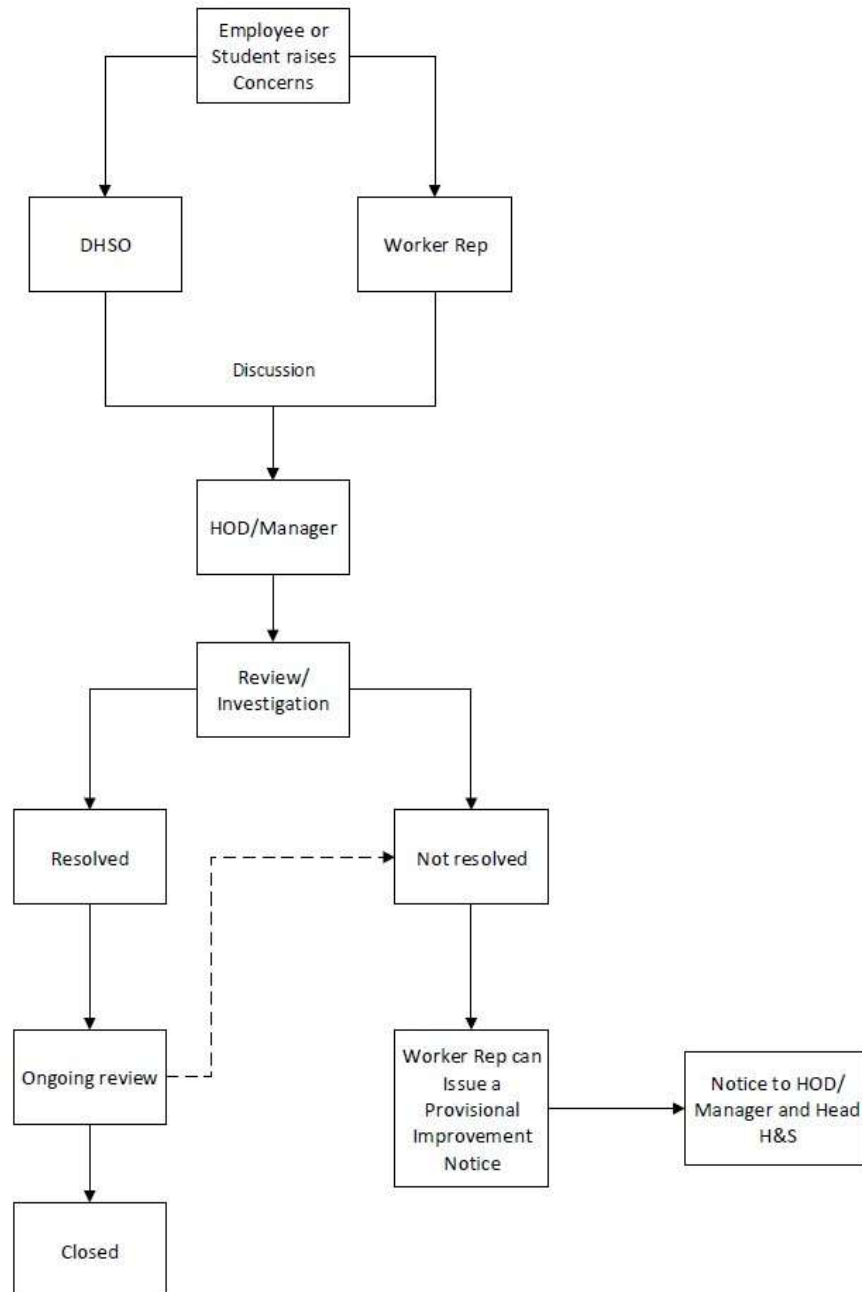
representative is elected. A Health & Safety Representative may resign from office at any time by giving notice to the PCBU (Health, Safety and Wellbeing Office). A Health & Safety Representative ceases to hold office if:

- he/she ceases to be a member of the work group that he/she was elected to.
- is removed from office under clause 17 of schedule 2 of HSAW.
- a simple majority of the members of the work group resolve that that representative should no longer represent the work group.


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Appendix 5: Provisional Improvement Notice Flowchart



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Appendix 6: Committee Organisation Structure

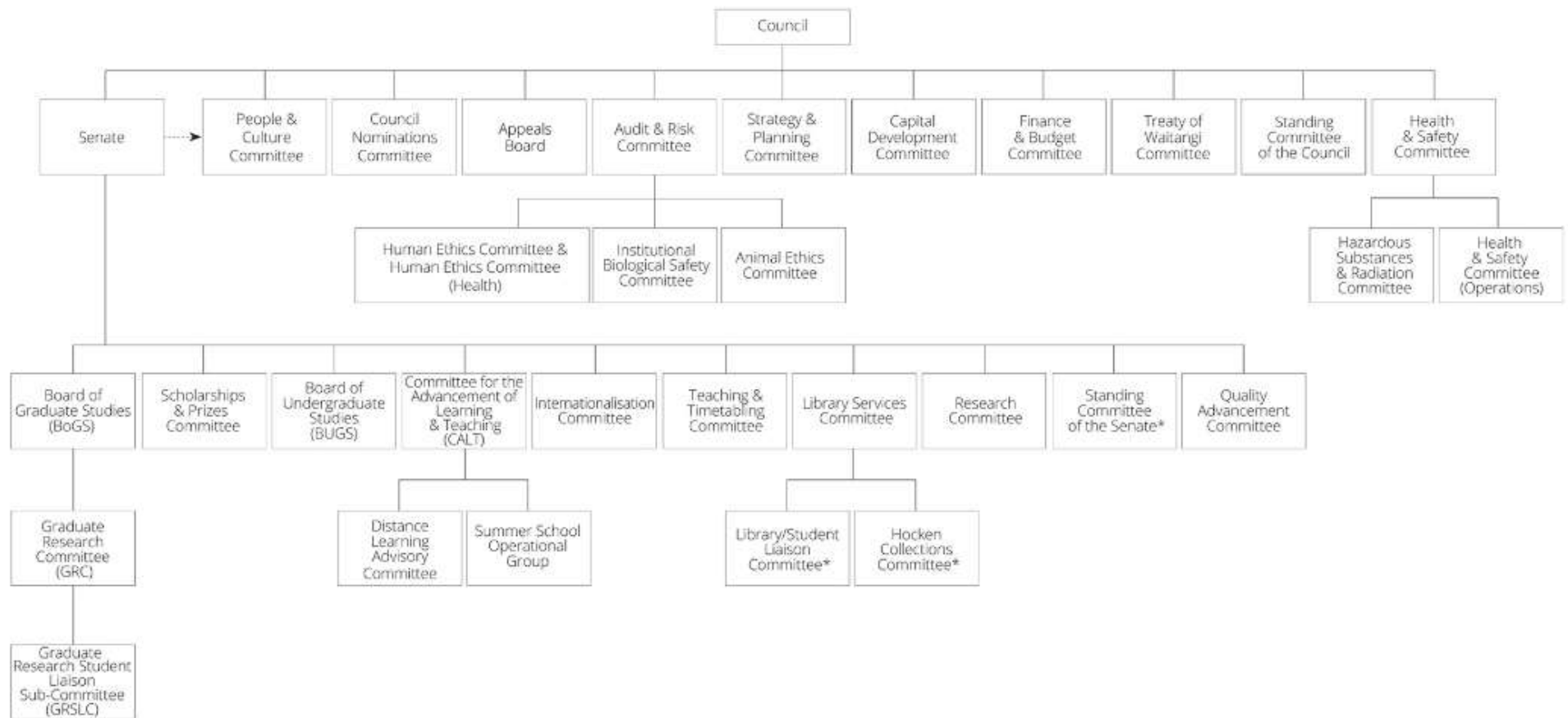



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TITLE: Worker Participation Framework 2025

OHSMS REF: Communications and Work Participation

University of Otago
Committee Organisation Structure



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Appendix 7: Health & Safety Committee (Council)

Terms of Reference

- To review and recommend to the University Council on all matters relating to health and safety, including related statutory compliance;
- To ensure that the University Council is regularly provided information in order that its members:
 1. are kept up-to-date with knowledge of work health, safety and wellbeing matters;
 2. maintain an understanding of the operations of the University, and generally of the hazards and risks associated with those operations;
 3. can be satisfied the University has in place, and is using, appropriate resources and processes:
 1. to eliminate or minimise health and safety risks; and
 2. for complying with its other Health and Safety duties and obligations
 4. can be satisfied that the University has appropriate processes in place for receiving and considering information regarding incidents, hazards, and risks and for responding in a timely way to that information; and
 5. can verify the provision and use of the resources and processes referred to in paragraphs (c) and (d)

Constitution

The Constitution of the Health and Safety Committee shall be as follows:


- One lay member of the University Council (*Convener*)
- Two further members of the University Council
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise)
- Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Health Sciences
- Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Sciences
- Chief Operating Officer

In attendance

- Director, Property and Campus Development
- Director, Health and Safety and Wellbeing
- Director, Human Resources Division

The following will attend when presenting reports:

- Convener, Hazardous Substances and Radiation Committee

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Appendix 8: Health and Safety Committee (Operations)

Terms of Reference

- To provide a forum for discussion of occupational health and safety matters leading to policy development and advice, including employee and union representation;
- To identify and facilitate the development of University policies in relation to health and safety matters;
- To receive quarterly reports from the University Health and Safety Manager on events/incidents and health and safety issues;
- To perform the ACC Partnership Programme self-assessment requirement in preparation for the external ACC audit;
- To receive reports from employee representatives on safety issues and health and safety compliance within Divisions;
- To liaise with the Hazardous Substances and Radiation Committee, the Institutional Biological Safety Committee, the Animal Ethics Committee , the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee and the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee (Health) as appropriate; and
- To report to the Health and Safety Committee (Council).

Membership

- Member of SLT (Convenor) (nominated by the Vice-Chancellor, authorised to make health and safety decisions on behalf of the Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU))
- Director, Health, Safety & Wellbeing (or delegate)
- Administration support
- Occupational Health Nurse
- Inter-Union Council Representative (as per Employee Participation Agreement Nov 2003)
- DHSO representatives from each Academic Division and two DHSO representatives from the Service Divisions
- Four Health and Safety Representatives from each Division, selected by employees;

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Appendix 9: Hazardous Substances & Radiation Committee

Terms of Reference

- To advise the University on all matters relating to hazardous substances and radiation safety in the Institution, including the development of policies and procedures relating to hazardous substances purchase, hazardous substance safety in laboratories, transportation of hazardous substance and radioactive substances on and off site, storage and disposal of hazardous waste.
- To facilitate and manage the development of emergency plans in relation to hazardous substances for compliance with the HSNO Act.
- To develop policy to ensure the University of Otago and licensees comply with NRL policies and guidelines for the use of radioactive substances and radiation sources.
- To develop policy to ensure the University of Otago complies with the HSNO Act regulations and guidelines in relation to the handling, use, transportation and disposal of hazardous substances, including the Code of Practice (Exempt Laboratories).
- To report to the Health & Safety Committee (Council).

Composition

- (Convenor appointed by Vice-Chancellor)
- Representative from Science Division
- Representative from Property Services
- Representative from Health Sciences
- University Laboratory Manager (Christchurch)
- University Laboratory Manager (Wellington)
- University Radiation Safety Officer
- Staff Member on the Dunedin Emergency Services Coordinating Committee
- Director, Health, Safety & Wellbeing
- University Laboratory Manager