Health & Safety Strategy

2023-2025

Think Safe – Be Safe – Home Safe

UNSW
SYDNEY

Acknowledgement of Country

UNSW campuses are located on the lands of the Bedegal (Kensington campus), Gadigal (City and Paddington Campuses) and Ngunnawal peoples (UNSW Canberra). This Strategy was written on the lands of the Gadigal, and Bedegal Peoples. We also acknowledge that our students and staff live and work on the unceded lands of First Nations peoples throughout NSW and Australia. We pay our respects and thank all traditional custodians for your ongoing care and custodianship of the lands and the sea. We are grateful for the wisdom and guidance of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues, as we work together to ensure UNSW is a physically and culturally safe and welcoming place for all.

Message from the Vice-Chancellor - Attila Brungs

I am passionate about all aspects of health & safety at UNSW, from physical to psychosocial. My aspiration is for everyone to feel safe in their work, discovery, and learning activities.

At UNSW, health & safety is a high priority and of utmost importance to our strategy. A positive safety culture is an extension of our core values: demonstrating excellence, being innovative, enhancing diversity, and of course respect and collaboration. Combined with the genuine care for others that is inherent in the UNSW community, this provides the critical foundation to build a nation-leading health & safety culture. Working together on the implementation of this strategy will enable us to continue to strengthen health & safety across our University.

Health & safety is a collective responsibility to which we must all continually contribute. Together we can inspire a proactive safety-first culture that enables everyone at UNSW to thrive and continue to achieve momentous outcomes in teaching, research, and the public good.

We want every person to:
Think Safe – Be Safe – Home Safe.

Message from the Director of Safety - Karl Baumgartner

It is an exciting time for safety at UNSW and I am pleased to be involved in the journey. For me, safety is very important, and it is my priority that each and every UNSW staff member, contractor, student, or visitor is able to come and do their work or study and know they will return home safely.

Safety is a collective responsibility, and it is critical that we continue to work together to improve and build a proactive safety culture. I look forward to implementing this strategy and continuing to work with you all.

Our Motto

Think Safe – Be Safe – Home Safe

Our Vision

To inspire and enable a safety-first culture across UNSW.

Purpose

With our people at top of mind, the Health & Safety strategy will lead the implementation of a progressive, proactive health & safety culture both physical and psychosocial. UNSW fosters a culture of genuine care, for everyone in our community, and strives for our campuses to be safe, healthy, and inspiring places to work, study and collaborate.

Scope

This strategy applies to all workers (including contractors), students, and visitors to any UNSW campus, or premises controlled by UNSW. It also applies to UNSW staff and students who work at premises controlled by other persons conducting a business or undertaking, unless other agreements are in place that cover the safety duty and responsibilities.

What we do, and want to achieve:

Health & Safety is key to the UNSW vision: to improve lives globally, through innovative research, transformative education, and commitment to a just society.

The Health & Safety Strategy (2023-2025) is aligned with UNSW's strategic priorities and themes as outlined in the UNSW 2025 Strategy.

Working with a shared purpose, with Safety as a core value, we want the entire UNSW community to view safety as both a personal and a collective responsibility and to continually operate with this shared purpose.

To maintain flexibility in our approach to ensure we can be responsive to emerging health & safety issues both physical and psychosocial.

Objectives

Leaders across UNSW demonstrate their dedication and personal commitment to our core health & safety principles as set out in the Health & Safety Policy and Health & Safety Statement.

Managers and supervisors understand that they directly influence the safety culture in their work areas and that their actions are key to continual improvement and the reinforcement of desired behaviours.

Everyone in our community understands that health & safety is a joint responsibility, and we all have an active part.

Everyone in our community is confident that their health & safety both physical and psychosocial are of the utmost importance at UNSW and are given the highest priority.

Our people feel safe to raise concerns and speak up about matters that impact their health & safety, and individuals feel responsibility for the safety of others.

We evaluate what goes well and any issues that arise and use both as an opportunity for learning and continuous improvement.

How we work together

We have clear principles and a policy that supports our approach to Health & Safety.

Across the UNSW community, everyone takes responsibility for the physical and psychosocial health & safety, of themselves and each other.

Leadership is ultimately held to account for the health, safety, and well-being of all our people.

Management is responsible for championing health & safety when undertaking UNSW work/business.
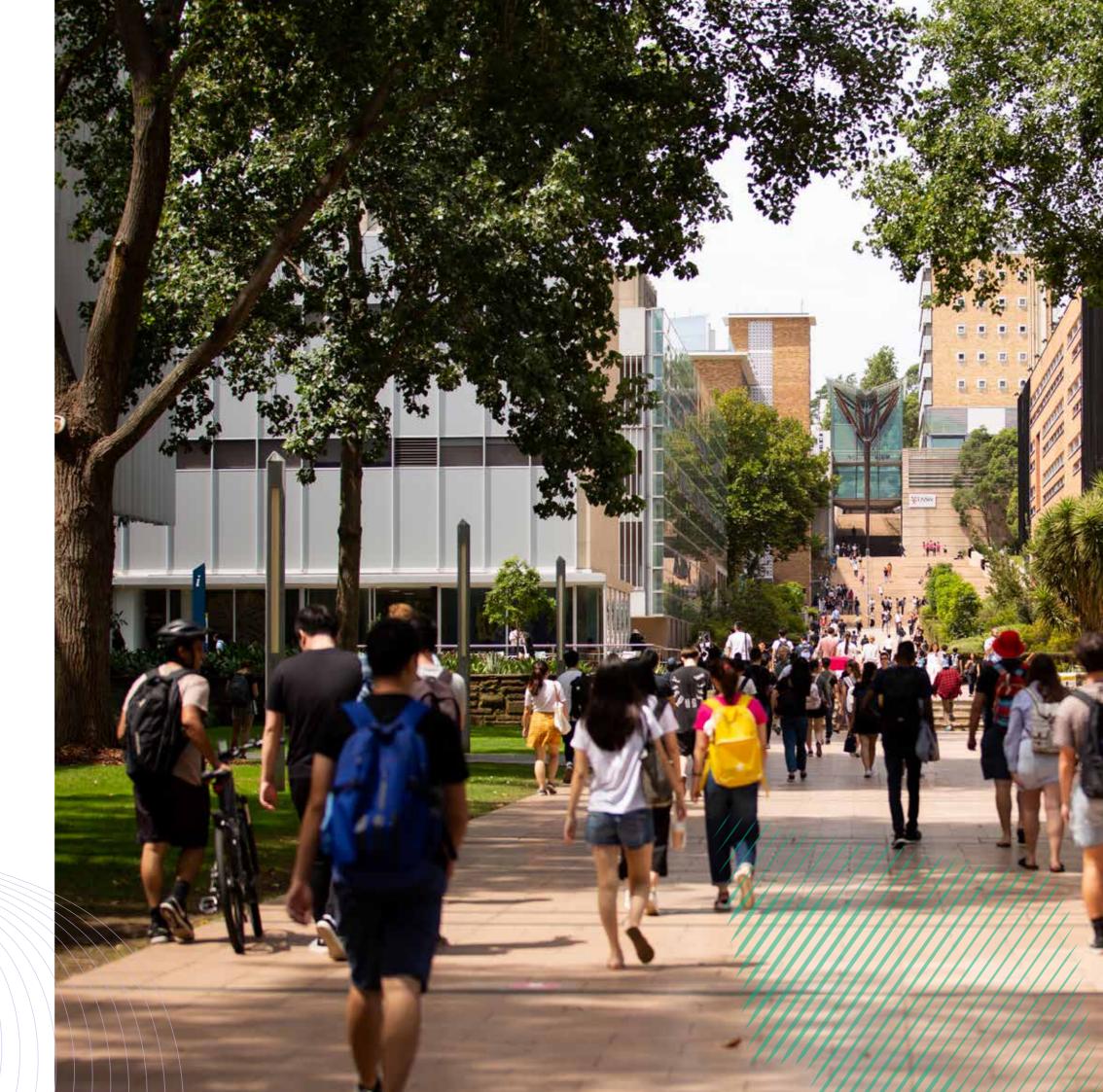
Individuals must take all reasonable steps for their health & safety both physical and psychological while undertaking UNSW business.

Collaborate with stakeholders across the university to achieve improved health & safety outcomes.

All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure no one is harmed while conducting any UNSW business.

Our values guide our behaviour and enable our staff to be their best –

Demonstrates Excellence, Builds Collaboration, Displays Respect, Drives Innovation, and Embraces Diversity.

Our Priorities

Leadership and Engagement – Think Safe

Leaders are consistent in their behaviours and create an environment to ensure teams are engaged and consistently practice the value of putting safety first, delivering a proactive safety culture.

Strengthen the capabilities of UNSW leaders and the wider community in their health, safety, and well-being responsibilities including psychosocial safety through advice, support, tailored programs, and tools. Growing the awareness of the importance of continually promoting health, safety, and wellbeing.

Leaders and their teams take ownership of their safety performance and the resolution of safety issues within the workplace.

Why this is important

As we strive to improve the culture of safety across the university, it is critical that leaders are engaged, and live and breathe safety to support the entire community to work towards a common vision.

Proactive Safety Risk Management – Think Safe / Be Safe

Processes to ensure risks are identified, understood, and prioritised, resulting in effective management. Risk management strategies are deployed to support our dynamic working environments. Health & safety risks are considered at all stages of the lifecycle, including the design of workspaces, processes, and workforce.

Risk is understood and actively managed across all levels with the objective of reducing injuries, significantly reducing the chance of a serious injury or fatality and catastrophic events. The effectiveness of controls is understood and actively managed across all levels across UNSW.

Each person within UNSW has the duty to ensure that health & safety risks are eliminated as far as reasonably practicable by thorough risk management prior to undertaking work.

Why this is important

Including risk management across all stages of the lifecycle enhances processes and workforce capacity, while reducing the potential for harm to people and property.

Work Planning and Implementation – Be Safe

Clear operational practices and routines to ensure the safe completion of work. Health & safety, psychosocial to physical, will be embedded into the framework of decision-making and daily business planning across all levels of the university. We will promote and encourage robust discussions about health, safety, and well-being to ensure consistency and continual improvement. Operational discipline and practices are established to ensure work is planned and safely executed day-to-day.

Why this is important
Being proactive in our approach to integrating safety as part of normal business, improves effectiveness, efficiencies, enhances collaboration, and encourages informed courageous decision-making and continuous improvement.

Learning and Improvement – Think Safe

Proactive programs, systems, and mindsets drive us to learn and do better in all that we do. We consistently work together to achieve excellence across the UNSW community with a shared vision to promote and support a proactive health, safety, and well-being culture with robust systems to support this.

Culture and processes exist where teams proactively seek to learn from every opportunity and implement quality actions to address systemic safety issues.

Why this is important

Continually moving forward, learning from our experiences promotes and supports an adaptive safety culture.

Leadership and Engagement – Think Safe

Objectives

- To support a positive ethos of teamwork, with an active speak-up/listen-up culture.

- To empower the UNSW community and to promote health & safety across the university.

- To have a proactive and engaged community where health & safety (physical and psychosocial) are at the centre of what we do.

- Leaders at all levels engage with, demonstrate and model desired safety behaviours.

Strategies

- University-wide Speak Up for safety campaign to empower everyone to have safety conversations.

- Leaders actively participate in safety programs and initiatives and encourage and enable others.

- Consistent resources, strategies, tools, and training to ensure a cohesive and systematic approach to the delivery of high-quality health & safety functions across the university.

Indicators of success

- Our people feel empowered to raise concerns and contribute to discussions about decisions that impact their health & safety.

- Safety is an active part of every team meeting agenda across the university and is reflected in the minutes.

- Leaders hold regular and meaningful safety walks through their areas of responsibility.

- Increased reporting of near misses, hazards and incidents, and positive safety behaviours.

- All staff, volunteers, students, and contractors are provided with appropriate health & safety inductions and training on commencement and through the employee lifecycle, to ensure they can safely perform their roles.

- Safety goals are an intrinsic part of everyone's MyCareer plan.

Proactive Safety Risk Management – Think Safe

Objectives

- Comprehensive understanding of all health & safety risks across UNSW including critical risks.

- Psychosocial safety is prioritised and addressed holistically.

- A culture where reporting hazards, incidents, and near misses is championed and rewarded.

- Policy and procedures that are adaptive and supportive to the risk environments that the university faces.

- An Institution that self-insures for workers' compensation to enable the best outcomes for staff and our community.

- Collaboration is valued and prioritised to enhance the success of programs.

Strategies

- Implement Faculty and Divisional Risk Registers and develop Action Plans that align with the UNSW Risk Appetite statement.

- Identify critical risks that could cause fatalities or serious injuries in the workplace, ensure these risks are documented and robust controls are in place to reduce the risk to as low as reasonably practicable.

- A comprehensive psychosocial plan is developed and implemented across the university.

- Review processes to ensure that health & safety risk management is considered through the work lifecycle (including the design, planning, and recruitment phases), across all University operations.

- Incorporate safety into the design of spaces and work processes, promoting safety in design principles.

- Ongoing review and management of our safety management, injury prevention, and workers' compensation practices to support a healthy, engaged, and productive workforce.

- Ensure Risk Management Forms (RMF) and Safe Work Procedures (SWP) are relevant to the task/work to be undertaken and are reviewed annually

- Work with and support the Conduct Integrity Office including with the Gendered Violence Strategy and action plan and other relevant projects.

Indicators of Success

- Development and implementation of high-quality risk management tools including Take 5's, Risk Management Forms (RMF's) and Safe Work Procedures (SWPs)

- Increased reporting of near misses, and hazards and reduced incidents.

- Psychosocial risk assessments are completed across all faculties and divisions, and staff across the business complete the People at Work survey in a phased approach, psychosocial plan endorsed and implemented.

- Risk Registers inform staff at all levels of the status of any risks within their areas and are reviewed annually.

- Critical Risks are identified, managed, and reviewed on a 6-monthly basis.

- Safety is incorporated into design at each stage of work/a project from planning to completion.

- UNSW is rated as a 'low-risk' self-insurer by the Workers Compensation Regulator.

Planning and Implementation
– Be Safe

Objectives

- At UNSW, health & safety will be embedded across all layers of decision-making and daily business planning.

- An active environment where curiosity and collaboration are fostered and encouraged to improve and promote health & safety across all areas of the University.

- Safety is to be embraced as a collective responsibility, where everyone has an active role.

- Safety is a core value.

- Safety Systems are enhanced to support and promote engagement with increased reporting, usable, reliable data, and tracking of training.

Strategies

- Faculty and Division health & safety plans embody the vision and purpose of health & safety across UNSW.

- Key stakeholders work together to ensure a holistic approach to health & safety is taken.

- Integrate safety as a core value at UNSW.

- Daily safety briefings and debriefings are held with all work participants including staff, students, and contractors to ensure hazards and risks are actively discussed and mitigated prior to the start of any work.

- At the completion of work, an active de-briefing is held to ensure Safety learning improvements are captured and embedded within the workgroup.

- Implement a Take 5 risk assessment process prior to undertaking any work.

- SALUS is fully integrated.

Indicators of Success

- Annual safety key performance indicators achieved across all Faculties and Divisions.

- A suite of event management tools/templates are implemented at UNSW.

- Improved reporting of event-related risks and hazards.

- Increased reporting of hazards and decreased numbers of incidents and near-misses.

- Zero fatality and serious injury events.

- Take 5 programs implemented

- Pre-start briefings including Go-for-Green program implemented.

Learning and Improvement – Think Safe, Be Safe

Objectives

- Foster and enhance a proactive reporting culture.

- Promote proactive learning to support a safety culture across UNSW.

- A Health & Safety audit and inspection program that is dynamic, and forward-thinking.

- A University that supports and enhances psychological and physical safety and supports individuals to flourish.

- Our leaders are curious and proactive in their approach to health & safety, encouraging all staff to be involved in decision-making and empowering them to have robust safety conversations.

Strategies

- Implement a Health & Safety audit and inspection programs that identify and inform continuous improvement.

- Collaborate across stakeholders to identify and manage psychosocial risks and implement tools and programs to enhance psychosocial safety across UNSW.

- Boost leadership capacity by supporting leaders with their health & safety responsibilities through advice, programs, and tools, and enhance their awareness of the significance of health and safety behaviours.

Indicators of Success

- Lessons learnt provide opportunities to gain insights and learn from experiences.

- Increase in near-miss and hazard reporting.

- Reduction in incidents.

- Safe Work Procedures and Risk Management Forms are regularly updated in response to corrective actions identified in reports.

- All inspections are recorded, with a reduction in corrective actions over time.

- Leaders across the university complete training on psychosocial hazards and how to support staff.

- Staff participate in programs and training to improve their safety: both psychological and physical.

- Pre-start briefings and de-briefings are implemented, with learning captured across the Faculties and Divisions and at a local level.

- Level 2 Safety meetings established to discuss and action safety trends and review incidents to learn from.

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