

# THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLNESS STRATEGY 2017–2021



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF QUEENSLAND  
AUSTRALIA

Create change

# MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

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“We do amazing things at this University and it is my goal to ensure that our endeavours are undertaken in a manner that poses the lowest practicable risk to the health and safety of our students and staff.

We know that the success of UQ depends on its people and we are committed to the safety and wellbeing of everyone who comes here to work and learn.”

**W**e are accountable for creating and maintaining safe and healthy work and learning spaces for the UQ community. We want to support a strong safety culture by enabling our people to work safely and productively. Everyone at UQ has a role to play as it is not acceptable for anyone to be harmed or injured as a result of their work, discovery or learning endeavours.

This strategy places emphasis on leaders at all levels to demonstrate to our staff and students that we are committed to their health, safety and wellness. To that end, I believe that it is essential that we espouse the cornerstone principles and embed them in our decision-making processes.

**Professor Peter Høj**  
Vice-Chancellor and President

# MOVING BEYOND COMPLIANCE

**U**niversities host large numbers of students, staff and visitors on campuses every day, and their safety and wellbeing is paramount.

In recent years, however, we have seen serious injuries occur in Australian and international academic institutions, which have serious implications for the tertiary sector. Globally, both research-intensive and teaching-focused universities have responded by dramatically enhancing safety efforts and encouraging staff and students to take more active roles to be proactive in identifying hazards and reducing risks in the workplace.

Like our fellow top universities across the globe, we must embrace a proactive culture of safety, while adopting or developing best practices. As a Group of Eight university, we can also influence and shape the safety culture within the Australian higher education sector.

Occupational health and safety at The University of Queensland (UQ) is managed with a strong compliance focus, a solid understanding of our systems and a firm grasp of legislative requirements. The strong governance relationships between the University Senate, senior management and risk committees provides leadership that sets commitments to health and safety, agrees on

objectives, monitors performance and ensures compliance with legislation. Encouragingly, the development of our Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) management system and increased auditing and compliance activities has resulted in a reduction in lost time injury.

However, UQ strives to continually seek opportunities to demonstrate our commitment to a healthy and safe working environment and to enhance UQ's health and safety culture.

The challenge – and opportunity – is to now move beyond compliance alone and adopt a proactive mindset that improves the health, safety and wellness culture at UQ. To this end, we must establish a safety ideology and structure that connects the UQ Strategy with a Health, Safety and Wellness Strategic Plan to create enduring change.

**UQ MUST SET DIRECTION  
AND DRIVE CHANGE**

**UQ HAS THE POTENTIAL  
TO BE THE SAFETY LEADER  
IN THE TERTIARY EDUCATION  
SECTOR**

“The UQ Create change platform gives new impetus to challenge how we understand and manage health, safety and wellness (HSW) at UQ.”

(Jim Carmichael, Director, OHS Division)



# HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLNESS VISION FOR 2021

UQ WILL BE AN INDUSTRY  
LEADER, TO CREATE CHANGE  
AND PREVENT HARM.

UQ WILL BECOME A  
PROACTIVE HEALTH,  
SAFETY AND WELLNESS  
ORGANISATION.

By 2021, UQ aims to help the members of its community to take control of their health, safety and wellness while at work. By focusing beyond regulatory compliance and placing people at the centre of solutions, we will prevent harm and become a proactive health, safety and wellness organisation.

In the pursuit of excellence, UQ will be recognised as a health, safety and wellness leader in the sector.

UQ will strive for five attributes of a proactive health, safety and wellness organisation:

- Managers and supervisors recognise that they influence the safety culture in their work areas and their behaviour is the key to ongoing improvement.
- Leaders demonstrate their accountability and personal commitment to the cornerstone health, safety and wellness principles outlined on page five.

- Staff and students are confident that their health and safety is protected at UQ and is given the highest priority.
- People make informed decisions to prevent harm without constraining our core business of learning, discovery and engagement.
- We will examine what goes well and any issues that arise, and use both as an opportunity for learning and continuous improvement.

We have a moral and ethical responsibility for our people – by connecting wellness with occupational health and safety, we can achieve this vision.

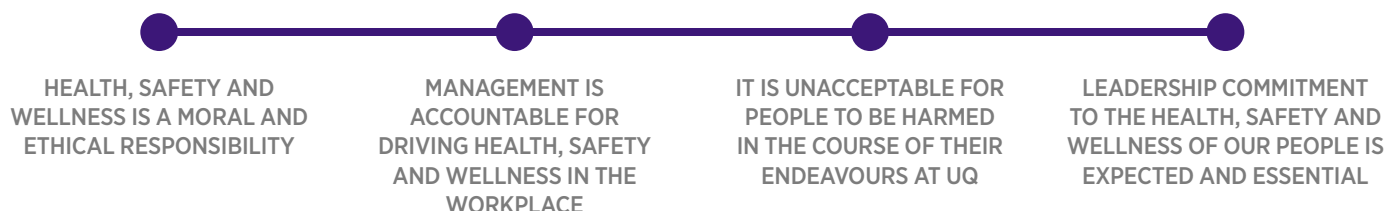
**UQ SAFE**  
health, safety  
and wellness





# HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLNESS PRINCIPLES

To ensure we achieve our vision for 2021, we must adhere to the following principles:



## DELIVERING OUR 2021 VISION

As part of the University's tiered planning process, the Health, Safety and Wellness Strategy will connect to the University's Strategic objectives.

To become proactive and prevent harm, our leaders must lead by example to enable our community to take control of their health, safety and wellness at work. Achieving this will require an investment and an ongoing commitment to the HSW principles across the University.

The strategy is an investment in the delivery of our 2021 vision. It places a focus on five priorities (see page six), which will be achieved through a set of initiatives informed by our principles. These priorities will form the structure of each organisational unit's management plan to collectively deliver this strategy.



# HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLNESS PRIORITIES

**B**etween June 2016 and March 2017, a broad consultation process on the Health, Safety and Wellness Strategy was undertaken to identify perspectives across various University stakeholders. Analysis of the consultation data provided areas of focus considered critical to the success of a health, safety and wellness strategy that is aligned with the University's vision, mission and values.

Stakeholders recognised the strength of existing risk management, systems and compliance functions as critical governance and integral priorities of the Health, Safety and Wellness Strategy, and viewed innovation, leadership, capabilities and enhancing wellbeing as priorities to evolve our health, safety and wellness culture.



## RISK MANAGEMENT

To ensure we continue to apply risk management strategies effectively in our dynamic working environments, we will enhance our occupational health and safety risk management processes so that they are robust and outcomes are proportionate and evidence-based.

### Initiatives:

- Align the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Risk Management Framework with the UQ Enterprise Risk Management Framework.
- Implement organisational risk registers and establish a university-wide OHS risk reduction target.
- Facilitate meaningful risk management processes.
- Maintain UQ's self-insurance licence to promote best outcomes for our staff.

## SYSTEMS AND COMPLIANCE

To integrate health, safety and wellness activities into daily business practices, we will aim to reduce complexity, burdensome documentation, and duplication, and support progress with meaningful information. We will continue to enhance regulatory relationships and ensure continued regulatory compliance.

### Initiatives:

- Streamline the OHS Management System processes through business integration opportunities.
- Automate the OHS Management System documentation and enhance reporting functions.
- Establish positive health, safety and wellness performance indicators throughout the implementation of the Health, Safety and Wellness Strategy.
- Maintain positive engagement with regulators through proactive communication and timely notification.



## CULTURE AND CAPABILITIES

To enhance our health, safety and wellness culture we will focus on our leaders' commitment to be accountable, inquisitive, consultative and visible in health, safety and wellness matters. To encourage collaborative relationships with our people we will empower them to be agile and innovative by placing them at the centre of solutions.

### Initiatives:

- Increase leaders' health, safety and wellness capability by developing a Health, Safety and Wellness Leadership Culture program.
- Redesign the existing OHS Staff Development program to meet the new health, safety and wellness strategic direction.
- Increase health, safety and wellness capability throughout UQ by embedding accountabilities and responsibilities in recruitment and appraisal processes.
- Minimise OHS risk to students on work placement by enhancing the Health, Safety and Wellness Awareness Program.

## INNOVATION

To provide innovative health, safety and wellness solutions we will maximise people's capacity, enhance performance and create adaptive people and processes.

### Initiatives:

- Enhance health, safety and wellness communication by establishing a communication strategy.
- Implement solutions for complex and burdensome compliance processes through technological and system enhancements.
- Increase recognition of innovations across the UQ community through the Health, Safety and Wellness Leadership Culture program.
- Encourage knowledge sharing across the UQ community, for example through academic service to the University and safety leadership program.

## ENHANCING WELLBEING

Being a socially responsible, sustainable business requires leaders and managers to consider the effect of management practices on people, including physical and mental wellbeing effects. We will encourage a culture of genuine care and personal commitment by providing our people with the opportunity to enhance their physical and mental wellbeing while at work.

### Initiatives:

- Implement a UQ mental health strategy.
- Reduce injuries through a leadership commitment to prevent harm.
- Establish a formal wellness champion program across UQ to enhance the delivery of the UQ Wellness Program.
- Increase awareness of modifiable risk factors through a targeted health, safety and wellness program.
- Transition to a smoke-free UQ.



# MEASURING OUR SUCCESS

At its core, four simple measures can be used to gauge the overall success of the strategy:

- 1 An increase in safety culture perception among staff and students.**
- 2 An increase in wellbeing satisfaction among staff and students.**
- 3 An increase in health, safety and wellness proactive actions.**
- 4 A decrease in the frequency and severity of injury or illness.**

A suite of indicators will be developed to provide the information we need to measure the progress and success of our priorities and initiatives.

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