

Health and Safety Procedure - Consultation and Communication

Section 1 - Key Information

Policy Type and Approval Body	Administrative - Vice-Chancellor
Accountable Executive - Policy	Chief Operating Officer
Responsible Manager - Policy	Senior Manager, Health and Safety
Review Date	6 March 2026

Section 2 - Purpose

(1) This Procedure documents the process on how La Trobe University will consult with staff on Health and Safety matters and communicate Health and Safety Information.

Section 3 - Scope

(2) This Procedure applies to:

- a. all staff and members of the University Community (including Council members, volunteers, students, contractors and associates)
- b. all University campuses and research areas.

Section 4 - Key Decisions

Key Decisions	Role
Forming a designated workshop	staff in a work area
Requesting a designated work group election or re-election	Designated work group staff

Section 5 - Policy Statement

(3) This Procedure forms part of the [Health and Safety Policy](#) suite which governs its application.

(4) This Procedure follows [Worksafe Victoria](#) guidance for Health & Safety representatives.

Section 6 - Procedures

Part A - Responsibilities

(5) The Health and Safety (H&S) Team will:

- a. Manage the Health and Safety Consultation and Communication Procedure;
- b. Maintain lists of Designated Work Groups (DWGs) and Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) on the [Health and Safety \(intranet\)](#) site;
- c. Participate in quarterly Consultative Committees;
- d. Manage the quarterly HSR briefings;
- e. Communicate health and safety information with University stakeholders.

(6) Leaders and Managers will:

- a. Consult via meetings with staff on issues that may affect their health and safety
- b. Communicate important Health and Safety information to support a culture of safety
- c. Support HSRs to attend approved training
- d. Confirm sufficient numbers of HSRs are appointed

(7) Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) will:

- a. Participate in Consultative Committees where a position is available;
- b. Participate in quarterly HSR briefings;
- c. Attend site meetings with the visiting Regulator (such as Worksafe VIC) as required; and
- d. Represent their designated work group on health and safety issues.

Part B - Designated Work Groups

(8) The University has established Designated Work Groups (DWGs) which are groups of employees formed on the basis of type of work, number of employees, and the nature of hazards at the workplace.

(9) The Health and Safety (H&S) Team will maintain a list of DWGs on the [Health and Safety \(intranet\)](#) site.

(10) Staff can request a review or propose a change to their current Designated Work Group. The Health and Safety team will work with the Group to develop a satisfactory arrangement, aligned with the established parameters noted above.

Part C - Election Process

(11) The election process for a HSR will commence within 28 days of any of the following occurring:

- a. A HSR resigns
- b. If more than one half of employees within the DWG request an election
- c. A new DWG is established

(12) All fixed-term and continuing staff of La Trobe University are eligible to nominate as a HSR. Nomination is precluded though if there is a perceived or real conflict of interest in financial authority when resolving health & safety concerns.

(13) When an election is required to take place a nominee of the DWG will call for nominations.

(14) If only one nomination is received the nominee is deemed to be elected. If more than one nomination is received an election will be held.

(15) The Health and Safety team will manage the election process and advise the successful candidate. Senior leaders of the DWG such as Deans and Directors will be notified of the election result and will communicate this outcome to staff.

Part D - HSR Term of Office

(16) A HSR for a DWG will hold office for a period of three years. HSRs are eligible to be re-elected once their term has expired.

(17) A HSR will cease to hold office if:

- a. They cease to be a member of the DWG
- b. They resign as a HSR by giving written notice to the relevant member of the Health and Safety Team
- c. The majority of members of DWG agree in writing that the person should no longer represent the DWG

Part E - Consultation

(18) Leaders and Managers will consult with staff in relation to issues affecting their health and safety including:

- a. Identifying and assessing hazards or risks to health and safety;
- b. Making decisions to control risks to health and safety;
- c. Proposed changes that may affect the health and safety of staff and students.

(19) Staff will be consulted in the following ways:

Type	Participants	Timeframe
Consultative Committees	In accordance with the respective School/Divisional Consultative Committee terms of reference	Quarterly
HSR briefings	All HSRs, Health and Safety Team	Quarterly
Toolbox talks	All staff of a division/Contractors	As required
Pre-Start meeting	All staff of a division/Contractors	Daily when working under a Task Safety Analysis*

*See [Health and Safety Procedure - Hazard and Incident Reporting](#)

Part F - Communication

(20) The Health and Safety Team will develop a range of communications on important Health and Safety information.

(21) Leader and Managers will communicate this information to HSRs and staff as appropriate in accordance with the target audience.

(22) Specific modes of communication will include:

Type	Target Audience	Description	Frequency
SEG - OHS Consultative Committee report	Senior Executive Group OHS Consultative Committee	Overview of incident and hazard report data, safety management plans, prevention projects and workers' compensation data	Quarterly
CGRIASC report	Corporate Governance, Risk, Internal Audit and Safety Committee	Oversight of hazard and incident reporting data, hazard and risk profile, and workers' compensation data	Quarterly
Health and Safety dashboards	Managers and Leaders Schools/ Divisions, HSRs	Analysis of key Health and Safety data, trends and targets	Quarterly
Minutes of committee meetings	All staff covered by the consultative committee	Summary of committee meetings discussion and actions	Quarterly
Health and Safety topics	All staff and contractors	Information on a pertinent topic	As required
Alerts	Relevant staff and contractors	Highlights important safety information about a product or process	As required
Lessons learned	Relevant staff and contractors	Highlights key learnings resulting from the failure of product or process	As required
Health and Safety (intranet) & Staff Communications	All staff and contractors	Safety information	As required

Part G - Training for HSRs

(23) All elected HSRs have the option to attend an initial approved course of training in occupational health and safety, annual refresher HSR training and any training conducted by [Worksafe Victoria](#).

(24) The HSR and their Supervisor will work together to schedule relevant training. Initial training should commence within three months of the staff member being appointed as a HSR.

(25) The HSR should contact the Health and Safety Team to seek advice on booking suitable training.

Part H - Documentation

(26) The Health and Safety Team will maintain a register of DWGs and HSRs on the [Health and Safety \(intranet\)](#) site.

(27) The School/Division Secretariat will take minutes for all Health and Safety Consultative Committee meetings and distribute to the committee.

(28) The Health and Safety Team will manage all quarterly HSR briefings and provide access to meeting documentation for all staff on the [Health and Safety \(intranet\)](#) site.

Section 7 - Definitions

(29) For the purpose of this Procedure:

- a. Designated Work Group (DWG): A group of employees determined on the basis of location; type of work; number of employees, the nature of hazards at the workplace and of overtime or shift working arrangements.
- b. Health and Safety Committees: Health and Safety Committees bring together a group HSR's employees and employer representatives to discuss and develop ways to improve health and safety across the school, division or campus.

- c. Health and Safety Representative (HSR): An employee elected by members of a designated work group to be the group's representative on health and safety issues.

Section 8 - Authority and Associated Information

(30) This Procedure is made under the [La Trobe University Act 2009](#).

(31) Associated information includes:

- a. [Health and Safety \(intranet\)](#)

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	30th January 2017
Review Date	5th March 2026
Approval Authority	Policy Advisor
Approval Date	31st January 2017
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Manager - Policy	Spomenka Krizmanic Senior Manager, Health and Safety 61 3 9479 2186
Enquiries Contact	Health and Safety

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"student" - Student is defined in the La Trobe University Act 2009 as: (a) a person enrolled at the University in a course leading to a degree or other award; or (b) a person who is designated as a student or is of a class of persons designated as students by the Council.

"staff" - Staff means any person employed by the University as per the definition in the La Trobe University Act 2009 (Vic).