

WHS OP021 Writing a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Section 1 - Overview

(1) This operating procedure specifies the requirements for the development, publication and application of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) through the utilisation of [WHS F059 Standard Operating Procedure \(SOP\) form](#).

(2) The objective is to ensure that written instructions are available for Workers and Students in the training and utilisation of plant, equipment, machinery tools and mixture of hazardous chemicals that pose a risk to health and safety.

Section 2 - Scope

(3) A SOP may be developed for use, by and for, any Worker or Student performing duties on behalf of UNE, with the approval of the relevant supervisor.

(4) A SOP is defined as a document that describes the steps carried out to utilise a particular piece of plant, equipment, machinery, tool, or to mix hazardous chemicals.

(5) A Job Safety Analysis (JSA) defines the process for an entire task from planning through to completion. A JSA may reference several SOPs if a particular job requires the use of several items of plant, equipment, machinery, tools or includes the mixture of hazardous chemicals.

Section 3 - Procedure

Identifying the Need to Develop a SOP

- (6) The requirement to develop a SOP may be identified by:
- a. A reported hazard or near miss with an administrative control to develop a SOP;
 - b. An incident with identified root cause/s relating to lack of procedure;
 - c. Completed risk assessment;
 - d. Legislative requirement;
 - e. Work group or Health and Safety Representative (HSR) request; and/or
 - f. Management request.

Developing SOPs

(7) Development of any SOP should be completed by at least one Competent Person in consultation with Worker and/or Student representation, whose health and safety is likely to be impacted by the task.

(8) In some cases it may be necessary to engage the input of subject matter experts either internal or external to the

University.

(9) Legislation, relevant codes of practice, standards, manufacturer's instructions and Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) should be consulted in the development of the SOP. They should be referenced on the form.

(10) Advice and guidance may be sought from the University WHS team and HSRs in the development of SOPs.

(11) Contributors to the development of the SOP shall be recorded on the form.

Manufacturer's Manuals

(12) Manufacturers' manuals or instructions can be listed and used as reference in the SOP where the information is:

- a. Very lengthy;
- b. In a format that provides the step by step instructions;
- c. Easy to use and is in an understandable format; and
- d. Easy to access.

(13) Manufacturers' manuals do not take the place of a SOP.

Approval of SOPs

(14) Upon development of any SOP the completed form shall be approved by the relevant manager/supervisor within the business unit. Approval will be granted on the basis that the approver is adequately satisfied that the SOP:

- a. Has been developed in consultation with relevant experts and other stakeholders; and
- b. Addresses foreseeable risks and includes controls that are financially and practically viable.

Prioritising SOP Development

(15) With consideration to the magnitude of potential SOPs that could be developed in the University, priority of development within each business unit shall be applied in the following order:

- a. New plant, equipment, machinery, tools, or hazardous chemicals where there are perceived high risks;
- b. Existing plant, equipment, machinery, tools or hazardous chemicals where there are perceived high risks;
- c. New plant, equipment, machinery, tools, or hazardous chemicals where there are perceived medium risks;
- d. Existing plant, equipment, machinery, tools, or hazardous chemicals where there are perceived medium risks;
- e. New and existing plant, equipment, machinery, tools, or hazardous chemicals where there are perceived low risks and utilised by a large number of workers/students; and
- f. New and existing plant, equipment, machinery, tools, or hazardous chemicals where there are perceived low risks.

Publication and Promotion of SOPs

(16) Upon approval of completed SOPs the document shall be provided to the University WHS team for publication on Safety Hub.

(17) Information and training in a new or modified SOP shall be provided to all workers and students likely to perform the task defined in the SOP. This may be facilitated by way of:

- a. 'Health and Safety Talks';
- b. Specific meetings for the introduction of the SOP; and/or

- c. Accredited training (internal or external).

Records

- (18) The 'sign off' section at the bottom of the SOP form shall be completed by all Workers and/or Students before commencing the task that the SOP pertains to.
- (19) Sign off must be completed by printing the document and having relevant stakeholders print and sign the document. It is acceptable for the approval of the SOP to be signed off electronically so that the approved version can be published on Safety Hub for ongoing use.
- (20) SOPs with the sign off section completed must be entered in TRIM by the relevant business unit.

Authority and Compliance

- (21) The Procedure Administrator, pursuant to the University's [Work Health and Safety \(WHS\) Rule](#) makes these Procedures.
- (22) University Representatives and Students must observe these Procedures in relation to University matters.
- (23) These Procedures operate as and from the Effective Date.
- (24) Previous Procedures relating to Standard Operating Procedure are replaced and have no further operation from the Effective Date of this new Procedure.

Section 4 - Definitions

- (25) Competent Person means a person who has acquired through training, qualification or experience, the knowledge and skills to carry out the task.
- (26) Effective Date means - takes effect on the day on which it is published or on such later day as may be specified in the procedure.
- (27) Student means an Admitted Student or an Enrolled Student, at the relevant time.
 - a. Admitted student means a student who has been admitted to a UNE course of study and who is entitled to enrol in a unit of study or who has completed all of the units in the UNE course of study.
 - b. Enrolled student means a student who is enrolled in a unit of study at UNE.
- (28) A Worker, as defined by the [WHS Act](#), is a person that carries out work in any capacity for a person conducting a business or undertaking, including work as:
 - a. an employee, or
 - b. a contractor or subcontractor, or
 - c. an employee of a contractor or subcontractor, or
 - d. an employee of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work in the person's business or undertaking, or
 - e. an outworker, or
 - f. an apprentice or trainee, or
 - g. a student gaining work experience, or
 - h. a volunteer, or

- i. a person of a prescribed class.

(29) University Representative means a University employee (casual, fixed term and permanent) contractor, agent, appointee, Council member, adjunct, visiting academic and any other person engaged by the University to undertake some activity for or on behalf of the University. It includes corporations and other bodies falling into one or more of these categories.

Status and Details

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