

## **Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS)**

### **1.0 Introduction**

The Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario (OHSA) places the onus for compliance with legislation on the workplace parties within an organization. The Act lists responsibilities for employers, directors and officers, supervisors and workers forming the Internal Responsibility System (IRS). The IRS provides the basis for an effective Occupational Health and Safety Management System that enables the University to be proactive on health and safety matters. Its success depends on cooperation, consultation and a common interest in a safe and healthy workplace.

The workplace parties in the Internal Responsibility System at University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) are:

- The Board of Governors
- The Office of the President
- The Deans
- The Researchers, Managers and Supervisors
- The Faculty, Staff and Students

The purpose of this document is as follows:

- To formalize and clarify the health and safety responsibilities of each individual in the UOIT community, which should result in the promotion of health and safety and the reduction of occupational injury and illness;
- To provide a framework under which the Board of Governors and the officers of UOIT may comply with their personal legal duties to take all reasonable care to ensure that the University complies with the OHSA and its regulations and the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA);
- To implement the University health and safety policy and provide a framework for identifying and controlling workplace hazards; and
- To provide guidance to Vice-Presidents, Deans, Directors, managers and supervisors in meeting their obligations under the legislation.

### **2.0 General Principles**

The management of health and safety is an integral part of management and supervisory activities. In order to make the health and safety management system successful, it must be fully integrated into all other management activities. Each level of management has an obligation and responsibility to those reporting to them and accountability to those whom they report to with respect to health and safety.

The safety standards at UOIT must, at a minimum, meet the requirements of any applicable piece of legislation or code of practice, as set by the various regulatory agencies.

Students leaving UOIT should take with them the knowledge and the attitude that integrates and accepts good health and safety practices as normal in their everyday activities. This standard can only be met if the faculty and staff set high personal standards, lead by example and ensure that safe work practices are routine in all activities.

UOIT has a Health and Safety Policy in accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The policy is approved by the Board of Governors and reviewed on an annual basis by the Joint Health and Safety Committee and the Board of Governors. The policy expresses the commitment of the University to providing and maintaining a healthy and safe working environment. The policy is posted prominently in the workplace and is distributed to all employees on the University Health and Safety web site. In order to make the policy a reality it must be implemented in all faculties and departments and be supported by a strong health and safety management system.

### 3.0 Responsibilities

All individuals in the workplace, faculty and staff, visitors and students, officers and directors, managers and supervisors, share the responsibility for ensuring a safe working environment. Under the OHSA, the University as an employer, and the individual supervisors, must "take every precaution reasonable under the circumstances for the protection of a worker". The responsibility lies with the Board of Governors and the line of supervision, beginning with the President and proceeding to the workplace supervisor and the worker. Managers and supervisors are accountable for carrying out their responsibilities in accordance with the OHSA and the policies and programs of the University. The OHSA assigns specific duties and responsibilities to various parties in the workplace.

#### 3.1 Officers and Directors

The members of the Board of Governors, the President, the Vice-Presidents, and the Associate Provosts are considered to be the "officers and directors" of UOIT.

[Section 32](#) of the OHSA states the following:

*"Every director and every officer of a corporation shall take all reasonable care to ensure that the corporation complies with,*

- (a) This Act and the regulations;*
- (b) Orders and requirements of inspectors and Directors (Ministry of Labour); and*
- (c) Orders of the Minister (Ministry of Labour)."*

**The Board of Governors** carries out its responsibilities, through the Office of the President. The Board of Governors is responsible for the health and safety activities of UOIT, for ensuring that the Occupational Health and Safety System is developed, implemented and maintained and for conducting an annual review, minuted in an annual meeting, to assure compliance with the OHSA requirements (as stated above).

**The Office of the President** assumes a leadership role in promoting the elements of the OH&S system and has responsibility, through those reporting to him/her, for the following:

- Approval of University policies and procedures to implement the OHSA, the CEPA and other health and safety policies;
- Preparation of a annual report on environmental health and safety activities for the Board of Governors;
- Preparation of reports for the Board of Governors, as they are required.

**The President** has overall responsibility for directing health and safety activities through the Provost and Director of Human Resources and, in particular, for ensuring that the Director of Human Resources has developed and maintains a written occupational health and safety policy and program and that the program is implemented satisfactorily. The President has delegated specific responsibilities for health and safety to the Director of Human Resources and to the management structure.

**The Director of Human Resources** is responsible to the Provost for directing health and safety activities. The Vice-Presidents, Deans and the Chief Librarian will assume a leadership role in promoting the elements of the occupational health and safety management system within their jurisdictions.

**The Director of Human Resources** oversees and supports the work of the Health and Safety Officer in coordinating the University's activities regarding the development, implementation and maintenance of the Occupational Health and Safety program.

The OHSA requires the employer to appoint "competent" supervisors as defined by the Act. Competent means a person that,

- "a) Is qualified because of knowledge, training, and experience to organize the work and its performance,*  
*b) Is familiar with this Act and the regulations that apply to the work, and*  
*c) Has knowledge of any potential or actual danger to health or safety in the workplace."*

### **3.2 Health and Safety Officer**

The Health and Safety Officer is responsible to the Director of Human Resources for the following:

- Recommending to the Director of Human Resources an occupational health and safety policy and program and amendments to keep them current;
- Coordinating the University's activities regarding the development, implementation and maintenance of the Occupational Health and Safety Program;
- Preparation of an annual report to the Board of Governors;

- Providing the health and safety support services to the University community as assigned.

The University Health and Safety Officer coordinates health and safety services.

The Health and Safety Officer assists individuals and departments in meeting their responsibilities by providing advice on applicable legislation and the University's policies and procedures, monitoring compliance with the legislation and the Health and Safety Program and recommending policies and procedures.

### **3.3 Deans, the University Librarian, and Academic and Administrative Managers**

[Sections 25 and 26](#) of the OHS Act list the duties of an employer. An employer is defined by the Act as:

*"A person who employs one or more workers or contracts for the services of one or more workers and includes a contractor or subcontractor who performs work or supplies services and a contractor or subcontractor who undertakes with an owner, constructor, contractor or subcontractor to perform work or supply services".*

UOIT is the employer, however the deans and managers of academic and administrative departments carry out many of the duties of the employer specified in these sections of the Act.

The managers of academic faculties and administrative units are responsible to their vice-president for ensuring the development, implementation and maintenance of health and safety programs within their unit. Although a number of functions surrounding the performance of these specific duties and legal obligations can be delegated by the dean to the department head, the responsibility to ensure compliance with applicable guidelines and regulations still rests with this individual.

Academic and administrative managers will assume a leadership role in promoting the elements of the Occupational Health and Safety Management System by:

- Conducting health and safety visibility tours of selected areas in their divisions;
- Providing information, instruction and training to enable workers to safely perform their jobs;
- Introducing and maintaining measures designed to identify, monitor, assess and control risks;
- Reviewing reports of serious accidents or high risk incidents within 24 hours and ensuring that appropriate corrective action is taken in a timely fashion;
- Maintaining appropriate records sufficient to demonstrate compliance with their duties and obligations; and
- Providing the proper supervision of all undergraduate and graduate students.

The assignment of duties to an internal department health and safety coordinator and cooperation with the Joint Health and Safety Committee will assist the manager to ensure compliance.

In the event that an employee of the University is found to be working in an unsafe manner, contrary to University policy and in contravention of the legislation, a system must be in place to take corrective action. Dangerous working conditions must be stopped by the appropriate University official and must be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the OHS Act and/or other applicable codes of practice or legislation.

### 3.4 Researchers, Managers and Supervisors

The OHS Act defines a "supervisor" as a "person who has charge of a workplace or authority over a worker" and lists the duties of a "supervisor" in [Section 27](#), as follows:

*"A supervisor shall ensure that a worker,*  
*(a) Works in the manner and with the protective devices, measures and procedures required by this Act and the regulations; and*  
*(b) Uses or wears the equipment, protective devices or clothing that the worker's employer requires to be used or worn.*

*Without limiting the duty imposed by the above, a supervisor shall,*  
*(a) Advise a worker of the existence of any potential or actual danger to the health or safety of the worker of which the supervisor is aware;*  
*(b) Where so prescribed (by the Regulations to this Act) provide a worker with written instructions as to the measures and procedures to be taken for protection of the workers; and*  
*(c) Take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker."*

Due to the unique nature of a university workplace, faculty members have all of the duties and responsibilities of employers and supervisors as detailed in the Occupational Health and Safety Act with respect to their contract staff and students.

Every person in a supervisory position is responsible to the line of authority for ensuring that:

- The health and safety of those persons reporting to the supervisor are protected and promoted;
- The maintenance and effectiveness of applicable health and safety programs are reviewed regularly;
- Staff receive information, instruction and training in order to perform their jobs safely;
- Accident/incident reports with potential for injury and/or property damage are investigated immediately and corrective action is taken;
- The work area is inspected on a regular basis and the required safety procedures are being followed;
- New staff are advised of safety rules, practices and procedures before beginning work;

- Safety rules, practices and procedures are discussed with staff on a monthly basis.

### **3.5 Workers**

The OHSA defines a worker as *"a person who performs work or supplies services for monetary compensation"*. All employees of the University are workers within the meaning of the OHSA. Students who are paid to perform work, are workers under [Section 28](#) of the Act.

All workers, as outlined above and while on the University premises, are responsible for:

- Complying with the OHSA and regulations and the rules and procedures developed under the Occupational Health and Safety Program of UOIT;
- Promptly reporting to his/her supervisor any observed contravention of the OHSA or regulations or of the rules and procedures developed under the Occupational Health and Safety Program or any workplace hazard of which he/she is aware;
- Refraining from any activity that may endanger their health and safety or that of any other person.

### **3.6 Supervisors of Independent Contractors**

Any employee of the University who is responsible for hiring or overseeing an independent contractor to perform work within a University workplace shall ensure the following:

- The contract documents incorporate the applicable requirement under the University Health and Safety Program;
- Relevant information relating to workplace hazards and environmental health and safety is communicated to the contractor;
- Contract requirements for complying with the University Health and Safety Program and other relevant programs are monitored and enforced.

### **3.7 Students**

It is the intention of the University to maintain and to improve workplace health and safety for all of its members. The University needs the co-operation of students in meeting these obligations. The policy by the University is extended to all students while engaged in University activities. All students are therefore reminded of their general obligations to the University:

- To take reasonable care for the health and safety of himself or herself and of other persons who may be affected by his or her acts or omissions.
- To seek medical advice from a doctor if he/she suspects any medical condition that may be study/course related.
- Not to interfere with or misuse equipment provided for safety purposes.

- To co-operate with the University to enable it to comply with any relevant statutory provisions.
- To co-operate with the University in the use of such personal protective equipment as may be required to be worn as a result of a 'safety risk assessment' carried out on an activity during practical classes and project work.

### **3.8 Visitors**

It is the policy of the University that, as much as is practicable, the campus will be a safe and healthy place to work and study. Therefore, although they may not meet the precise definition of worker, visitors to campus should be afforded the same protection that would be afforded a worker under the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario.

### **4.0 Committees**

#### **4.1 Joint Health and Safety Committee**

UOIT has one Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) established to meet the Ministry of Labour requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario. The functions of the committee, as mandated by the OHS, are to identify and evaluate potential hazards, recommend corrective action to the employer and follow-up on recommendations. The JHSC makes recommendations to the Director of Human Resources and meets at least once every three months. The JHSC have established a Terms of Reference.

The Health and Safety Officer provides advice, training and support to the JHSC.

#### **4.2 Radiation Safety Committee**

The Radiation Safety Committee (RSC) is chaired by the Radiation Safety Officer, appointed by and accountable to the Provost. The committee is made up of representatives from the radioisotope permit holders, the Radiation Safety Officer and the University Health and Safety Officer. The RSC meets semi-annually as a minimum. The RSC provides support, advice and recommendations to the Radiation Safety Officer. The Radiation Safety Officer liaises with the federal authority, The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and provides reports of inspections, training, and general activity to the RSC.

#### **4.3 Biosafety Committee**

The Biosafety Committee is chaired by a designated faculty member appointed by the Associate Provost. The Biosafety Committee is a regulatory committee providing approval and support within the University for all uses of biohazardous materials. The Biosafety Committee meets whenever an application is put to the committee involving a new protocol involving the use of biohazardous materials on campus.

## **5.0 Health and Safety Report**

The Health and Safety Officer is charged with the responsibility of monitoring compliance with health and safety legislation and the University health and safety program. Policies and procedures are developed by the H&S Officer to allow the University to achieve practical and effective control of hazards, to minimize the potential of death or injury to employees, and in response to the legislative requirements. An annual report, which outlines health and safety activities, with supporting metrics and relevant to maintaining a healthy and safe environment, will be provided to the Director of Human Resources. The report may contain information about JHSC meetings, workplace inspections, special reports of hazard specific committees (radiation and biosafety), departmental or faculty initiatives, results of accident or hazardous condition investigations, and new/amended safety procedures developed in that year. Results of these reports will be reported to the Board of Governors.

## **5.1 Audit**

Periodically, a formal auditing process is necessary to monitor and review the health and safety management system to ensure the Internal Responsibility System is working. The audit process assists all parties to carry out their legal responsibilities and to demonstrate due diligence. The audit is based on the WSIB Workwell Core Health and Safety Audit and can be conducted by the Health & Safety Officer or can be facilitated by an outside party such as an Ontario Safe Workplace Association or a qualified independent consultant.

April 2009