

Work Health and Safety (WHS) Report

Quarter 1 2022

This report provides an overview of Work Health, Safety and Wellbeing issues:

1. Notifiable Incidents
2. WHS Action Plan
3. COVID Related Matters
4. WHS Report for Quarter 1 2022
5. Status of Action Items and Ongoing Improvements to WHSMS

1. Notifiable Incidents

There were five notifiable incidents that were reported to relevant WHS regulators during Quarter 1 2022,

COVID-19 cases

SafeWork NSW was notified, on 13 January 2022, about two COVID-19 cases on the North Sydney and Strathfield Campus. The notifiable reporting criteria, which is associated with COVID-19 infections, was subsequently changed after these reports were submitted. Employers are now only required to report infections that are likely to have occurred in the workplace which led to hospitalisation/more serious health outcomes.

The notification of infections by staff and students, via Service Central and AskACU reporting forms, supports the University to initiate contact tracing and cleaning to reduce the risk of further infections. Staff and students also assess the scope and extent of their interactions during the infectious period and engage their nominated supervisor.

Tent collapse

On 22 February, a tent, housing an information stall at O-Week, collapsed and struck a student during a period of heavy rain. This incident occurred on the Strathfield Campus. The impacted student was transported to an accident and emergency department for observation. SafeWork NSW was notified but did not formally review and investigate the incident.

Several lessons were identified because of the incident. WHS risk assessments for similar events have been broadened to include an assessment of the hazards that are associated with weather events. In addition, where possible, higher quality tents will be hired on NSW campuses for use during information days and other activities. Hire companies will erect the tents, which will further reduce the risk of a similar incident occurring during wet conditions.

Supplier incident

ACU vendor Big Fun Co was operating an inflatable mechanical snowboard 'ride' as part of Market Day, Brisbane Campus, on 15 March 2022. The device was anchored to the ground with approximately 200 kilograms of weights but was not pegged to the ground. The anchorage system was observed by a SafeWork Queensland inspector, who was visiting the Brisbane Campus for an unrelated purpose. He requested a copy of the vendor's WHS risk assessment and an engineering certificate (associated with the anchorage system). The inspector determined the WHS risk assessment was too limited in scope and the supplier was unable to provide an engineering certificate. The anchorage system was determined to be insufficient, unsafe, and non-compliant with the requirements of the applicable Australian Standard. An Improvement Notice was subsequently issued to Big Fun Co.

This incident reinforces that ACU staff should collaborate with its vendors about the identification and management of hazards and associated WHS risks. Relevant staff should request copies of applicable WHS risk assessments whenever they collaborate with suppliers to hold 'on campus' activities that are likely to present WHS risks to staff, students, and others.

The WHS and Wellbeing Policy documents ACU's commitment to identifying and managing the WHS risks that are associated with the activities that are both managed and influenced by the university.

Contractor - Mother Teresa Building site

On 2 March 2022, a contractor engaged at the Mother Teresa building site sustained a laceration while removing glass which shattered. He was hospitalised for 2 days and required surgery. WorkSafe VIC attended the site on 4 March 2022 because of the notification by the lead contractor Watpac. The incident informed an update to the relevant Safe Work Method Statement and film is now being applied to the outside of glazing before removing to ensure that shards are held in place in the event of glass shattering. Counselling was offered to workers who were present during the incident.

The lessons from notifiable and other significant incidents, such as the tent collapse and the supplier incident, will inform Safety Alerts that are published in Workplace and the Staff Bulletin during 2022.

2. WHS Action Plan

ACU is currently developing the next version of the plan that will take effect from 1 July 2022. The plan will be informed by the WHSMS Bi-Annual Analysis that was conducted during Quarter 4, 2021 and Quarter 1, 2022.

The analysis reviewed:

- The activities that ACU manages and influences, relevant WHS risks and recommended improvements;
- How the university aligns its Work Health and Safety Management System (WHSMS) with the expectations of its stakeholders and recommended improvements;
- WHS risks to the WHSMS and ACU's capacity to realise its safety and wellbeing goals, and associated risk controls which support the university to manage these WHS risks; and
- Resourcing of WHS and wellbeing.

A diverse range of recommendations were informed by the WHSMS Bi-Annual Analysis that will help shape the WHS Action Plan. The plan supports ACU to reduce musculoskeletal injuries, strengthen wellbeing and assists work areas to improve their management of WHS risk by applying the WHSMS.

3. COVID Related Matters

Campus Reactivation

ACU is committed to maintaining a safe place of working and learning as Australian states and territories ease COVID restrictions. Following extensive consultation with staff, staff representatives, staff consultative committees and unions¹, many staff and students returned to in-person teaching from the commencement of Semester 1 2022. The activation of ACU campuses was informed and supported by a comprehensive, university-wide "Campus Activation and University COVID-19 Safety Plan" which was designed to bring together in a single document the risks, mitigations and controls that have been developed during the pandemic and to support ACU's approach to campus activation.

¹These consultations were held with the Vice-Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committee, Critical Incident Convenor, Incident Convenors, WHS Management Committee, WHS Campus Committees, Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs), COVID WHS Consultative Forum - NSW Campuses (see below), Executive Deans, Heads of Schools, Deputy Heads of Schools, and all ACU Staff via a staff survey).

The draft plan was revised based on feedback invited from and provided by the university community and was authorised by the COO on 15 March 2022. A summary of feedback received and the university's response to this, as well as Q&As suggested by the feedback, were published to ACU's COVID-19 pages. The "Campus Activation and University COVID-19 Safety Plan" will remain a living document that can be updated as we adapt to future developments related to COVID-19.

COVID WHS Consultative Forum - NSW Campuses

SafeWork NSW recommended to ACU that there was scope to strengthen consultation around COVID-19 and campus reactivation. In response to the regulator's recommendation, a COVID WHS Consultative Forum - NSW Campuses was held on 8 March 2022. Chaired by Associate Professor Miriam Tanti, Associate Dean Partnerships, Faculty of Education and Campus Dean (Strathfield), the session was conducted to consider and discuss COVID safety in the context of campus activation for ACU's Strathfield, Blacktown, and North Sydney campuses.

Attendees were invited as representatives for their work group (academic, professional, technical, location, faculty) and their campus. Health and Safety representatives from Strathfield and North Sydney attended and both the CPSU and NTEU were represented. Staff from the Office of the Chief Operating Officer, the Properties & Facilities Directorate, and the Safety team also attended.

Feedback from the forum was posted online and taken to the WHS Management Committee on 10 March 2022 which considered feedback and made recommendations about what additional measures the university should implement (leading to the formalisation of the Campus Activation and University COVID-19 Safety Plan).

Additional risk assessments

In March 2022, SafeWork NSW requested that ACU schools:

- identify any type of activity (other than practical classes) carried out in each School in which physical distancing may not always be possible; and
- to conduct a WHS risk assessment to determine whether any additional controls should be implemented.

Fourteen risk assessments were received in response.

A small number of activities in some schools were identified where physical distancing could not be maintained, in addition to practical classes where mask wearing is already required. In these cases additional controls were implemented, usually the wearing of masks, but also in some cases, schools required:

- Students and staff to declare their wellness status prior to engaging in class activities; and
- Use of hand sanitiser prior to entering room.

Some example scenarios included:

- Consultation with multiple students in an enclosed office space;
- Science laboratories and design and technologies workshops;
- Students undertaking small group tutorial work in the music studio;
- Role-plays of practical basic counselling skills; and
- Workshops where students in groups of where to four share psychological test batteries.

Ventilation assessments

As an outcome of COVID-19, workplaces (including ACU) have become more focused and attuned to air conditioning principles, hygiene, and different methods for servicing and maintaining these systems. During late 2021, ACU Facilities Management commenced a series of trials to improve the functioning of building air conditioning systems across ACU as another control against the spread of COVID-19. Building on this, organisational hygienist consultants (Prensa) were engaged in March 2022 to undertake ventilation assessments of all ACU air-conditioned rooms and campus indoor spaces, across all Australian ACU campuses. By the end of Quarter 1 2022, the reports were available for Ballarat campus buildings.

These results are published online. Where spaces were found not to meet the required standard, ACU removed those spaces from service pending consideration of possible modifications or rectification works which are required to be conducted to return the room to service.

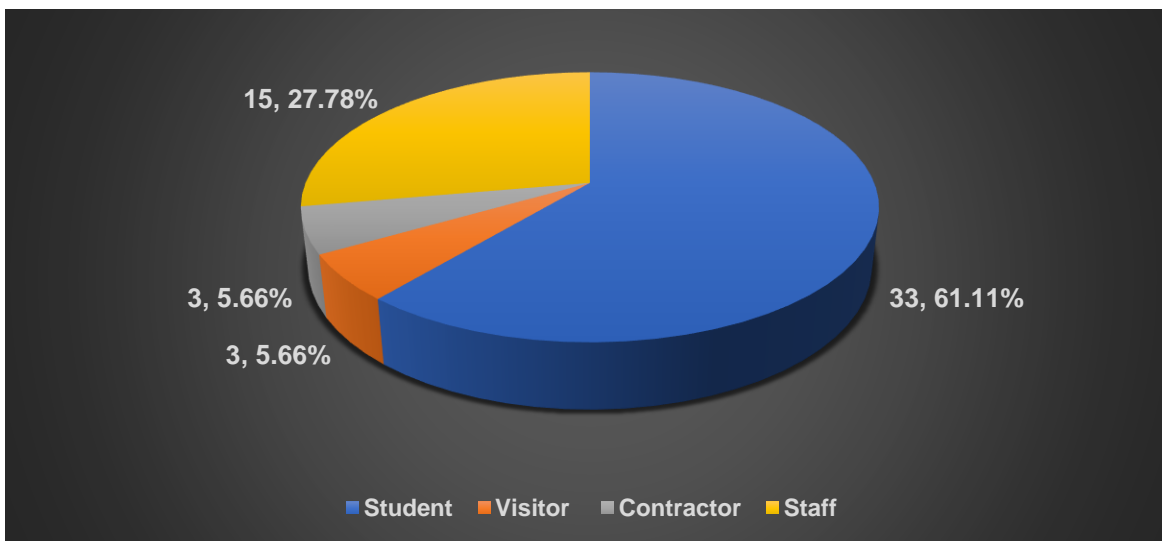
‘Contact tracing’

ACU implemented revised COVID reporting forms for students and staff. The information provided in the reporting forms is being used by ACU to assess the notification requirements within relevant cohorts (staff and student) and also the listing of the exposure sites on ACU's website. This has supported ACU's compliance with WHS requirements for managing the risks of COVID positive cases in the workplace.

COVID case numbers are reported at section 4.4 below.

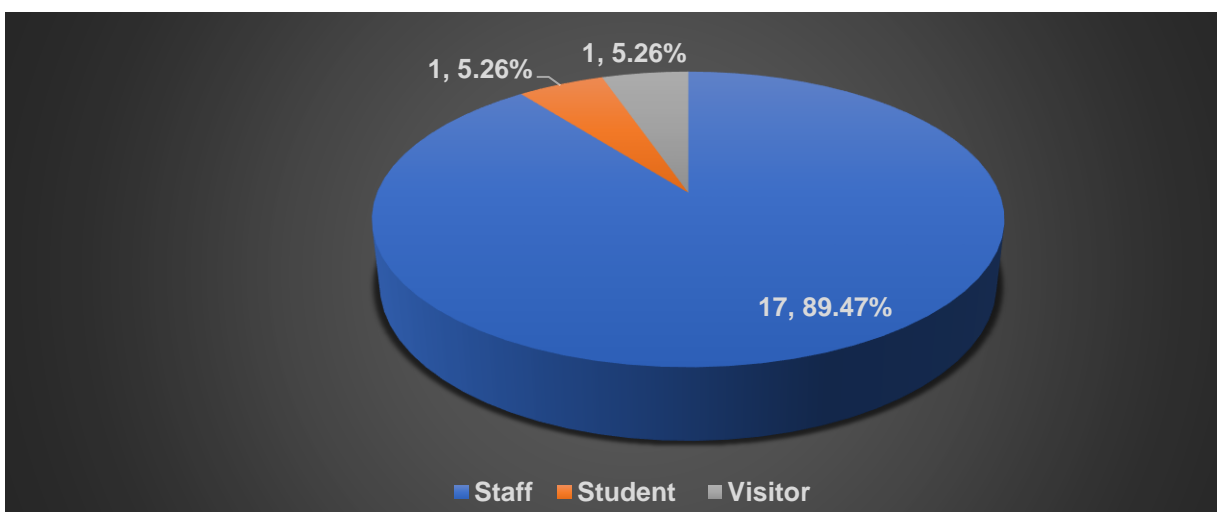
4 WHS Report, Quarter 1 2022

4.1 Number of riskware incidents by person type, Quarter 1 2022



Students accounted for 33 of 54 (61.11%) riskware incident reports that were logged during Quarter 1, 2022. Fifteen staff incidents, 27.78%, and an additional six reports (three about each person type) were submitted about visitors and contractors.

4.2 Number of hazard reports by person type, Quarter 1 2022



Seventeen hazard reports, 89.47%, were logged by staff members during Quarter 1 2022. A visitor and student also logged a report each of a hazard that accounted for 10.52% of the 19 reported hazards.

Eight of these 19 reports addressed staff concerns about COVID-19 hazards. Two of the reports addressed airflow issues and the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) submitted two reports on behalf of staff.

Some of the corrective actions that were developed because of these notifications, include:

- The substitution of planned teaching activities with lower risk activities to minimise infection risks;
- Isolation of an infected student;
- Addressing airflow issues that were identified; and
- The provision of N95 masks were expedited and were ready for the commencement of semester 1.

Six reports of fall hazards were reported. The reporting of hazards that are associated with falls and manual handling issues supports the University to realise its WHS Action Plan objectives and targets for reducing musculoskeletal injuries. Falls account for a significant portion of ACU's workers compensation claims. Five of these reports have been managed for risk.

Some of the control measures that have been developed, a result of these reports, include:

- Devices (silver pins) used to reduce slips were dislodged, which reduce the risk of falls, and have been replaced;
- Facilities Management temporarily provided barriers/anti-slip mats;
- Timber pallets were installed to evaluate stock from water saturation;
- An undulated/hole in open turf zone has been filled; and
- A step edge is being isolated from being accessed by patients with disabilities.

4.3 Mechanism of Injury Report (riskware incidents), Quarter 1 2022

Description	Student		Staff		Visitor		Contractor		Sub-total		Change
	Qtr. 1, 2021	Qtr. 2, 2022	Qtr. 1, 2021	Qtr. 2, 2022	Qtr. 1, 2021	Qtr. 2, 2022	Qtr. 1, 2021	Qtr. 2, 2022	Qtr. 1, 2021	Qtr. 1, 2022	
Illness (excl. psychological) incl. fainting, pains in chest, heart palpitations	13	6	3	1	4	0	0	0	20	7	13
Falls on the same level (incl. trips and slips)	7	2	5	5	3	0	0	0	15	7	8
Hitting objects with a part of the body	3	2	1	2	0	0	0	3	4	7	-3
Sporting Injury (incl. gym/cardio and recreational activities)	3	3	1	1	2	2	0	0	6	6	0
Sharps (needle stick injury)	9	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	10	5	5
Contact with, or exposure to, biological factors	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	-4
Other Muscular Stress (incl. manual handling)	3	2	3	1	0	0	0	0	6	3	3
Other and multiple mechanisms of injury	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0
Unspecified mechanisms of injury or other	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	-2
Verbal abuse/exposure to violence	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	3
Falls from a height	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	-2
Exposure to mental stress factors	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	1
Ampule Injury	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	-1
Being hit by moving objects	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Contact or exposure to heat and cold	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Exposure to sharp, sudden sound	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Contact with electricity	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total	48	33	20	14	9	3	0	3	76	54	22

*Excludes hazard reports and COVID-19 reports that were submitted via AskACU and Service Central

*Includes contractor reports/incidents that were provided by Watpac

There was a reduction in the number of the riskware incidents that were logged in Quarter 1 2022, in comparison to the corresponding quarter in 2021. Fifty-four incidents were logged in Quarter 1 2022, in comparison to 76 submitted during Quarter 1 2021. This reduction is partly attributed to lower numbers of staff and students being present on campus during the last quarter. However, there was a significant increase in hazard reports logged. Nineteen hazard reports were logged during the last quarter, in comparison to six during Quarter 1 2021. This significant increase in hazard reports logged is informed by ACU raising awareness about the need to submit these riskware reports. Refer to 4.2 for more information.

Reports of illness, falls on the same level, hitting objects with part of the body, sharps and sporting injuries accounted for 34, 62.96%, of the incidents logged during Quarter 1 2022.

Seven reports of illnesses were submitted during Quarter 1 2022. Three of these reports were associated with students fainting during learning activities. One of these reports was attributed to excessive temperatures within an anatomy laboratory and another incident detailed a student fainting while wearing a N95 mask. Corrective actions that were initiated as a result of these incidents include reviewing the air conditioning system within a Ballart Campus learning space, reminding students to remain hydrated and eating prior to laboratory sessions, and educating students about the importance of attending practical classes with adequate sleep and hydration. Faculties should also ensure that WHS risk assessments account for hazards that may be associated with the use of N95 masks.

There were nine falls (on the same level and from a height) that were reported during Quarter 1 2022. Two of the incidents resulted from student fainting and one of the reports related to a fall because of a sporting activity. In addition, three staff incidents were reported and two clients while attending campus. One of these incidents occurred within an ACU health clinic and client fall on a Brisbane Campus footpath.

Some of the corrective actions that have been/will be implemented, in response to these incidents, include:

- the installation of a railing;
- placing additional yellow non-slip tape to ensure that pedestrians are always in contact with a non-slip surface; and
- a lecturer will run a practical on hazards that are associated with treating clients.

There were seven reports submitted about hitting objects with part of the body. One of these incidents impacted upon a student that was kicked by a patient during a contraction. Another student sustained a small cut while using an allen key and a student was struck by a tent (refer to Section 1 for more information about the corrective actions that are being applied). The contractor incidents triggered improvements to Safe Work Method Statements and compliance with these instructions,

Five sharps incidents were reported during Quarter 1 2022, in comparison to the 10 during the corresponding quarter in 2021. This reduction is attributed to less students needing to administer COVID-19 vaccines while on placements. Six sporting incidents were reported during the Quarter 1 during 2021 and 2022.

Four of the reports were about contact with, or exposure to, biological factors. Three of these reports about COVID-19 exposures were logged in riskware. However, most reports of COVID-19 cases are submitted by staff and students within Service Central and AskACU. Although the reports of COVID-19 exposures that are submitted in riskware are triaged and managed, the logging of these reports within these other channels, supports ACU to manage these incidents consistently and initiate contact tracing and schedule cleaning in a timely manner.

Both reports of verbal abuse/exposure to violence impacted upon students on placement that were impacted by a patient hitting or slapping them. One of these students was supported as a result of the incident.

Four of the eleven staff incidents have resulted in workers compensation claims being submitted. The University will continue to publish Safety Alerts about lessons from significant incidents that impact upon staff and students.

Action Item No:	Action	Timeline
1	WHS Unit will engage Faculties about the lessons, from WHS incidents, which should be applied across their learning spaces.	Ongoing
2	WHS Unit will remind placement staff of the support that is available for students who are impacted by client abuse/violence.	Quarter 2 2022

4.4 COVID-19 Reports

From 28 February 2022, ACU commenced reporting on the number of COVID-19 notifications received from staff, students, visitors, and contractors. Between 28 February 2022 and 31 March 2022, the following COVID cases were reported by staff and students via AskACU and Service Central.

Campus	Number
Ballarat	10
Blacktown	11
Brisbane	38
Canberra	24
Melbourne	120
North Sydney	77
Strathfield	44
Total	324

These notifications support the University to initiate contact tracing, in collaboration with staff and students, and clean work and learning spaces on campus to reduce the risk of additional infections on campus and within off-site locations such as placement sites.

5. Status of Action Items and Ongoing Improvements to the WHSMS

Number	Action	Status
Action Items Previous Reports		
1.	WHS staff will engage relevant nominated supervisors about injuries that are associated with mental stress factors, falls, manual handling and ergonomics (priorities of the WHS Action Plan 2020-2021). Support will be provided to identify the contributing factors to these incidents and to apply learnings across the University.	Ongoing
2.	WHS staff will contact placement and other teams to prompt these work areas to remind students that counselling support is available whenever they are impacted by traumatic events, both on and off campus.	Ongoing
4.	WHS Risk management resources, which will support work areas to manage the risks of falls and manual handling injuries, will be uploaded to the WHS SharePoint site and emailed to relevant work areas by the WHS Consultant by the end of Quarter 1, 2022.	In Progress
6.	WHS Consultant will engage relevant staff within the Faculty of Health Sciences about the review of relevant WHS risk assessments that address needle stick risks within learning spaces and on placements.	In Progress
Ongoing Improvements to the Work Health and Safety Management System – ACU is implementing actions to concurrently implement the outstanding audit recommendations, which were associated with an audit against the WHSMS, and align the framework with International Standard ISO 45001		
7	WHS Skills Matrix - To ensure that staff have appropriate competencies.	Partly completed – currently engaging stakeholders
8	Corrective actions requirements that are associated with the WHSMS.	In Progress
9	<p>Accident investigation training to be provided to staff to increase their capabilities to identify and apply learnings from incidents.</p> <p>More information about status update</p> <p>Automatic riskware notifications were revised to include hyperlinks to resources such as the Accident Investigation video, Safety Hub, and Quick Reference Guide about reviewing incidents. Workshops will be scheduled for relevant Deputy Heads of School, during 2022, to improve the capacity of these decision makers to review and manage student incidents.</p>	Partly completed
10	Internal audit schedule to be developed.	To be actioned

Number	Action	Status
11	Increase awareness of the University's consultations about safety and wellbeing by placing noticeboards across all campuses.	Partly completed
12	Update WHS Policy posters and circulate across ACU, to increase awareness of the University's commitment to safety and wellbeing.	On hold due to reduced campus populations. Digital alternatives will also be considered during Quarter 2 2022

Submitted for Information
Human Resources
April 2022