

The University of Queensland

SAFETY, HEALTH & WELLNESS CULTURE: A GUIDE FOR UQ LEADERS



THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND
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The University of Queensland (UQ) is committed to promoting the good health, wellbeing and safety of its staff. We know that the success of the University depends on its people and we want to look after everyone who comes here to work and to learn.

MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

As UQ leaders, we are accountable for creating and maintaining safe and healthy work and learning spaces for the UQ community. We want to enable our people to work safely and productively. No one wants to see anyone harmed or injured as a result of their work, discovery or learning processes they participate in at UQ.

If we are to demonstrate to our staff and students that we are committed to their health, safety and wellbeing it is important that we, as leaders, are visible, inquisitive, consultative and active in health, safety and wellness matters.

Professor Peter Høj

Vice-Chancellor and President

CONTACT FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For further information, contact your local Work Health and Safety Manager/Coordinator, or the UQ OHS Division:

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AS UQ LEADERS, HOW DO WE DEMONSTRATE OUR SAFETY LEADERSHIP?

Safe work behaviors are a powerful way of demonstrating our safety leadership and our commitment to health, safety, wellness, and they keep our workplaces safe. The actions of senior managers, and what they say, are noticed by staff and can be remembered for years. It is important to acknowledge that senior managers and leaders set the safety agenda at UQ, and influence the health, safety and wellness culture of their work areas.

Senior managers' leadership is vital for safety culture. Management attitude, behaviour and style have a powerful effect on workplace safety, and help separate good from excellent OHS performance¹. Senior managers at UQ are encouraged to continually seek opportunities to demonstrate their commitment to a healthy and safe working environment, and to enhance health and safety culture.

This guide aims to assist senior managers, managers and staff in their day-to-day safety leadership.

1 O'Dea A and Flin R (2003), The role of managerial leadership in determining workplace safety outcomes, at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/rrhtm/rr044.htm>.

UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS AND SAFETY CULTURE



BE VISIBLE, ACTIVE

- 1 Lead by example – show your staff and students how you expect them to behave:
 - a. Wear personal protective equipment;
 - b. Follow safe work procedures;
 - c. Participate in safety training.
- 2 Share your own safety story, safety values and vision.
- 3 Make safety personal and encourage staff and students to look after their colleagues and head home safely.
- 4 Visibly reward safety behavior eg. establish an excellence in safety award, make special mention of safety performance at staff meeting.
- 5 Formally demonstrate your focus on safety by featuring it on your website and through other local information channels.
- 6 Believe in and commit to safe work, and drive change.
- 7 Show enthusiasm and interest for good health and safety outcomes.
- 8 Be clear about what is acceptable and unacceptable. Remember the adage: “whatever you are prepared to walk past, is deemed to be acceptable by staff and students”.
- 9 Chair or participate in OHS Committee meetings, promote and participate in safety events such as UQ OHS Forums, October Safe Work Month.
- 10 Talk about safety in meetings eg open meetings with a 5 minute ‘safety-share’, close-out with a safety message.
- 11 Champion a health, safety and wellness initiative eg vehicle safety, laboratory safety, walking challenge.



BE INQUISITIVE

- 1 Be solutions focussed and be involved in problem-solving safety issues.
- 2 Stay involved in high-risk safety research, teaching and operations rather than delegating responsibility eg. understanding and evaluating use of explosives in an experiment.
- 3 Seek information about hazards, ways to reduce them and how to put controls in place.
- 4 Ask staff for their views about health and safety, and take them into account.
- 5 Take time to understand, discuss and approve risk assessments and incidents.



BE INCLUSIVE, CONSULTATIVE

- 1 Recognise staff who have a passion for OHS and support them in making work safe.
- 2 Give a ‘one team’ message about safety in which everyone is responsible, involved, expected to contribute, and respected.
- 3 Have regular ‘corridor conversations’ about safety.
- 4 Walk through work places and chat with staff about their safety.
- 5 Give feedback about safety issues and initiatives.
- 6 Act on feedback, or give reasons you didn’t act.
- 7 Talk about lessons learned from incidents
- 8 Consult with peers and senior executives about safety.
- 9 Ask staff to explain safety protocols to you and check whether or not they are easy to follow.
- 10 Promote an open, positive environment for dealing with health, safety and wellness concerns.



BE ACCOUNTABLE

- 1 Be absolutely clear that it is not acceptable to damage people at work!
- 2 Be ready to act on safety, health and wellness issues when they are raised, and to explain your actions.
- 3 Lead by example e.g. walk-through work areas wearing appropriate safety-clothing and carrying equipment.
- 4 Include safety conversations in the career progression and appraisal process.
- 5 Actively monitor the safety performance of your work area eg. incident statistics, quality of risk assessments, local OHS management plans.
- 6 Include safety discussions during planning, operational and general meetings.
- 7 Consult early with staff about change and its impact on safety. Continue to consult throughout the change process.
- 8 Encourage your staff to report incidents and near-misses and to learn from these.



BE SMART WITH RESOURCES

- 1 Support OHS initiatives with time, knowledge and resources needed to make them a success.
- 2 Streamline safety within operations eg. include safety in design briefs and project management cycles.
- 3 Develop staff capabilities in health and safety and in job competencies.
- 4 Respond in a considered and proportionate way to identified safety risks.
- 5 Support effective OHS measures eg. safe handling equipment rather than safe lifting training.
- 6 Give staff safe tools for doing their job eg. machinery, skills, training.