University of South Australia WHS PROCEDURE

Project Proposal Safety Authorisation

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1. Purpose

This procedure outlines the requirements for the management of risks associated with **research projects** and **student investigation projects** if the project involves the use of plant, equipment, devices or pressure vessels that are not part of the normal plant, equipment, devices or pressure vessels assessed and managed by the school or institute under its routine work health and safety (WHS) responsibilities. This procedure is integrated with the university approval process for ethics.

This procedure helps the university to fulfil its duty under the WHS Regulations to identify and manage the risks associated with the university's work activities. It should be read in conjunction with university WHS procedure **Managing workplace health and safety risks**.

2. Definitions

Project proposal safety authorisation – a system designed to identify and manage foreseeable hazards associated with research or student investigation projects using plant as defined below and involves an analysis of foreseeable hazards and senior management authorisation of hazard control measures.

Research project or **student investigation project** – for the purpose of this procedure means research that involves any scientific, engineering or field work that falls outside of the undergraduate teaching syllabus, but also includes any work undertaken by undergraduate students to produce new knowledge and/or using new and untested methodologies eg final year student projects.

Plant – for the purpose of this procedure includes any machinery, equipment, appliance, implement or tool, and any component, fitting, connection, mounting or accessory used in any research project or student investigation project that are not part of the normal plant, equipment, devices or pressure vessels assessed and managed by the school or institute under its routine WHS responsibilities.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Heads of Schools / Directors of Research Institutes are responsible for:

- Reviewing, authorising and monitoring the implementation of research and student investigation projects involving plant or machinery or devices with potential energy and any other circumstances that may present a risk to health and safety.

Researchers or Academic Supervisors are responsible for:

- the implementation of this procedure in their area of responsibility and accountability
- completion of **form WHS70 Project Proposal Safety Authorisation** and seeking approval from the Head of School or Director Research Institute prior to the commencement of research or student projects
- the implementation of appropriate risk control measures in consultation with Technical Support Officers and students

Staff and students are responsible for:

- not placing themselves or others at risk of injury
- participating in the development of appropriate risk control measures for identified hazards associated with research or student projects so as to eliminate or minimise risk
- complying with relevant conditions associated with a research or student project, using control measures as required and any other action taken which is designed to protect health and safety

4. Procedure

Project proposal safety authorisations are to be completed for all research or student investigation projects where potential hazardous circumstances may be involved from the use of in house designed:

- plant and equipment
- load bearing assemblies
- pressurised equipment
- pressure vessels
- any other source(s) of potential damaging energy

Before commencement of a research project or a student investigation project involving the above mentioned circumstances, the researcher or academic supervisor shall complete **form WHS70 Project Proposal Safety Authorisation** and seek approval from their Head of School or Director Research Institute to proceed with the project.

The researcher or academic supervisor shall complete relevant risk assessments in consultation with staff and/or students involved in the project.

Completed risk assessments (**WHS41 – Plant & Equipment Risk Assessment**) are to be referenced in **form WHS70 Project Proposal Safety Authorisation**.

The researcher or academic supervisor will implement risk control measures identified from the project safety authorisation process.
Where there is a change of the scope of a research or student investigation project, the researcher or academic supervisor are to evaluate the potential for new hazards associated with the change of scope. Should new hazards be evident, the researcher or academic supervisor shall seek authorisation from the Head of School or Director Research Institute to proceed with the project after outlining the new risk control measure.

5. Evaluation of controls

After risk control measures have been implemented for a research or student project, the risk control measures shall be reviewed by the personnel who undertake the project to ensure that risk is effectively reduced and managed.

6. Performance measure

All research projects and student investigation projects using plant, equipment, devices or pressure vessels, that are not part of the normal plant, equipment, devices or pressure vessels assessed and managed by the workplace, shall have a completed **form WHS70 Project Proposal Safety Authorisation**.

7. Documents /Forms

Further advice on managing risks in university workplaces, including supporting documents and training courses are available on the Safety & Wellbeing website.

- WHS Procedure - Managing Workplace Health and Safety Risks
- WHS Procedure - Purchasing and Safety
- WHS8 – SOP Development
- WHS12 – Chemical Process Risk Assessment and Control
- WHS15 – Chemical Hazards Application
- WHS70 - Project Proposal Safety Authorisation
- WHS71 - Plant & Equipment Risk Assessment
- Research and Innovation Services - Ethics & Integrity webpage

8. References

- SafeWork SA Resources—WHS legislation and Approved Codes of Practice