

# **VIU Health and Safety Administrative Oversight Plan**

**December 2015**

## VIU Health and Safety Administrative Oversight Plan

A health and safety risk and hazard mitigation approach has been developed to balance health and safety concerns with the importance of promoting vibrant and innovative teaching and research at Vancouver Island University (VIU).

This plan provides an overview of the mechanisms that are in place at VIU to administratively oversee the development of health and safety programs to best manage and control health and safety risks and their associated hazards at VIU.

### Delineation of the Health and Safety Roles and Responsibilities at VIU

It is important to establish clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for health and safety at Vancouver Island University. Those in leadership roles have a special obligation to lead by example. VIU leaders create and promote a safe workplace and encourage and empower our faculty, staff and students to bring forward health and safety concerns and suggestions for improvement. This is achieved by being active and visible on campus, interacting positively with faculty, staff and students. Achieving a health and safety culture that is sustainable requires an ongoing commitment from our leaders.

VIU will continuously improve its health and safety performance by learning from experience, collaborating with faculty, staff and students, and by using appropriate resources to support VIU's safety vision.

### Internal Responsibility System

*At VIU everyone has a responsibility for safety.*

The Internal Responsibility System consists of the following participants:

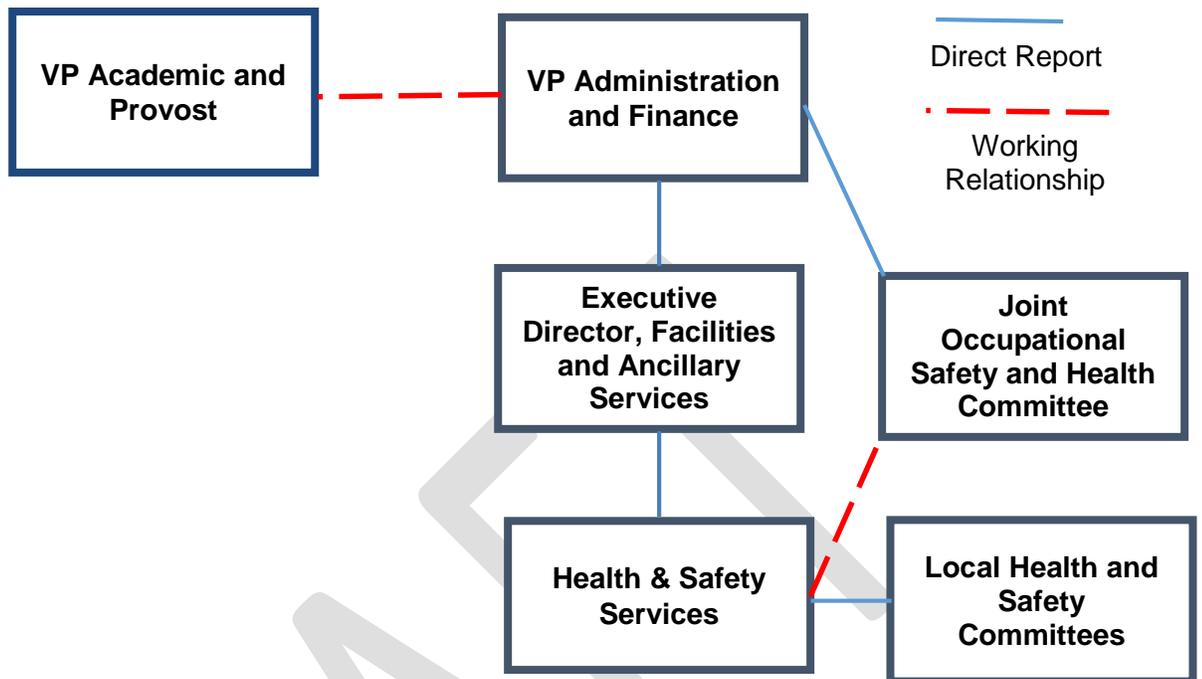
1. VIU Senior Management Group:
  - President
  - Provost and Vice-President Academic
  - Vice-President Administration and Finance
  - Associate Vice President Scholarship and Community Engagement
  - University Secretary
  - Executive Director, University Relations
2. Supervisors, as defined under the BC *Workers' Compensation Act*: "a person who has charge of a workplace or authority over a worker". The term 'supervisor' at VIU has been expanded to include:
  - Executive Directors
  - Campus Administrators
  - Directors
  - Deans
  - Associate Deans

- Department Chairs
  - Operational/office managers and supervisors
  - Unionized supervisors
  - Faculty members who have charge of a workplace (a laboratory or classroom) or who have some degree of authority over individuals such as teaching assistants, students, administrative staff, or other University employees.
3. Workers or employees, as defined under the BC *Workers' Compensation Act* (persons who perform work or supply services for monetary compensation).

This organizational structure supports the Health and Safety Program and takes into account the following:

- (1) Formal delegation of health and safety responsibilities to individuals throughout all levels of the organization;
- (2) Acknowledgement of their authority, legal responsibilities and accountabilities to the University's Senior Management Group, and all who have charge of a workplace or authority over workers and students at VIU;
- (3) Maintenance of a consultative and collaborative process on health and safety matters;
- (4) Establishment of a department to deliver an institution-wide Health and Safety Program; at VIU this is the Department of Health and Safety Services (HSS), and
- (5) Establishment of Local Health and Safety Committees, each with an appointed Health and Safety Advisor from HSS, to coordinate health and safety activities at the local level.

## Organizational Structure for Health and Safety



### 1. The VIU Senior Management Group

The VIU Senior Executive has the ultimate accountability for strategic level health and safety management at VIU. The VIU Senior Management Group represents the employer, VIU, under the *BC Workers' Compensation Act*. The VIU Senior Management Group is responsible for ensuring that there is a health and safety management system in place at VIU. The system ensures that there are workplace illness and injury prevention programs and processes in place. The programs and processes are managed and overseen at VIU by Health and Safety Services.

The oversight role of the VIU Senior Management Group includes:

- Fostering a culture of health and safety in the workplace by regularly communicating the importance of safety in all of VIU's operations; through awareness of health and safety issues, trends and injuries within the Division or Faculty; etc.);
- Ensuring compliance with all legal health and safety requirements and standards associated with work activities at VIU;
- Supporting the ongoing development and implementation of the institutional health and safety program.

The VIU Senior Management Group provides a clear, decisive lead and has delegated the development, implementation and maintenance of the VIU health and safety program to the Department of Health and Safety Services (HSS).

Under the oversight of the VIU Senior Management, HSS ensures that there are appropriate and specific health and safety plans within each department or service unit at VIU. These plans identify the work areas (e.g., laboratories, workshops, studios, etc.) and major job activities within those areas where significant health and safety risks and hazards are present. The plans identify methodologies to identify, control, monitor and communicate health and safety risks and hazards to faculty, staff and students at VIU. The methodologies include, but are not limited to:

- a) Worker health and safety orientation and training
- b) Relevant hazard control programs (fall protection, confined space entry, lockout/tag out, hazardous materials management)
- c) Standard operating procedures for hazardous activities
- d) Workplace inspection programs including, where applicable, equipment inspections within a preventative maintenance process
- e) Accident/incident reporting and investigation
- f) Record keeping of worker training, workplace and equipment inspections, and workplace accident and investigation reports

At VIU, hazard-specific health and safety program development is the responsibility of the department of Health and Safety Services, but conducted in collaboration with faculty and staff and external resources as required.

## **2. Administrative Heads of Unit: Deans, Academic Chairs, Campus Administrators, Directors and Executive Directors**

Academic Deans, Chairs, Non-academic Executive Directors and Directors ensure compliance with the *BC Workers' Compensation Act* by:

- a) Reviewing job hazards within their respective areas/department;
- b) Ensuring that the hazard-specific health and safety plans developed by HSS are in place for each identified hazard; the plan will include worker safety orientation and training, accident investigations, standard operating procedures, workplace inspection schedule, equipment maintenance/calibration, record keeping (i.e., worker training, workplace/equipment inspection, accident and investigation reports);
- c) Fulfilling the responsibilities as a supervisor (e.g. investigating incidents and accidents, provide safety orientation, ensure completion of mandatory health and safety training, etc.);
- d) Responding to health and safety concerns brought to their attention; and
- e) Appointing competent supervisors that can act effectively on their behalf.

## **3. Supervisors (including Academic Staff who have Supervisory Responsibilities of students)**

Supervisors are responsible for escalating workplace health and safety concerns to administrative heads, as appropriate (e.g. inadequate resources, implications for policy and operational procedures, potential liability, etc.).

Supervisors ensure that those activities over which they have control are conducted in a safe manner and in accordance with the University's policies, programs and applicable legislation. This is achieved through:

- a) Responding promptly to employee health and safety concerns;
- b) Attending mandatory health and safety training;
- c) Reviewing job task risk assessments to ensure that their employees (faculty and staff) receive appropriate training and that controls are in place to prevent injuries;
- d) Conducting and recording regular workplace inspections;
- e) Implementing and maintaining emergency response and standard operating procedures/guidelines for all work activities;
- f) Implementing and enforcing relevant safety rules and VIU health and safety programs
- g) Advising staff of the existence of any potential and existing health and safety hazards; ensuring staff work in accordance with established instructions, procedures and guidelines; etc.);
- h) Investigating workplace accidents that occur, identifying root cause(s) and implementing remedial and preventative action;

#### **4. Faculty and Staff**

All faculty and staff of the University are "workers" under the *BC Workers' Compensation Act*. Employees, in addition to the duties imposed by legislation or contract, are responsible for:

- a) Complying with the rules and procedures of VIU's Health and Safety Program by performing work in a safe and healthy manner;
- b) Reporting promptly to the supervisor(s) any observed contravention of the BC OHS Act and Regulations, or rules and procedures under VIU's Health and Safety Program;
- c) Reporting promptly to the supervisor(s) any workplace hazard of which they are aware;
- d) Reporting promptly to the supervisor(s) any workplace injury;
- e) Refraining from any activity which may jeopardize the health and safety of the employee, other workers, or others persons on VIU campuses;
- f) Learn about and wear/use personal protective equipment as required.

#### **5. Employees who Hire/Oversee Independent Contractors**

Any employee of the University who is responsible for hiring or overseeing an independent contractor that performs work within a University workplace must ensure that:

- a) Contract documents incorporate the applicable requirements for complying with the VIU *Health and Safety Policy* and relevant supporting VIU health and safety program information; and
- b) Relevant information relating to workplace hazards and occupational health and safety is communicated to the contractor;

## Health and Safety Resources at VIU

### 1. Executive Director, Facilities and Ancillary Services

The Executive Director of Facilities and Ancillary Services is responsible to the Vice-President Administration and Finance for coordinating the University's activities regarding the development, implementation, monitoring and maintenance of all elements of the Occupational Health and Safety Program.

### 2. Health and Safety Services (HSS)

HSS reports to the Executive Director, Facilities and Ancillary Services, who in turn reports to the Vice President of Administration and Finance (VPAF). The Executive Director, Facilities and Ancillary Services is a member of VIU's Senior Management Group.

The VIU Health and Safety Advisors within HSS are the central point of contact for health and safety at VIU and act as a resource to the VIU community on all health and safety matters. HSS are professional personnel with expertise in various areas (e.g., asbestos safety, radiological, biological and chemical safety; ergonomics; laser safety; indoor air quality; and hearing conservation). HSS works cooperatively and collaboratively with the University community, providing expertise/consultation on health and safety legislation; hazard identification and assessment processes; and safety education and training.

HSS advises the University-at-large on a wide range of health and safety issues and undertakes a central coordinating role for the development, implementation and maintenance of health and safety programs. HSS plays a key role in developing the University's workplace safety policies and in maintaining the University's Health and Safety Program. HSS is also the identified liaison with all external regulators related to H&S legislation in Canada and British Columbia.

HSS is also responsible for the development of program content at the local, faculty and service area level by creating health and safety procedures that contain all applicable legislative requirements and processes. This ensures that, at a minimum, the legislative requirements are being implemented.

The VIU Health and Safety program is collaborative in nature with advice being sought and utilized from the Joint Occupational Safety and Health Committee, senior management, faculty and staff. Where there is an imminent health and safety risk to the VIU community, HSS has the authority to stop work as appropriate under the British Columbia Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Legislation. Major non-compliance issues are reported to the Executive Director of Facility Services and the Chair of the JOSHC, for immediate report to the VP Administration and Finance. HSS also reports non-compliance issues to the federal, provincial, and municipal authorities as appropriate.

HSS collaborates with Facilities Services and Campus Development to ensure that all new facilities and infrastructure, including renovations to existing spaces, include relevant health and safety information. Faculties, departments and service areas are responsible for financing unique retrofits in their spaces using grant and budget monies. Facilities Services and Campus

Development prioritizes upgrades to spaces based on the risk associated with the deficiencies and tracks them in their ongoing maintenance plan.

### **3. Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee**

Joint Occupational Safety and Health Committees (JOSHCs) are required to be in place under the *BC Workers' Compensation Act*. Committees consist of representation of worker members and management members, and function as advisory bodies on health and safety issues affecting employees and infrastructure. At VIU there is an institutional Joint Occupational Safety and Health Committee (JOSHC) comprised of members who are appointed by their respective union local (the workers) or represent the University (the employer). The JOSHC meets monthly to review health and safety issues and incident trends that impact VIU as a whole. (See the Terms of Reference for the JOSHC).

The JOSHC reports to the VP Administration and Finance. The JOHSC is responsible for making recommendations for the improvement of the health and safety of VIU faculty, staff and students; providing input to the development of hazard control programs; and being consulted about occupational hygiene testing. The JOHSC is required under the BC legislation to meet at least once every month.

Recommendations from the JOSHC are directed to the Vice-President Administration and Finance, but may be directed specifically to any representative of the employer.

### **4. Local Health and Safety Committees**

Local Health and Safety committees (LHSC) represent faculties, departments, administrative areas and service areas, or a combination thereof. The local health and safety committee's purpose is to engage workers and employer/university representatives by working cooperatively to identify and resolve health and safety concerns that are specific to their respective work areas.

The LHSC are VIU's means of consultation within our organization to review institutional health and safety programs, establish proactive communication, and assist VIU with preventing, reducing or eliminating incidents, accidents and injuries to the university community. The role of the committee is primarily consultative and the duties are to review, recommend and promote health and safety to the faculty, staff and students in their respective areas. The local health and safety committees also support Vancouver Island University's health and safety programs by coordinating and promoting health and safety activities in their areas.

### **5. Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC)**

The IBC reviews and approves all procedures, policies, and guidelines related to the acquisition, storage, usage, transport and disposal of biohazardous agents at VIU. The IBC provides expertise, guidance and technical advice to users of biohazardous agents. The IBC reviews VIU internal biosafety approvals and local risk assessments where the use of biological agents is required in teaching and/or research.

## VIU Roles and Responsibilities in Health and Safety Program Development

Due to the complexity in governance structure, facilities and activities at VIU, VIU incorporates a combination of identification, assessment and control components to limit non-compliance and the potential for accidents and incidents. The management of health and safety at VIU is a collaborative effort. While VIU acknowledges that all activities have associated elements of risk, VIU will manage risk to protect both the University community and its assets. The University does not seek to eliminate risk; rather, it ensures that existing and emerging risks are identified and managed within an acceptable risk tolerance.

The University Senior Management Group has the ultimate accountability for ensuring that systems are in place to:

- a) Identify strategic health and safety risks that impact the University's integrated plans and University objectives;
- b) Assess the health and safety risks identified;
- c) Control the health and safety risks identified; and
- d) Monitor and report health and safety risks to the VIU community;

The VP Administration and Finance at VIU ultimately leads the health and safety processes. To better assist VIU stakeholders to determine the risks and mitigation strategies for specific workplace hazards (physical, biological, chemical, radiological and environmental hazards) the management and development of the VIU Health and Safety Program is delegated to the Advisors in Health and Safety Services.

### **Health and Safety Services**

Health and Safety Services is designated by VIU to develop health and safety programs on behalf of the faculty, staff, students and service departments.

When developing H&S programs the following is taken into consideration to ensure that all of VIU's institutional needs are being met:

- What does this program need to accomplish? What are the outcomes?
- How does this program support the VIU community
- How will this program be monitored and enforced?
- How has VIU handled this issue in the past?
- Are we willing to invest the time it takes to keep the program up to date?

HSS coordinates the development of institutional safety programs and associated procedures in consultation with relevant stakeholders including management, workers who do the job where this hazard/risk is present, and the joint occupational safety and health committee.

Institutional H&S hazard-specific programs that have been, or are currently being developed, by HSS for the VIU community include:

Accident Investigation

Asbestos Safety and Management  
Violence in the workplace  
WHMIS 2015  
Hazard Identification and Assessment  
Lockout Safety  
Confined space entry  
Fall protection  
Personal protective equipment  
Emergency Procedures  
Hazardous Material Management (Chemicals, Biosafety, Radioisotopes)  
Working alone or in isolation  
Hazardous Waste Disposal  
Ergonomics  
Hearing Conservation  
Roof Top Access  
Personal Protective Equipment  
First Aid  
Vehicle Safety  
Laboratory Safety

In order to support the VIU community to implement these programs in their respective areas, HSS has made available a variety of helpful tools. The tools are available by contacting Health and Safety Services directly at (250) 740-6283.

**Hazard-specific Safety Manuals**  
**Hazard ID, Assessment and Control Procedure**  
**Inspection Checklists – area specific**  
**Incident/Accident Reporting System**  
**Incident Investigation Procedures**  
**Standard Operating Procedure (aka Safe Work Procedure) Templates**  
**Ergonomics – Workstation design and set-up (videos)**