



Occupational Health & Safety

Information Package

for

**Preservice teachers
&
Interns**

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Introduction

Purpose of this package

This package provides students in preservice education courses, who will be in schools as a part of their practicum, with:

- general information about the Department's approach to occupational health and safety (OHS)
- specific advice to assist in ensuring their health and safety during their practicum.

It contains information on key areas of the legislation while helping to meet induction requirements by allowing for the inclusion of local workplace safety procedures and information on specific risks.

How to use this package

The information in this package deals with generic OHS concepts and requirements and should be read by all preservice teachers and interns prior to beginning their preservice experience or internship.

Topics include:

- OHS legislation
- The Department's OHS Policy
- Consultation
- Risk management
- Injury management
- First aid
- Emergency procedures
- Chemical safety



Within each topic there may be further details required. Preservice teachers and interns should follow-up with their colleague or supervising teacher at the school to obtain site-specific information.

Additional information

Additional safety information relevant to the preservice teacher or intern will also be provided at the school level. This information will vary depending on the nature of the preservice experience or internship and may include issues such as the safe use of equipment, use of personal protective equipment, chemical safety requirements and student behaviour.

If preservice teachers or interns have any OHS questions or related concerns they should speak with relevant university personnel or the principal at the school.

OHS Legislation

What is OHS about?

OHS is aimed protecting the health, safety and welfare of all people in the workplace, including employees and non-employees. Achieving a safe and healthy workplace depends on having policies and practices in place to ensure safe systems of work, safe premises, safe equipment and safe work environments.

Which laws govern workplace health and safety in NSW?

Key legislation in this area includes the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000*, the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001*, the *Workers' Compensation Act 1987*, the *Workplace Injury Management and Workers' Compensation Act 1998* and associated amendments.

Who is responsible for OHS under the legislation?

The main emphasis of the OHS legislation is on preventing work-related injuries and illness. It promotes a cooperative approach, encouraging employers and employees to work together to achieve safe and healthy workplaces.

Employer responsibilities

The primary responsibility for health and safety rests with the employer. This means that the Department must ensure the health, safety and welfare of all their employees at work by:

- ensuring workplaces under their control are in a safe condition and have safe entrances and exits
- ensuring that any plant (this includes machinery, equipment and appliances) or substance provided at work are safe and pose no health risks if properly used
- ensuring systems of work and working environments are safe and without risk to health
- providing any information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to ensure the health and safety of employees
- providing adequate facilities for the welfare of employees

The Department must also ensure that non-employees such as preservice teachers, interns, students, visitors and contractors are not exposed to health or safety risks arising from the Department's conduct while they are on departmental premises.

Employee responsibilities

We all have OHS responsibilities under the law. The legislation sets out particular duties for employees and others at the workplace.

Employees must:

- take reasonable care of the health and safety of themselves and others at the workplace
- cooperate with the employer in their efforts to comply with the OHS legislation
- report any unsafe conditions which come to their attention.

Everyone at a workplace must not:

- interfere with or misuse items provided for health, safety or welfare purposes
- obstruct attempts to give aid or prevent a serious risk to the health, safety or welfare of people at work
- refuse a reasonable request to assist in giving aid or preventing a risk to health, safety or welfare
- disrupt a workplace by creating health and safety fears.

The Department's OHS Policy

The NSW Department of Education and Training is committed to ensuring a safe and healthy working and learning environment for staff, students and workplace visitors across the organisation. This includes preservice teachers and interns.

The Department's policy has been developed to implement the legislation. It sets out the Department's commitment to meeting its OHS obligations and outlines the role of all parties including managers, supervisors and staff.

What is expected of me?

Although you are not an employee, you will be expected to comply with departmental policies and guidelines during your practicum.

A copy of the Department's OHS policy is included at Appendix 1.

How can I support workplace safety during my practicum?

- Cooperate in maintaining a safe and healthy work environment.
- Follow workplace safety procedures.
- Familiarise yourself with relevant occupational health, safety and welfare policies, procedures, guidelines and programs at the school.
- Take reasonable physical and psychological care of yourself and others at the workplace.
- Understand and respect the roles and responsibilities of others.
- Be aware of the impact of your actions on the health and safety of others.
- Participate in risk management activities. (More on this later in the package.)
- Report accidents and workplace hazards.
- Keep work spaces and storage areas in an orderly condition.
- Participate in OHS discussions and training activities, where relevant.
- Follow safety signs.
- Use equipment safely.
- Wear personal protective equipment where required.
- Advise both the school and your university if you are aware of any permanent or long standing condition which would require an adjustment to your workplace.

Consultation

As an employer, the Department must consult with its employees so that they can contribute to decisions affecting their health and safety. Although not an employee, you will be expected to participate in all aspects of school life during your practicum. This includes taking part in safety discussions or contributing to consultation activities should the opportunity arise.

What is OHS consultation and when does it occur?

Consultation means:

- sharing relevant information about occupational health, safety and welfare
- giving staff the opportunity to express their views and to contribute in a timely fashion to the resolution of OHS issues at work
- valuing and taking into account the views of staff when making decisions.

Staff must be consulted when:

- risks to the health and safety are assessed or reviewed
- decisions are made about measures to eliminate or control risks
- decisions are made about the adequacy of staff welfare facilities
- changes are proposed to the premises, systems or methods of work that may affect health, safety or welfare
- decisions are made about consultation procedures.

How does OHS consultation take place?

Consultation can occur by any one of the following means:

- OHS committee
- OHS representative
- Other agreed arrangements made by employer and employees



Ask about the consultation arrangements at the school where your preservice experience or internship will take place.

What is the role of an OHS committee or representative?

An OHS committee member or representative:

- consults with the employer on behalf of the employees
- reviews measures taken to ensure health, safety and welfare of employees and may investigate any matter which may be considered a risk
- assists in negotiating with the employer on matters of health and safety as they arise and may recommend ways to resolve them in a timely and efficient manner.



Find out who the OHS committee, representative or contact person is for the school where your preservice experience or internship will take place.

How else does OHS consultation occur in schools?

In addition to the formal consultation arrangements outlined above, OHS consultation also occurs in other workplace forums such as staff meetings, team meetings and other committee meetings.

Risk Management

When it comes to managing OHS issues, the legislation requires workplaces to adopt a risk management approach. Risk management is fundamentally about prevention. This means finding and fixing hazards before they cause harm.

Risk management involves:

- **identifying hazards** – knowing the OHS problems in the workplace
- **assessing the risk** – being aware of the harm the hazard can cause
- **eliminating or controlling the risk** – doing something about it to ensure that people are not harmed
- **monitoring and reviewing the controls** – ensuring that measures continue to be effective.



Ask about hazards at the school which may impact on your work during the practicum period and relevant control measures.

How do you identify and report hazards?

A hazard is anything that has the potential to cause illness or injury. You can identify hazards in many ways including observation, workplace inspections, staff discussions, tasks analysis or by examining injury records.

The risk of injury can be inherent in many activities or when using machinery and equipment. Therefore it's important to be aware of possible hazards as you go about your work. If you cannot address the problem yourself report the hazard, including any near miss, to your supervisor.



Ask about the school's hazard reporting process.

How do you assess the risk?

The risk of harm can be assessed by the likelihood that a particular hazard will cause harm and the severity of harm that could reasonably be expected. Using the matrix below will rank the risks and determine a priority order for implementing controls.

How severely could it hurt someone or how ill could it make someone? And how likely is it to be that bad?	very likely <i>could happen anytime</i>	likely <i>could happen sometime</i>	unlikely <i>could happen, but very rarely</i>	very unlikely
Kill or cause permanent disability or illness	1	1	2	3
Long term illness or serious injury	1	2	3	4
Medical attention and several days off work	2	3	4	5
First aid needed	3	4	5	6

Figure 1. Risk Assessment Matrix

How are risks controlled?

Risks must be eliminated where possible. If it is not reasonably practicable to do so, then the risk needs to be controlled to the fullest extent possible using the following hierarchy.

Eliminate the hazard	Remove the hazard from the workplace. Stop using it, buy different substances or materials which don't create a hazard or change the activity so that the hazard is not used.
Substitute the hazard	Replace the material, process, chemical or machine with a less hazardous one to lower the risk from the hazard.
Isolate the hazard	Isolate the hazard from the person at risk such as guarding of equipment and machinery or locating noisy machinery away from the main work area.
Use engineering controls	Design and install equipment to counteract the hazard such as installing an extraction system to remove dangerous fumes or dust or installing lifting equipment for heavy loads.
Use administrative controls	Establish and document work procedures and safe work practices. Examples include supervision of students, behaviour management programs, instruction and training in safe work methods, job rotation and documented classroom safety procedures.
Use personal protective equipment	Use appropriately designed and properly fitted equipment such as safety goggles, ear muffs in conjunction with other control measures identified from above.

Table 1. Hierarchy of controls

Why is it important to monitor and review controls?

Monitoring and reviewing the risk management process ensures that measures adopted to control risks continue to be effective.

What are the key points for me to remember?

- Think safe – report all hazards and near misses.
- Act safe – know the hazards which may affect you and use the controls which are in place to help to keep you safe.
- Teach safe – consider the safety of students when planning lessons and use a risk management approach to ensure that safety concerns are addressed.

Injury Management

If a workplace injury occurs it needs to be managed quickly and effectively to assist the injured person with their recovery.

How does the Department support injured staff?

Workplace injuries and illnesses are managed through injury management plans and return to work programs. Work-based rehabilitation, consistent with medical advice, is provided to assist staff to return to work as soon as possible.

What does this mean for me?

While preservice teachers and interns are not employees of the Department, they still need to report any work-related injury or illness.

What do I do if I am injured at school?

If you are injured as a result of a work-related activity you must:

- notify the principal as soon as possible after an injury or illness occurs (this can be done through your colleague or supervising teacher at the school)
- enter details of the injury in the school's Register of Injuries
- where necessary, request first aid or consult a doctor to arrange treatment
- report the injury or illness in accordance with your university's guidelines (note that preservice teachers and interns will have separate insurance procedures).



Ask about the university's injury reporting process for preservice teachers or interns.

Some work-related incidents will also need to be reported to WorkCover NSW. Where relevant, this will be done by the school.

First Aid

First aid is the initial treatment given to an injured or ill person. If first aid is provided at the school level, it must be recorded in the *Register of Injuries*.

What are my responsibilities?

- Report all incidents to the principal for investigation
- Ensure you are familiar with the school's first aid procedures and follow instructions from the first aid officer

What first aid procedures are in place?

The school will have a number of first aid kits at various locations and staff designated to provide first aid.



Ask about the first aid arrangements at the school where your preservice experience or internship will take place.

Find out:

- **Who the first aid officer is**
- **Where the first aid kits (facilities) are located**
- **What site specific first aid procedures apply**

Emergency Procedures

All schools have procedures to deal with a range of serious incidents, such as a fire or bomb threat.

Please ensure you are familiar with the procedures relating to emergency evacuation and serious incidents at the school.



Ask about the emergency procedures at the school where your preservice experience or internship will take place.

Find out:

- **Who to contact in an emergency**
- **Where the nearest exits are**
- **What the evacuation alarm sounds like**
- **Where to assemble in case of an evacuation**

Obtain a copy of the school emergency procedures and a map of the school site.

Note – in the case of an evacuation, do not re-enter the building until advised.

Chemical Safety

Any chemicals used in schools must be in accordance with advice in the Department's Chemical Safety in School's package.

Copies of this package can be accessed:

- through your university
- at the school where your preservice experience or internship will take place
- via the Department's Intranet at
<http://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/directorates/properties/chemicals/index.htm>



Ask about the location of Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) at the school where your preservice experience or internship will take place.

Depending on the nature of your preservice experience or internship, more information on the safe use of chemicals will be provided at school level as required.

Further Information

Where do I go for further assistance or advice?

For information about OHS, talk to:

- your university lecturer prior to starting your preservice experience or internship
- your colleague or supervising teacher and the principal at the school site.

Useful OHS websites include:

- WorkCover NSW www.workcover.nsw.gov.au
- The National Occupational Health and Safety Commission www.nohsc.gov.au
- Comcare www.comcare.gov.au

Useful OHS tools, advice and information are available through the DET Intranet through the following sites:

- OHS Directorate webpage
<http://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/adminandmanage/ohands/index.htm>
- Asset Management Directorate webpage
<http://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/directorates/properties/>
- Legal Services Directorate webpage
<http://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/directorates/leglserv/legal%20unit/welcome.htm>
- Safety & Security Directorate webpage
<http://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/adminandmanage/safetysecsch/index.htm>

OHS related information can also be sourced through the DET Internet at:

- Our Policies website <http://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/index.shtml>

Appendix 1

DN/04/0005

NSW Department of Education and Training and NSW TAFE Commission

Occupational Health and Safety Policy

The Director-General/Managing Director and senior officers are committed to ensuring a safe and healthy working and learning environment for staff, students and visitors to schools, colleges and other workplaces across the organisation. In addition, the Director General/Managing Director and senior officers are committed to injury management aimed at the early and safe return to work of injured staff.

Legal Compliance

The Director General/Managing Director and senior officers will comply with the requirements of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000*, the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001*, the *Workplace Injury Management and Workers' Compensation Act 1998*, the *Workplace Injury Management and Workers' Compensation Regulation 2002* and all relevant codes of practice.

Consultation

The best way to ensure a safe and healthy workplace is for management and staff to work together to identify and solve occupational health and safety problems. The Director-General/Managing Director and senior officers are committed to regular consultation using the negotiated and agreed OHS consultation arrangements with staff and their representatives and where necessary with contractors and suppliers of equipment and services, to ensure that occupational health and safety management is of the highest standard.

Management

Senior officers of the Department of Education and Training and the NSW TAFE Commission acknowledge that they have a primary responsibility for the health and safety of those who work under their direction.

The Director-General/Managing Director will ensure that OHS responsibilities are appropriately defined and that managers and supervisors receive the training and resources they need to carry out their OHS responsibilities competently.

All managers and supervisors have a duty to provide and maintain, as far as practicable, a working and learning environment and conditions that are safe and without risk to health.

Planning

To ensure that the Department's OHS obligations are met, the Director-General/Managing Director and delegated senior officers will:

- integrate OHS and injury management into the organisation's management systems with the aim of preventing or minimising workplace risks
- develop a strategic OHS plan and performance measures to achieve the aims of this policy, and regularly monitor OHS and injury management practices and improve them wherever possible

- develop appropriate strategies for ensuring that facilities and any plant hired, purchased or provided to the agency meet all relevant standards
- review and develop policies in relation to other goods and services purchased or provided to schools, colleges and other workplaces, which could affect occupational health and safety
- provide the resources, training, information, instruction and levels of supervision needed to achieve the policy's objectives
- employ competent and skilled persons who have the training and experience to assist the Department in meeting its OHS policy obligations
- consult with employees to enable them to contribute to the making of decisions affecting their health, safety and welfare at work

Implementation

To meet these objectives, the Director-General/Managing Director will have systems in place and will delegate responsibilities to senior officers to:

- ensure that all workplaces managed or controlled by the agency are equipped and maintained to provide for all employees' health and safety while they are at work
- ensure that all workplaces managed or controlled by the agency have appropriate consultation mechanisms in place
- identify all current and foreseeable workplace hazards (including the potential for workplace violence or aggression), assess the risks associated with them and develop strategies to eliminate or control the risks
- maintain an appropriate workplace incident and injury reporting system that will provide the organisation and individual workplaces with information to help prevent incidents and work related injury or illness in the future
- encourage employees to report to their principal or manager any suspected workplace hazard, work related injury or illness affecting themselves or others, at the earliest opportunity without prejudice to any employee
- conduct investigations into all accidents and incidents that may expose a person to the risk of injury or illness, or result in injury or illness
- provide for the prompt management of injured staff and for their safe and timely return to work
- ensure that all contractors understand the safety standards expected of them and meet these standards when carrying out their work
- ensure that suppliers of equipment and substances understand and meet DET and TAFE NSW safety standards.

Employees

All employees while at work regardless of the position they hold, will:

- comply with their obligations under the OHS Act
- take reasonable care to ensure the health and safety of themselves, and others under their supervision at work, including students

- use all provided personal protective clothing or equipment (PPE) in accordance with directions, and report when any PPE requires repair, replacement or where risk assessment indicates the need for PPE to be provided by the employer
- co-operate with DET as far as necessary to enable compliance with any requirement under the OHS Act, including complying with any reasonable OHS instruction or direction given by a principal or workplace manager
- contribute to the agency meeting its OHS strategic plan and performance levels by complying with OHS procedures
- assist the DET in its OHS obligations by reporting and recording all incidents (including incidents of violence or bullying) and hazards that may cause injury or illness (including damage to facilities or plant requiring maintenance)
- participate in any training arranged to support the implementation of this policy
- engage with principals or workplace managers in consultation on any OHS issues or information
- co-operate in any return to work plan developed for injured staff.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed each year and at other times if any significant new information or legislative or organisational change warrants a change in this document.

Contact Person

The officers who have been given responsibility by the Director-General/Managing Director for the implementation of the policy, and policy objectives, are the Senior Executive Service officers of the organisation and other senior officers with functional responsibilities for OHS.

For further information regarding this policy, enquiries can be directed to the OHS&R Directorate or the Human Resources Support Team supporting your region or institute.

This policy applies from 1 January 2004

Martin Bowles

Deputy Director General (Corporate Services)

For and on behalf of the NSW Department of Education and Training and NSW TAFE Commission