

**Quality Manual Policy – QPOL7****Workplace Health and Safety**

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<b>Authorised By:</b>	General Manager
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**Objective**

Synergy Education Group confirms its commitment to meeting the ASQA standards relating to the workplace health and safety of students during training courses.

**Purpose**

Synergy Education Group is committed to the proper management of occupational health and safety. We will provide a safe and healthy workplace for our staff, learners, contractors and visitors by having a planned and systematic approach to the management of occupational health and safety. We will provide the necessary resources for the successful implementation of this policy and its supportive procedures. Occupational health and safety will be managed through Synergy Education Group management committee and in close consultation with staff, learners, contractors and visitors.

The policy is not intended to cover the entire scope of situations which may arise in a workplace that relate to safety or hazards. Synergy Education Group recognises this, and we are committed to applying a continuous improvement approach to robust policy development.

The objectives of this policy are to ensure that:

- Hazards and risks to health and safety are systematically identified, assessed and, where they cannot be eliminated, are effectively controlled;
- Measures to control hazards and risks to health and safety are monitored and evaluated regularly;
- Staff are engaged and sought to contribute to occupational health and safety matters affecting their health and safety at work;
- Staff, learners, contractors and visitors receive appropriate information, training and supervision to understand and carry out their responsibilities safely.

## Responsibilities

### The CEO is responsible for:

- Providing a healthy and safe workplace for staff, learners, contractors and visitors;
- Ensuring that adequate resources are provided to meet the health and safety objectives and procedures of Synergy Education Group;
- Ensuring that Synergy Education Group complies with all relevant occupational health, safety legislation and standards;
- Providing appropriate health and safety policies and procedures to enable the effective management of health and safety and control of risks to health and safety;
- Providing mechanisms which enable staff to be consulted on work practices, policies or procedures which may affect the occupational health and safety of staff;
- Providing mechanisms to monitor and report regularly on the organisation's health and safety performance.
- The management committee is responsible for:
- Assisting in the development, implementation and monitoring of health and safety policies and procedures;
- Considering proposals for, or changes to, the workplace, policies, work practices or procedures which may affect the health and safety of staff;
- Promoting awareness of health and safety across Synergy Education Group;
- Ensuring that hazards in work or study areas are identified, risk assessed and controlled and that these risk control measures are monitored regularly and maintained;
- Ensuring that staff and learners under supervision are provided with the required information and training to carry out their work or study safely and effectively;
- Providing leadership and setting a good example for staff and learners in occupational health and safety matters.

### Staff and learners are responsible for:

- Complying with relevant Synergy Education Group health and safety policies and procedures;
- Obeying any reasonable instruction aimed at protecting their health and safety in the workplace;
- Using any equipment provided to protect their health and safety in the workplace;
- Assisting in the identification and assessment of hazards and implementation of hazard control measures;
- Reporting any incident or hazard in the workplace to their manager;
- Considering and providing feedback on any matters which may affect their health and safety;
- Not being affected by alcohol or non-prescribed (illicit) drugs whilst at work or study.

**Contractors are responsible for:**

- Following all Synergy Education Group policies and procedures;
- Complying with all relevant occupational health and safety legislation, standards and codes of practice;
- Ensuring that they do not, through their acts or omissions, do anything that could put at risk their own health or safety or that of Synergy Education Group staff, learners, other contractors or visitors.

## Safety guidelines

The following guidelines are provided as a basis for safe practice in the training and assessment environment. The guidelines are particularly relevant to learners, trainers and assessors.

- Know and observe details of emergency response and evacuation plans;
- Do not undertake activities which may cause injury to self or others;
- Be responsible for your own actions;
- No smoking at the training and assessment facilities or offices;
- Report all potential hazards, accidents and near misses to the RTO staff;
- No consumption of alcohol within training and assessment facilities or during the conduct of training and assessment;
- Keep training and assessment areas neat and tidy at all times;
- Seek assistance if you volunteer to lift items e.g. move furniture in a training area; and
- Observe hygiene standards particularly in eating and bathroom areas.

**Electrical equipment:**

- Electrical equipment that is not working should be reported to RTO staff.
- Electrical work should only be performed by appropriately licensed or trained personnel. Learners, trainers and assessors should not undertake any task related to fixing electrical equipment such as lighting or electrical training aids.

**Fire safety:**

- Synergy Education Group will undertake to communicate the procedures involved in evacuation and the location of fire equipment to learners at each facility for each training and assessment event; and to users of the office at least twice each year.
- All users of a training and assessment facility need to be familiar with the location of all EXITS and fire extinguishers. Users will consult available maps to determine location.
- It is the user's responsibility to understand fire drill procedures displayed around the premises.
- Users are asked to attend any sessions on fire safety procedures and the use of fire safety devices.

**First aid:**

- Provision for first aid facilities are available where training is delivered.
- All accidents must be reported to staff.
- The accident and any aid administered must be recorded by staff involved.

**Computer facilities:**

- Extended periods of work with computers can result in general fatigue and eye strain. Repetitive tasks and incorrect posture will result in consistent aches and pains.
- Current occupational health and safety guidelines indicate that people working for long periods at computers should organise their work so as to allow a five to ten minute rest every hour. This rest should include a change of position and stretching exercises as appropriate.
- Posture can be improved by adjusting chair height so that the operator's feet are comfortably placed on the floor (or footrest) and your arms are at an approximately 90-degree angle.
- The screen should be positioned to avoid reflection from lights and windows and at a suitable distance so that it can be easily read.

**Lifting:**

- Learners, trainers and assessors are encouraged not to lift anything related to the training and assessment provided by Synergy Education Group unless they do so voluntarily and taking all responsibility for any injury caused.
- Never attempt to lift anything that is beyond your capacity.
- Always bend the knees and keep the back straight when picking up items.
- If you have experienced back problems in the past do not attempt to lift heavy objects at all. Ask someone else to do it for you.

**Work and study areas:**

- Always ensure that all work areas are clean and clear of clutter so as to avoid the danger of accident by tripping or falling over.
- Place all rubbish in the bins provided.
- Ensure that kitchen bench spaces are left clean and tidy and that all dishes are washed.
- Do not leave tea towels or any cleaning cloths in a bundle on the bench tops or draped near any bin.
- Do not sit or climb on any desks or tables.

## Training Safety Procedures

Synergy Education Group will achieve its training safety objectives by applying procedures which assist managers, staff, learners, contractors and visitors to carry out their responsibilities.

### Hazard management procedures

The aim of this procedure is to provide a practical guide to the identification, assessment, control and monitoring of workplace safety hazards. A hazard is defined as a source or a situation with a potential for harm in terms of human injury or ill-health, damage to property, damage to the environment, or a combination of these<sup>1</sup>. Hazards may arise from a variety of sources within a workplace. Sources of hazards may include equipment, the work environment, work systems and work procedures.

Workplace hazards can be categorised as follows:

- Physical e.g. noise, radiation, light, vibration;
- Chemical e.g. poisons, dusts;
- Biological e.g. viruses, plants, parasites;
- Mechanical/electrical e.g. slips, trips and falls, tools, electrical equipment;
- Psychological e.g. fatigue, violence, bullying.

In order to manage the workplace safety hazards at Synergy Education Group, the following steps are to be applied:

#### Step 1 - Identify hazards

Select a method to identify hazards. This may include:

- Asking the question, 'Does this task / training activity / situation / event have the potential to harm a person?' or 'What if?' For example, "What if a person were to attempt to lift this heavy object from the top shelf?"
- Conduct a review of records of past accidents and near misses.
- Conduct regular walk-through visual inspections of the workplace. Look at each task the workers do to see if any hazards are present, such as handling loads, using chemicals or equipment.
- Observe workers performing their tasks and the activities involved, such as training activities, cleaning, maintenance and inspection, as more hazards may become apparent. This also provides an opportunity to see whether the workplace procedures for performing particular tasks are being followed by workers, or whether workers are taking short cuts.
- Consult workers about any near misses or events that have not been reported, unreported minor injuries or health complaints.
- Research the hazards associated with the relevant industry to identify the common potential hazards.
- Conduct (or arrange for) basic testing, measuring and samples of the workplace environment.

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<sup>1</sup> AS/NZS 4801:2001 Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems

When collecting information to identify hazards, consider the following:

- Competency and level of training of workers and whether it is adequate;
- How people actually use, clean, service or repair equipment and materials;
- How equipment is used to complete tasks and where it is located;
- How people could be hurt directly and indirectly by the various workplace aspects;
- How waste materials are or should be disposed of;
- The serviceability of substances, equipment, materials and premises, which may affect their safety; and
- The long-term health effects rather than an immediate injury, for example, exposure to loud noise over a period of time.

## Step 2 - Assess and prioritise the risks

Assess the likelihood of an event occurring by asking questions such as:

- How would circumstances arise that would make the event likely?
- Where would the event be likely to occur?
- When are people exposed to the hazard?
- How does exposure vary over time or by location and personnel involvement?
- When considering the likelihood of an event occurring, align it to the likelihood that most applies using the Likelihood Assessment Table.

Assess the potential consequence resulting from an incident by asking questions such as:

- How much harm the hazard could do?
- How many people it could affect?
- Will the effects be short or long term?

When considering a potential consequence resulting from an incident, align it to the consequence that most applies using the Consequence Assessment Table.

Assess the level of risk, represented by a 'risk rating' by consideration of the relationship between the likelihood and consequence of an event or incident. To determine the level of risk, plot the assessed likelihood and consequence on the Risk Evaluation Matrix to identify the appropriate risk rating. The risk ratings are coloured to provide a visual prompt regarding the level of response required in determining control measures. The following risk ratings are provided:

- **L - Low Risk (Green)**  
Flag at next management meeting and implement control measures through normal business processes.
- **M - Moderate Risk (Blue)**  
Monitor and implement control measures as soon as possible.
- **H - High Risk (Yellow)**  
Monitor closely and implement control measures as a matter of high priority.
- **E - Extreme Risk (Red)**  
Stop the activity immediately and implement control measures before recommencing.

### Step 3 - Determine control measures

The best way to control a hazard is to eliminate it. This concept has led to the development of a hierarchy of control that starts with the elimination of the hazard as the preferred solution and ends with using personal protective equipment to protect the person in the event of a hazard being realised. Ideally, hazards should be controlled by addressing their root cause or the source of the hazard.

The following list describes the hierarchy of control in order of most effective to least effective as means of reducing the risk:

- Eliminating the hazard from the workplace entirely is the best way to control it. An example of elimination is to remove a noisy machine from a quiet area or to sub-contract a function out to others who are better trained and equipped to undertake a particular task.
- Substituting or modifying the hazard by replacing it with something less dangerous, for example, by using a paint which does not contain asthma-encouraging agents.
- Isolating the hazard by physically removing it from the workplace or by cordoning off the area in which a hazard is used.
- Engineering methods can be introduced to control the hazard at its source; tools and equipment can be redesigned, or enclosures, guards or local exhaust ventilation systems can be used.
- Administrative controls are the management strategies that can be introduced to ensure the health and safety of employees. Administrative procedures can reduce exposure to hazardous equipment and procedures by limiting the time of exposure (eg. by job rotation) or varying the time when a particular procedure is carried out.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) may also be used to reduce exposure to a hazard. PPE should not, where possible, be utilised as a primary control measure as its use neither reduces nor removes the hazard. In conjunction with other treatment strategies, PPE provides additional redundancy should primary control measures fail.

One or a number of controls may be used to address a particular hazard. In most cases, it is desirable that multiple strategies are used to allow for human error or oversight. In matters of technical speciality, it may be necessary to seek expert advice in the application of hazard controls. The hazard controls should be well documented in the hazard control register.

### Step 4 - Implement control measures

Once hazards are appropriately identified and assessed, the implementation of the determined controls is the next critical step. This requires planning and consultation with those who will carry implementation responsibility. It may also require the allocation of resources to ensure the planned implementation is not hindered or restricted.

The following considerations should be taken when planning hazard control implementation:

- The implementation process should be appropriately documented;
- The effect on work procedures should be considered to ensure controls are integrated into work routines;
- Persons who will be affected by implementation should be identified and consulted in order to build acceptance and understanding of the control measures;
- The review and adjustment to emergency plans and procedures to recognise the new hazard in the workplace and the associated control measures;
- The competence and training requirement for personnel to implement the control measures;
- The monitoring and supervision of the hazard controls to ensure measures are being implemented as planned; and
- Staff members are informed, and inappropriate application of control measures is identified and corrected.

The implementation of control measures usually requires the development of an implementation plan. The implementation plan should:

- Clearly state the hazard controls to be implemented;
- Identify what actions need to be taken to implement the control measures;
- Specify the resources required to implement the control measures;
- Identify responsibilities for implementation of control measures;
- Layout the timetable for implementation and completion; and
- Specify a date for reviewing the control measures.

The implementation plan should be retained to provide a source of information for review.

### Step 5 - Monitor control measures

The effectiveness of the hazard control measures to minimise the risk to personnel must be monitored in order to allow the opportunity to improve control measures which do not adequately address the hazard. Factors that may affect the likelihood and consequence of a risk may change over time, as may the factors that affect the suitability of the control measures. It is for this reason that monitoring must not be overlooked.

To monitor control measures, the following strategies can be applied:

- Conduct a review of records including incident or near miss register;
- Conduct walk-through and visual inspections of the workplace;
- Consult workers about their experience with the implemented control measures and how effective they believe them to be; and
- Conduct (or arrange for) basic testing, measuring and samples of the workplace environment to compare the results with those obtained prior to the implementation of the control measures.



Whilst monitoring hazard controls, the following question needs to be addressed:

- Have the control measures been implemented as planned and are they being applied in the workplace?
- Have the control measures been accepted by personnel and what is their opinion on their effectiveness?
- Have there been any occurrences involving the hazards since the implementation of the controls?
- Have the implemented control measures produced any unintended effects, such as changes to work routines or new hazards?

#### **Step 6 - Review the hazard management process**

The review of the hazard management process is essential to ensure that the management of hazards universally remains relevant and in the right context over time. The review of the hazard management process is to be conducted not less than every two years.

The essential elements of a review are:

- The hazard management process for must be valid in the context of the operating environment of Synergy Education Group;
- Improvements in the operating processes of Synergy Education Group must be reflected in the hazard management process;
- The process should reflect best practice from an industry perspective in the identification, assessment and control of hazards; and
- Stakeholders should be given the opportunity to contribute to the review in order to build capacity within Synergy Education Group to manage workplace safety hazards.

Further guidance on the review of risk management and hazard management processes can be found in AS/NZS 4360:2004 Risk Management.

## Training Hazard Management Process

