



Commitment Statement (2)

Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012-22: Healthy, safe and productive working lives

**Strategic outcome: Those providing work health and safety education, training and advice have
the appropriate capabilities**

The Australian OHS Education Accreditation Board shares the vision promoted in the Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012-2022 of *Healthy, safe and productive working lives*. Through their activities the Accreditation Board will contribute at a national level to the strategic outcome that those providing work health and safety education, training and advice have appropriate capabilities. The Accreditation Board is committed to the target outcome that:

University level OHS teaching units have access to qualified OHS educators sufficient in number and scope of knowledge, skills and experience to address the required scope of teaching and learning as well as OHS expertise.

1 Problem/issue

Threats to the supply of suitably qualified university based OHS educators were formally identified by Quinlan in 1995¹ and more recently by Toft et al.,² (2010). Anecdotal information, including responses to employment vacancies suggests that there has been little improvement and possibly a further deterioration. The key issues are supply of suitably qualified and experienced people and resultant high use of session staff, pay differential between academia and industry, age profile of OHS academics and teaching staff, conditions of work and succession planning. The small teaching units spread across a number of universities exacerbates the issue of ensuring input to the teaching and learning by quality, qualified OHS educators with sufficient personnel to address the required scope of speciality expertise.

2 Influence and action

2.1 Accreditation criteria

The core activity of the Australian OHS Education Accreditation Board is to recognise those university level OHS professional education programs that meet the criteria established by the Board. A number of the

¹ Quinlan, M. (Ed.). (1995). *Tertiary education in occupational health and safety in Australia and New Zealand* Sydney.

² Toft, Y., Capra, M., Kift, R., Moodie-Bain, D., Pryor, P., Eddington, I., et al. (2010). *Safeguarding Australians: Mapping the strengths and challenges towards sustainable improvement in OHS education and practice*. Final Report, Part 1. Sydney: Australian Learning and Teaching Council.



accreditation criteria address capability of OHS educators. To achieve accreditation for the program the university is required to provide evidence demonstrating compliance with the requirements.

Accreditation criteria relating to capability of OHS educators

2.5	Academic staff	Academic staff in sufficient number and capability to ensure the quality and viability of the program.
4.3	Academic staff	Staff receive induction and professional development to enable them to be an integral part of the education process
4.4		Where sessional staff are employed for a series of lectures or for a unit there is evidence of them being supported to contribute as an integral part of the educational process.
4.6	Academic and educational culture	Teaching staff have experience in the OHS field and/or are supported in obtaining/maintaining industry contact and experience.
4.7		Teaching staff are encouraged and supported in undertaking professional development.
4.8		Teaching staff are encouraged and supported in undertaking research and are expected to maintain scholarship in the field.

2.2 Support currency and further development of educational theory and OHS knowledge of OHS educators

Webinars and workshops for OHS educators are a key component of the strategic plan for the Accreditation Board. These webinars cover developments in the OHS Body of Knowledge as well as providing a discussion forum on educational theory as it relates to the teaching and learning in OHS professional education.

3 Evaluation of effectiveness and impact of activities

The Accreditation Board will evaluate the effectiveness and impact of these activities on the capability of those providing OHS professional education in the Higher Education/ university sector. This evaluation will include an annual report comprised of conduct of relevant activities against the operational plan and a status report derived from information obtained as part of the accreditation process. A more detailed evaluation will be conducted via surveys conducted in 2013-14 (baseline), 2017-18 and 2021-22.

4 Reporting

A report detailing activities supporting capability of those providing OHS education in the Higher Education/university sector and the evaluation of the impact of these activities will be included in the Accreditation Board Annual Report with a copy provided to Safe Work Australia.

