



## **Commitment Statement (1)**

### **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:

***New graduate OHS professionals will have the required knowledge and skills to enter  
the workforce as effective entry level OHS professionals***

#### **1 Problem/issue**

Universities in Australia are self accrediting. Thus, once the university identifies that they wish to provide a particular program the program developers go through a development and approval process defined and managed by the university. While there is no external approval required for specific programs the quality processes employed by universities are oversights by the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA). The need for specialist review of professional programs is recognised by many professions that conduct external professional accreditation of programs developed by self accrediting universities. The role of professional accreditation processes are recognised by TEQSA.

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) is not a regulated profession and there are no educational or experience requirements for employment as an OHS advisor/coordinator/ manager/consultant. Also, there is substantial variation in OHS education provided by universities; this may reflect the specialties of host schools, e.g. health, sciences or engineering, or the interests of key educators within particular programs. The increasing emphasis on distance/online modes of delivery presents further challenges for OHS education in developing graduates equipped as effective entry level OHS professionals.

#### **2 Influence and action**

##### *2.1 Accreditation of OHS professional education*

The purpose of the Australian OHS Education is to contribute to work health and safety by facilitating the education of graduates equipped with the knowledge and skills to enter the workplace as effective entry level OHS professionals. To achieve this the Accreditation Board sees its mission as ensuring that OHS



professional education is based on educational design and review processes, and delivery of learning appropriate to develop graduates equipped with the required knowledge and skills.

The core activity of the Accreditation Board is to work with universities; examine and evaluate the program including resourcing, learning and teaching strategies and materials, assessment practices and review processes; provide feedback; and monitor the program annually. Thus accreditation not only recognises those programs that meet the standards but act as a positive influence on the development of quality education for current and aspiring OHS professionals.

## *2.2 Guidance on selection of OHS professional education programs*

A register of OHS programs provided by Australian Universities is posted on the Accreditation Board web site. The web site also includes guidance for potential students and for employers supporting the development of their OHS advisors on selecting the level and provider for OHS professional study. The web site also offers an email contact for those wanting to ask specific questions about selecting an OHS qualification with further telephone contact with the registrar in some cases.

## **3 Evaluation of effectiveness and impact of activities**

The Accreditation Board will develop and implement an evaluation protocol to assess the effectiveness and impact of these activities.

As part of its annual reporting, the Accreditation Board will provide a report on accredited programs and total number of student and graduates.

The provision of guidance for selection of OHS qualifications will be assessed through monitoring 'hits' on the relevant pages of the web site, email queries via the web site and the response and number of telephone calls responded regarding selection of OHS education programs.

## **4 Reporting**

A summary report detailing accreditation outcomes, student and graduate numbers and provision of advice on selection OHS qualifications will be included in the Accreditation Board Annual Report with a copy provided to Safe Work Australia.