



Fifth Annual Report

2015-2016





CONTENTS

Members of the Australian OHS Education Accreditation Board	3
Acknowledgements	4
Accreditation assessment panels	4
Supporting partners	4
1 Report by Registrar and Chairperson.....	5
1.1 Accreditation of university level OHS education programs	5
1.2 OHS Body of Knowledge.....	6
1.3 International engagement.....	6
1.4 Relationship with the Safety Institute of Australia	6
1.5 The view ahead to 2017	7
2 Core principles	8
2.1 Purpose statement	8
2.2 Vision	8
2.3 Mission	8
2.4 Corporate and business structure.....	8
3 Operating environment	8
3.1 The Australian WHS Strategy and Safe Work Australia.....	8
3.2 Higher Education Sector.....	8
3.3 Vocational Education and Training (VET)	9
3.4 The OHS profession	9
3.5 Industry demand	9
4. Board administration	10
4.1 Board structure	10
4.2 Board meetings	10
4.3 Supporting partners	11
5 Opportunities and challenges for 2015 and beyond	11
5.1 Challenges	11
5.2 Opportunities	11



Members of the Australian OHS Education Accreditation Board

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Safety Institute of Australia representative

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Dr Deborah Vallance MBBS, B Med Sci(Hons), MPH
National OHS Coordinator, Australian Manufacturing Workers Union
Australian Council of Trade Unions representative
As of December 2015 Dr Vallance was replaced by

Brian Devlin B. Labour Studies
Assistant State Secretary, Australian Manufacturers Workers Union (QLD)

Registrar

Pam Pryor BSc, BEd, GDOHM, CFSIA, ChOHSP



Acknowledgements

Accreditation assessment panels

The Accreditation Board wishes to acknowledge and thank the following OHS academics and OHS professionals who have contributed time to participate in accreditation assessment panels between the commencement of accreditation and June 30, 2016.

Academics

Professor Mike Capra, University of Queensland

Dr Margaret Cook, University of Queensland

Leo Ruschena, RMIT University

Professor David Cliff, Minerals Industry, Safety and Health Centre, University of Queensland

Associate Professor Tim Driscoll, University of Sydney

Associate Professor Susanne Tepe, RMIT University

Professor Dino Pisaniello, University of Adelaide

Dr Jodi Oakman, Latrobe University

Dr Rwth Stuckey Latrobe and Monash Universities

Associate Professor Carole James, University of Newcastle

OHS professionals

Meagan Browne, WorkSafe Victoria

Angela Seidel, OHS Manager, PMP Printing

Mike Walsh, Managing Director Mollitiam Pty Ltd

David Skegg, Manager, Health, Safety & Environment, Clyde Babcock-Hitachi (Australia) Pty Ltd

Trevor Love, Principal, AusSafe Consulting

Patrick Murphy, Head of Health Safety and Environment, Corporate, Origin

PJ Fleming, Assistant Director Safety Capability, Defence Centre for Occupational Health & Safety

Phil Turner, JK Tech, University of Queensland

John Green, Laing O Rourke

Ross Pilkington, WorkSafe Victoria

Jo Kitney, Kitney Occupational Health and Safety Pty Ltd

Marc McLaren, Managing Director, Generative HSE

Phil Lovelock, Senior Occupational Health and Safety Consultant and Policy Adviser, Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Supporting partners

The Australian OHS Education Accreditation Board could not undertake much of their work without the support of their Supporting Partners.





1 Report by Registrar and Chairperson

The Australian OHS Education Accreditation Board has now completed its fifth year of operation.

Originally established for the sole purpose of accrediting OHS professional education programs the Accreditation Board initially took on a broader role as an advocate for OHS professional education and OHS capability. A review of activities conducted over the last year has resulted in a defined focus on two areas:

- Recognising university-level programs that meet the accreditation criteria, and
- Custodian of the OHS Body of Knowledge

These activities continue to be important contributors to Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012-2022 *Healthy, safe and productive working lives*, which includes the strategic outcome that those providing work health and safety education, training and advice have appropriate capabilities.

1.1 Accreditation of university level OHS education programs

There are currently 14 universities offering a total of 29 OHS professional education programs. The status of accredited programs as at 30th June is shown in Figure 1.

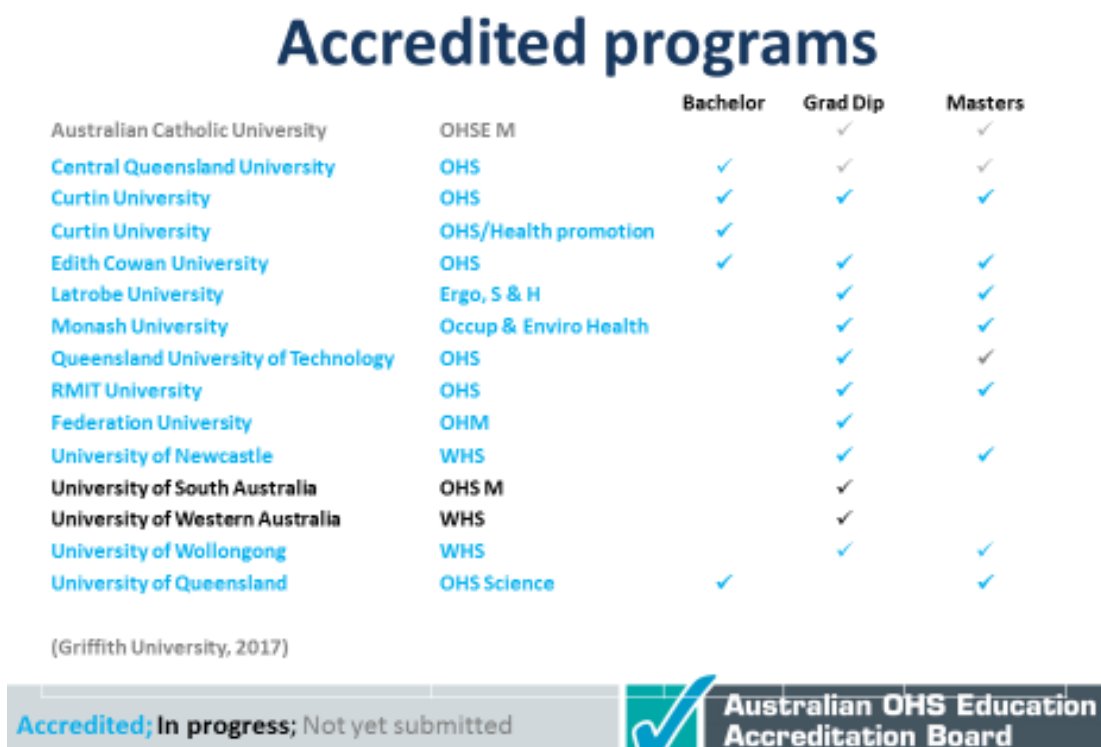


Figure 1: Status of accredited programs as at 30th June, 2016



Universities with accredited programs are able to display the Accredited Program logo on their web site and related publications. A register of OHS professional education programs is also available on the Accreditation Board website which is becoming a first port of call for potential students.

A formal review of the implementation of accreditation was conducted in 2014-15 which culminated in a consultative Accreditation Forum held in Melbourne and online in November 2015. Concurrent with this review the Australian Government reviewed the standards for universities with the legislation for the new Threshold Standards approved in December 2015. Universities are required to be compliant with the new Standards by January 2017. As it is the policy of the Accreditation Board to align OHS accreditation criteria with university standards the new Threshold Standards were a further input to the review.

The outcomes of the review resulted in revised criteria and fee schedule effective from January 2017 for new accreditations; currently accredited qualifications will migrate to the new criteria as part of the annual review process and as they renew their accreditation.

1.2 OHS Body of Knowledge

The OHS Body of Knowledge for Generalist OHS Professionals has attracted acclaim both in Australia and internationally. It is available free of charge for individual professional, non-commercial use at www.ohsbok.org.au. The copyright of the OHS Body of Knowledge is held by the Safety Institute of Australia with the Australian OHS Education Accreditation Board having a custodian role responsible for currency and further development.

Following an active period in 2014 to 2015, 2015-16 was a consolidation period. Work commenced on four new chapters in the latter part of the year which are due for completion end of 2016, early 2017.

1.3 International engagement

Through the registrar, the Accreditation Board has been an active partner in the development of the *OHS Professional Capability Framework: A Global Framework for Practice* developed by the International Network of Safety and Health Practitioner Organizations (INSHPO). The first version of the Framework addressing the OHS professional was launched at the IFAP Fluoro conference in Perth in October 2015. (See <http://inshpo.org/work.php> for the professional framework) Work has continued to develop a Practitioner and Professional version of the Framework presented side-by-side. This second version of the Framework will be launched at the SIA Annual Conference to be held in Sydney in September 2016.

1.4 Relationship with the Safety Institute of Australia

The Accreditation Board is created under the By-Laws of the Safety Institute of Australia and operates under the corporate umbrella of the SIA with autonomy related to standard setting and decision-making about accreditation. During the first 3 years of operation the Accreditation Board generally operated autonomously from the SIA. Discussions between the SIA and the Accreditation Board during 2015 resulted in a greater alignment of objectives and activities by the SIA and the Accreditation Board. This alignment of operations has continued with the SIA National Office providing support to the Accreditation Board and the SIA subsidising the operation of the Accreditation Board to enable cost to the universities to be minimized while ensuring a rigorous and supportive accreditation assessment process.



1.5 The view ahead to 2017

The focus of the Accreditation Board for the year 2016-17 will be to implement the new accreditation criteria and fee structure while supporting and encouraging those universities with programs not yet accredited to gain accreditation.

As the OHS Body of Knowledge plays an important role in accreditation, the Accreditation Board will continue to oversight the development of new chapters and review of current chapters. It will contribute to the determination of priorities for development and ensure relevance, quality and standard of content. The operational aspects of the development and review of the OHS Body of Knowledge, including funding, will be managed through the SIA.

Having reached five years of operation, undertaken and responded to major review, the Accreditation Board now moves into a new era with the first universities to achieve accreditation now approaching the the second round and seeking re-accreditation.

Pam Pryor
Registrar

July 2016

Mike Capra
Chairperson



2 Core principles

2.1 Purpose statement

To contribute to workplace 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.

2.2 Vision

That OHS professional education is based on strong scientific and technical concepts, evidenced-informed, delivered by suitably competent persons and so recognised by the profession, government, industry and the community.

2.3 Mission

To ensure that OHS professional education is based on educational design and review processes, and delivery of learning appropriate to develop graduates equipped with the knowledge and skills to enter the workplace as an entry-level generalist OHS professional.

2.4 Corporate and business structure

The Accreditation Board is created under the By-Laws of the Safety Institute of Australia. As such it is auspiced by the Safety Institute of Australia but is independent in its decision-making regarding standards and accreditation of OHS education programs.

Membership of the Board is an honorary non-executive position with travel expenses for meetings and for participation in assessment panels reimbursed. The chair of the Board is determined by the Board members. Members the Board are appointed as individuals based on their expertise and experience related to the activities of OHS professionals and the education of OHS professionals. The Board is supported by a registrar which is a part time remunerated position.

3 Operating environment

3.1 The Australian WHS Strategy and Safe Work Australia

Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012-2022, with the vision of a *Healthy, safe and productive working lives* includes the strategic outcome that *those providing work health and safety education, training and advice have the appropriate capabilities*. The activities of the Accreditation Board align with this strategic outcome.

3.2 Higher Education Sector

The Higher Education sector comprises 39 public universities, 14 of which provide OHS professional education programs. While universities are self-accrediting in that they can develop, approve and provide qualifications without reference to outside bodies there are professional education accreditation bodies for most professions. Thus the work of the Accreditation Board aligns OHS with other professions in this area.



During 2016 and into 2017, universities are working to ensure they comply with the new Threshold Standards. Activity by OHS teaching units to meet accreditation criteria will also demonstrate that they are meeting the Threshold Standards at the teaching unit level.

The Minister for Education and Training, Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham has tasked the Higher Education Standards Panel (HESP) to look at professional accreditation as part of its remit to provide advice on a wide range of quality-related issues in the education sector. The Department of Education and Training has commissioned a study on behalf of HESP that will look at reducing red tape in professional accreditation processes, streamlining accreditation requirements and a greater consistency in approach. The outcomes of the study may have ramifications for OHS accreditation in the longer term.

3.3 Vocational Education and Training (VET)

The quality of VET work health and safety qualification is important as they are often a route of entry to university-level OHS qualifications. However, the quality of training in the VET sector generally, and for WHS qualifications continues to be an issue. The Australian Government has undertaken a major review of the VET sector which has resulted in a re-structure of the support and process for developing qualifications and competencies. While these changes appear to be positive there are still some challenges for the work health and safety qualifications. The developments are being monitored through SIA representation on the relevant Industry Reference Committee.

3.4 The OHS profession

A profession wide certification process for Generalist OHS Professionals has been implemented by the Safety Institute of Australia. Certification is the third outcome of the OHS Body of Knowledge project and brings OHS in line with other professions such as accountancy, engineering and dietetics. Accredited professional qualifications are a key requirement for certification.

3.5 Industry demand

While the actual drivers are unclear, a recent remuneration survey (safesearch) showed an increasing demand for university level OHS qualifications for OHS roles with Masters qualifications being consistently required for higher level positions.



Figure 2: Demand for OHS qualifications

The qualitative comments on the remuneration survey noted that:

While the majority of respondents confirmed the importance of formal qualifications, greater emphasis was put on credibility and influencing – with these soft skills seen as having more of a positive impact in safety culture and performance than formal training alone. “Good balance between capabilities technical, strategic and soft skills is required”.

4. Board administration

4.1 Board structure

The Accreditation Board Charter requires that the members of the Board appoint one of their members as the chair for the 12-month period. Professor Mike Capra was appointed to continue as the chair for the period 2015-16.

4.2 Board meetings

The Board held four meetings in 2015-16; one face to face, three by GoToMeetings video/teleconference.



Meeting attendance

Meagan Browne.	2
Mike Capra	4
David Cliff	4
Margaret Cook	3
Tim Driscoll	2 (+1 part)
David Goddard	1
Bruce King	4
Jane Whitelaw	4
Leo Ruschena	4
Angela Seidel	4
Chris Sutherland	3
<i>Deborah Vallance</i>	2
<i>Brian Devlin replaced Deborah Valance as from December</i>	2
Pam Pryor	4

Having sought stability during the establishment period the Accreditation Board will be undergoing natural renewal in the next 12 months.

4.3 Supporting partners

Supporting partners continue to be vital to the operation of the Accreditation Board. Initially the Accreditation Board conducted an autonomous Supporting Partner program. However, during 2015-16 the Supporting Partner program was integrated with the SIA Corporate Member program where Corporate members are offered the option of nominating the Accreditation Board for their support. These organisations are then recognised as a Supporting Partner of the Accreditation Board.

5 Opportunities and challenges for 2015 and beyond

5.1 Challenges

Funding continues to be a challenge, with the extent of engagement, support and advocacy determined by funding.

The government reviews and budgets for the Higher Education sector tend to create an environment of budget pressure and demands from staff that may impact on accreditation.

5.2 Opportunities

While certification of Generalist OHS Professionals will be voluntary this is likely to create demand for accredited qualifications.

International engagement, particularly in the project work on developing an international framework for the OHS profession has provided an opportunity to bring an international perspective to the Australian OHS professional scene as well as influencing the international work at the ground level.