

## Frequently Asked Questions – Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems

### 1. What is an occupational health and safety management system (OHSMS)?

Our OHSMS serves as a framework to establish, implement and maintain a system to improve occupational health and safety (OHS), eliminate hazards and minimize OHS risks, take advantage of OHS opportunities, and address OHS management system nonconformities associated with its activities.

### 2. What is the management system based on?

Our OHSMS is based on the ISO/CSA Z45001 standard, which specifies the requirements and provides guidance to enable organizations to provide safe and healthy workplaces by preventing work-related injury and ill health, as well as by proactively improving their OHS performance.

### 3. The workplace seems healthy and safe; why are we implementing an OHSMS?

The management system is the result of a thorough review process and opportunity to become leaders in the post-secondary occupational health and safety field. The system provides structure to our health and safety program and presents an opportunity to pursue provincial recognition and accreditation from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development.

### 4. Where does the policy on occupational health and safety fit into the OHSMS?

The policy is above and outside of the management system. It sets organizational commitment and direction and is approved by executive management. It is our highest level (Tier 1) document.

### 5. What is included in the management system?

There are several levels of documentation within the OHSMS:

- **Tier 2 – Governance framework outlining how the management system operates.** The framework documents the operating model including mandates, responsibilities, accountabilities, governance structure, and outlines the overall structure of the OHSMS. This document details who does the work and where OHS applies.
- **Tier 3 – Program manuals explaining the expectations and mandatory requirements in key risk areas.** These documents establish the minimum requirements and considerations for the relevant stakeholders based on functional needs. They include:
  - General OHS Program Manual
  - Laboratory Safety Program Manual
  - Biological Safety Program Manual
  - Radiation Safety Program Manual
- **Tier 4 – Recommended practices establishing activity-specific guidelines.** These documents are a combination of industry recommended practices, which support the compliance to the requirements defined within the programs. Faculties must choose to either adopt the recommended practice or develop their own procedure (Tier 5 document) that meets or exceeds the requirements of the program. These practices are only established for critical processes and do not contain “general information.”
- **Tier 5 – Work aids, which support the implementation of procedures or recommended practices.** Work aids (faculty specific procedure, forms, guides, safety sheets, instructions, etc.)

support the OHSMS. These tools enable the implementation and documentation of procedures and practices while also providing users with a guided approach.

#### 6. What about previous or historical OHS documents?

As part of the implementation, some historical programs, procedures, guidelines and resources will be relinquished. These changes will be communicated as part of the OHSMS implementation.

#### 7. What is the implementation plan?

An 18-month implementation plan has been developed to provide a gradual and methodical rollout of each phase. Communications, support resources, and change management activities have been planned and leaders in faculties/services identified to help support and sustain the change for the long term.

#### 8. What is expected of me?

The institutional occupational health and safety team needs you for this important initiative. The most important actions you can take to support the OHSMS rollout are:

- Read, understand, and apply [policy 77](#):
- Know, understand, and apply your health and safety [roles and responsibilities](#).
- Be a leader and a champion for health and safety in your faculty/service.