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MEDIA RELEASE

Degree to Create New Generation of Health & Safety Professionals

Graduates of Australia's first four-year degree in occupational health and safety will become a new generation of highly-trained OHS professionals, according to The University of Queensland's Professor of Occupational Health and Safety, Mike Capra.

Professor Capra said graduates of the new program will help alleviate a workforce shortage and respond to the need for better qualified health and safety specialists.

The Bachelor of Occupational Health & Safety Sciences will have its first student intake next year.

"The program was developed at the request of the OHS industry, including peak body the Safety Institute of Australia, which saw the need for a professional qualification in the field," Prof Capra said.

"The lack of well-qualified OHS professionals is causing alarm among members of major OHS associations, government authorities and employers.

"Historically OHS education has been a career 'add on', often a short course or minor area of study in a broader degree, so UQ consulted with stakeholders and practicing OHS professionals to develop a program to meet their needs.

"The result is a four-year degree that includes a strong scientific focus, a significant practical component and covers mental health workplace issues, which was a specific request from industry," he said.

Students will learn about a variety of issues in the workplace, including chemical, physical, mechanical, psychological and biological hazards. They'll also study law, ergonomics, risk management, behaviour change and workplace conflict.

The indepth knowledge and practical skills provided by this program means graduates will be considered professionals able to provide high-level strategic and operational expertise in OHS.

For more information, visit www.uq.edu.au/health/ohsdegree.

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