2016 OHS review Terms of Reference

Background
Significant work is currently occurring to enhance the quality and efficiency of UQ’s professional services to better support UQ’s academic endeavour. The functions of human resources, finance, legal services and information technology are already well progressed in their review processes. The Chief Operating Officer has signalled the intention for the remaining professional service functions to undertake a review of their functional areas as an integral part of the service improvement process, including occupational health and safety.

Within this same environment, UQ is conducting a strategic planning process to articulate the vision for health, safety and well-being (HSW) at UQ across the next four years. This process is developing the HSW vision, principles and priorities to confirm UQ’s intended health, safety and wellness position in 2020. This will be invaluable during the current review process to ensure our current capabilities are well aligned to the position to which UQ wishes its HSW function to evolve.

Purpose
The purpose for this review is to examine occupational health and safety professional services across UQ to ensure UQ benefits from consistent, effective, progressive and responsive services, and to ensure UQ is well positioned to move to its intended future occupational health and safety positioning. The review will be mindful of the three key proposals put forward in the finance and HR reviews i.e. consolidating effort into professional service teams, creation of standardised roles and position descriptions, and the use of a single point of accountability. It will also be essential to draw on the vision, principles and priorities developed during the HSW function’s strategic planning process.

Scope
The scope of the review will include the formal occupational health and safety function across UQ (i.e. OHS services provided across all levels and business units of UQ, including the central Division). It will include the occupational health and safety function, wellness program, worker’s compensation program, and the biological safety/compliance function.

Terms of Reference
The UQ HSW function operates within complex legislative, policy and compliance frameworks. The scope, breadth and regulatory compliance burden in all areas of OHS has significantly increased over the last 15 years, at a time when the research activity of the University has grown.

The risk appetite for the University with respect to work health and safety risks and biosafety risks is low, and there is a clear expectation that health and safety performance will be second to none in the sector. The review will:

1. seek opportunities for service enhancement, notably in ensuring rigorous and responsive OHS systems and practices, and a safer workplace
2. enhance the consistency and parity of OHS services across organisational units
3. identify and reduce any unnecessary duplication of effort across the University
4. confirm the correct structural positioning of occupational health and safety effort, noting the legislative context in which managers operate
5. identify opportunities for improving efficiencies in an environment where there is a clear expectation to be a sector leader in health and safety.

In order to achieve the above the broad process of the review will include:

- conducting a base-lining exercise to determine the extent, location and activity of the dedicated and hybrid occupational health and safety staff resources at UQ
- conducting a scope of service process to determine the nature and extent of the occupational health and safety services currently being provided across UQ
- engaging the clients of occupational health and safety services at UQ to determine the required nature and extent of these services (in light of UQ’s legal and corporate responsibilities
- making recommendations with the aim of outlining the opportunities for service enhancement, improved consistency and parity of occupational health and safety services across UQ.

Deliverables
Anticipated deliverables of the review will include:

1. a document outlining baseline information of the dedicated and multifunctional role occupational health and safety staff resources at UQ (as of end 2016).
2. a document outlining baseline information of the reported occupational health and safety staff resources at other relevant universities.
3. A description of the current nature and extent of the occupational health and safety services currently being provided across UQ.
4. A report outlining the review’s findings and recommendations for consideration by the Chief Operating Officer.