

Suggested procedure for Designated Work Groups: how to elect an employee Health & Safety Representative

1. Application of this advice

Designated Work Groups (DWGs) are not required to accept this advice. Members of the DWG may agree to determine any election procedure to elect a Health & Safety Representative (HSR). Any member of a DWG may request advice on the conduct of an election from the General Manager EHS or delegate, WorkSafe or other representative.

2. How to come to an agreement on an election procedure

2.1. Actions

Appoint a Returning Officer for the election from inside or outside the DWG. Suggested Returning Officers are the Chair of the local EHS Committee or a member of the local EHS Committee. The Returning Officer shall be responsible for the fair and accountable conduct of the nomination and election process. It is suggested that persons intending to nominate for election should not accept Returning Officer duties.

Returning Officer sends a proposal for an election procedure to all members of the DWG, to allow opportunity for all staff to comment or object if necessary.

If there are no objections to the procedure, call for nominations.

2.2. Timeline

Suggested consultation period: two weeks.

3. How to call for nominations

3.1. Actions

The Returning officer compiles an electoral roll for the election, which needs to include all University of Melbourne staff members who are members of the DWG.

Returning Officer distributes a call for nominations to the electoral roll. The call for nominations should clearly specify the process and the closing date and time for nominations. Candidates are offered the opportunity to submit an electoral statement together with their nomination.

A suggested nomination form is available on the EHS Unit website at http://www.pb.unimelb.edu.au/ehs/ehs/ehsm_guidance/. This form requires a nominator and a

seconded from within the DWG, and also requires the nominated member to agree to the nomination.

All members of the electoral roll, including incumbent or past HSRs, are eligible to nominate for election.

3.2. Timeline

Suggested deadline for receipt of nominations: one week.

4. Determining the outcome of the call for nominations

4.1. Actions

For DWGs with one vacant HSR or Deputy HSR position:

- If there are no nominations received, the Returning Officer consults the DWG to decide whether to make one or more further calls for nominations.
- If there is one nomination received, the nominee is declared elected as the Health & Safety Representative of the DWG for a period of three years.
- If there is more than one nomination received, hold an election.

For DWGs with more than one vacant HSR or Deputy HSR position:

- If there are fewer nominations received than there are vacancies, the Returning Officer consults the DWG to decide whether to make one or more further calls for nominations.
- If there the number of nominations received and the number of vacancies are the same, the nominees are declared elected as HSRs or DHSRs of the DWG for a period of three years.
- If there are more nominations received than there are vacancies, hold an election.

5. How to hold an election

5.1. Actions

Returning Officer distributes ballot papers by physical post to all members of the DWG. Candidate electoral statements, if any, are distributed with the ballot papers or made available through another means, such as publication online.

Candidates may withdraw from the election at any time. Any candidate wishing to withdraw from the election must do so in writing to the Returning Officer.

A suggested ballot paper with voter instructions are available on the EHS Unit website at http://www.pb.unimelb.edu.au/ehs/ehs/ehsm_guidance/ This ballot paper incorporates a simple majority voting system.

For an auditable secret ballot:

- The postal distribution to voters should contain:
 - a ballot paper which includes voting instructions;
 - an envelope labelled "Voting Paper" – a template for a sticker to create these is available on the EHS Unit website at http://www.pb.unimelb.edu.au/ehs/ehs/ehsm_guidance/; and

- a second (preferably larger) envelope addressed to the Returning Officer. On the back of this envelope should be a sticker or printed box requiring the voter's name and signature – a template is available on the EHS Unit website at http://www.pb.unimelb.edu.au/ehs/ehs/ehsm_guidance/
- Voters place their ballot papers inside the Voting Paper envelope, and then place the Voting Paper envelope inside the envelope addressed to the Returning Officer, then name and sign the outside envelope. Voters return completed ballot papers to the Returning Officer.
- Returning Officer receives and securely retains completed ballot paper returns unopened until the voting deadline has passed.

5.2. Timeline

Suggested deadline for receipt of ballot papers: one to two weeks. Take account of any potential postal delays in setting this deadline.

6. Determining the outcome of the election

6.1. Actions

Returning Officer asks candidates if they wish to nominate one scrutineer each. Scrutineers should not be candidates in the election.

The Returning Officer, in the presence of any scrutineers, counts the votes thus:

- examines the voter name and signature on the back of the outer envelopes and verifies that the vote has been cast by a valid elector who has voted only once;
- opens the outer envelopes and discards them;
- opens the inner envelopes;
- may declare any ballot paper that is illegible or not completed in accordance with the instructions invalid;
- counts valid ballot papers and assigns weight to votes according to the agreed voting system;
- declares and records a final tally of votes cast in favour of each candidate, as well as invalid votes.

The candidate receiving the most votes (after the votes are weighted in accordance with the voting system) is declared elected as the Health & Safety Representative of the DWG for a period of three years.

7. Welcoming the newly elected HSR

The Returning Officer advises the successful candidate and any unsuccessful candidates of the outcome of the election. A template for a welcome letter to the new HSR is available on the EHS Unit website at http://www.pb.unimelb.edu.au/ehs/ehs/ehsm_guidance/

The Returning Officer announces the outcome of the election to the the local EHS Committee and the members of the DWG.

The Returning Officer advises the General Manager, Environment, Health & Safety, of the outcome of the election, including the new HSR's date of election and contact details, via ehs-info@unimelb.edu.au

The General Manager EHS will cause the new HSR to be added to the University's register of HSRs at http://www.unimelb.edu.au/ehsm/HSRs_list.pdf, and to the EHS Unit's HSR mailing list.

The HSR may request WorkSafe certified HSR training. This training is not compulsory unless stated in local area policy and procedures. EHS Advisers/Managers from the EHS Unit can assist with arrangements and payment for this training.

Records of the election process should be maintained by the Returning Officer for a period of three years. These records should include:

- Completed nomination forms
- Copies of all correspondence sent to and received from nominees and candidates
- Copies of all correspondence sent to and received from members of the DWG in relation to the nomination and election process
- Electoral roll for the DWG
- Completed ballot papers.

8. References

Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004 (Vic)

Environment, Health & Safety Manual, 8.5.New. *EHS Representation & EHS Committees*

9. More information

Templates for the voting system suggesting in this advice are available from the EHS Unit website at http://www.pb.unimelb.edu.au/ehs/ehs/ehsm_guidance/

For further advice, contact your EHS Adviser/Manager in the EHS Unit – refer <http://www.pb.unimelb.edu.au/ehs/ehs/general/contact.php3>