
Diving and Boating Procedure

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this Procedure is to ensure that teaching and research-related operations at Victoria University of Wellington ('the University') that involve diving and boating activities comply with the statutory obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.

2. Application of Procedure

- 2.1 This Procedure applies to Staff Members and Students as well as volunteers, individuals from auxiliary organisations, and other authorised persons engaged in university-approved research and educational projects the results of which are intended to be credited towards completion of a university course or degree.
- 2.2 This Procedure covers all forms of scientific, research, and educational activity that involve a diving and boating component (and is inclusive of snorkelling, row boating, and kayaking). Activities undertaken with university assets and funding provided by or administered through the University also fall under this procedure.
- 2.3 Diving and boating activities conducted for recreational purposes are not covered by this procedure as the University does not allow its assets to be used for recreational activities.
- 2.4 The University's Health and Safety and Off-Campus Activities policies give effect to this Procedure.

Procedure Content

3. Administration

- 3.1 Diving and boating operations conducted for research or education purposes are highly specialised activities with specific risks and regulatory requirements (AS/NZS 2299.1:2015, AS/NZS 2299.1:2007, and AS/NZS 2299.2:2002 for diving; Maritime New Zealand rules for boating).
- 3.2 The University is a member of the American Academy of Underwater Sciences (AAUS). The members of the University's Diving & Boating Safety Committee ('DBC') are co-listed as a Diving Control Board Member (DCB) or Diving Safety Officer (DSO) by the AAUS. The DCB fulfils the functions of a DCB but has a broader mandate which includes boating safety. The AAUS provides technical advice to the University in accordance with the regulations listed under 3.1.
- 3.3 The University's Vice-Chancellor is ultimately responsible for all Health and Safety matters in the University and for Diving and Boating activities this responsibility has been delegated to Pro Vice-Chancellor, Division of Science, Health, Engineering, Architecture and Design Innovation (SHEADI) and Dean of Science.
- 3.4 Members of the DCB are appointed by Pro Vice-Chancellor SHEADI and Dean of Science from amongst staff members who actively engage in and/or supervise research and educational programmes that involve diving and boating, and/or staff members with expertise in H&S policy and risk management. The Chair of the Diving and Boating Committee directly reports to the Dean of Science.

3.6 As per the AAUS requirements, the majority of DBC members shall be active scientific divers (preferably with additional familiarity in small boat operation). If required, additional members with specific boating expertise may be appointed. The preferred committee size is ~8 people, with representation from all Schools within the University that have significant scientific diving and/or boating activity. Beyond this, the committee shall comprise:

1. A senior member of the University's academic staff to serve as Chair; the Chair should be active in scientific diving and boating.
2. The University's Diving Safety Officer, who provides broad technical expertise and routine operational authority related to diving.
3. The University's Boating Safety Officer, who provides broad technical expertise and routine operational authority related to boating.
4. The Director of the Victoria University Coastal Ecology Laboratory, who has knowledge and operational oversight for a large proportion of the University's diving and boating activities.
5. A member of the VUW (or an appropriate School) Health and Safety Committee, with general knowledge of H&S best practice.
6. Other academic staff members to represent the breadth of scientific diving and boating activities from across the University, as appropriate.

Note: Some of these roles may be fulfilled by the same individual.

3.6 Responsibilities of the DBC include developing policies pertaining to scientific diving and boating; providing operational oversight and monitoring performance of relevant activities; investigating accidents or any other unforeseen incidents; identifying risks and risk-owners; and taking measures to mitigate associated risks.

3.7 The DBC normally convenes twice per year but also meets when the need arises. Decisions at DBC meetings are taken by majority vote. The quorum for decision making is five members. The Diving Safety Officer (or delegate) is the only key person required for voting on diving-related matters. The Boating Safety Officer (or delegate) is the only key person required for voting on boating-related matters. While co-opted members can occasionally be called upon for advice, they cannot cast votes in DBC meetings. The Chair of DBC circulates the agenda and associated documents prior to each meeting. With the agreement of members present, DBC may also take into consideration matters that have not been on the agenda. DBC members are expected to declare any potential conflicts of interest.

4. General requirements

4.1 Any research and teaching activity that involves diving or boating is subject to a formal risk assessment. Wherever diving or boating is included as part of a project's proposed activity plan, a risk assessment must be carried out and approved by the DBC (or the nominated DSO/BSO as appropriate). These projects may commence (meaning that field trips may be planned) only after receiving this approval. Field trips for an approved project must be notified in advance, and must provide essential pre-activity planning details such as personnel involved, itineraries, expected return times, and emergency contact details.

4.2 Project registrations, risk assessments and activity plans for diving and boating activities must be lodged through university approved systems. For legislative compliance purposes, information and records must be created, managed, and stored in approved data management platforms.

4.3 A final pre-trip assessment should be made by the dive leader and/or boat skipper.4.4 Requirements specific to diving:

- (a) all diving must comply with the University's Diving Safety Manual.

(b) the University implements a Scientific Diving Programme in accordance with the internationally-recognised standards set by the AAUS. The safe operating procedures and requirements for attaining and maintaining certification and approval to operate as a scientific diver are detailed in the Diving Safety Manual (this document is externally audited and approved by AAUS). The DSO has routine operational authority over diving activities and reports to the DBC.

4.5 Requirements specific to boating:

(a) all boating activities must comply with the University's Boating Safety Manual.

(b) all operation of University-owned vessels in New Zealand waters must comply with Maritime New Zealand's Maritime and Marine Protection Rules. The safe operating procedures and requirements for attaining and maintaining certification and approval to operate as a vessel skipper are detailed in a set of Maritime Transport Operator Plans (these documents are externally audited and approved by Maritime NZ). The BSO has routine operational authority over boating activities and reports to the DBC.

5. Definitions

In this Procedure, unless the context otherwise requires:

AS/NZS	refers to a joint standard adopted both by Standards Australia and New Zealand. AS/NZS 2299.1:2015 refers to <i>Occupational diving operations - Standard operational practice</i> . AS/NZS 2299.2:2002 refers to <i>Occupational diving operations – Scientific diving</i> .
Boating Safety Officer (BSO)	means a university staff member who provides technical expertise and exercises routine operational authority related to boating. The BSO reports to the Diving and Boating Committee.
Diving Safety Officer (DSO)	means a university staff member who provides technical expertise and routine operational authority related to diving. The Victoria DSO reports to the Diving and Boating Committee.

Related Documents and Information

6. Related Documents

[Education and Training Act 2020](#)

[Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#)

[AAUS Standards For Scientific Diving](#)

[Maritime New Zealand – Maritime and marine protection rules](#)

[Boating Safety Manual \(an appendix of the Operations Manual\)](#)

[Diving Safety Manual \(an appendix of the Operations Manual\)](#)

[Guide to the Management of Off-Campus Activities](#)

[Health and Safety Policy](#)

[Information and Records Management and Security Policy](#)

[Off-Campus Activities Policy](#)

7. Document Management and Control

Approver	Pro-Vice-Chancellor SHEADI
Approval Date	25/01/2022
Effective Date	25/01/2022
Last Modified	14/12/2021
Review Date	25/01/2025
Sponsor	Pro-Vice-Chancellor SHEADI
Policy Owner	Dean of Science
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