

OHS pivotal in promoting safety and welfare of workers



OHS students during an industry tour to Vatakoula Gold Mines.

The safety and welfare of everyone at the workplace is paramount as it provides employees a safe and protected environment to work in, which contributes positively to the overall productivity and efficiency of the organisation.

The Fiji National University (FNU) provides training programmes in the area of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) that addresses the need to identify and prevent unsafe workplaces and promote safe working environments.

Offered by the College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST), students who want to make valued contributions to an organisation through the field of health and safety could study in either the Certificate IV or Trade Diploma in OHS courses.

CEST School of Applied Science, Department of OHS Assistant Instructor, Vikrant Nair, said workplace safety for employees had increasingly gained widespread attention and concern due to the substantial safety and health risks it posed for workers.

“Globally, safety and health laws and regulations have increased the demand for professionals in the safety and health fields,” Nair said.

“To avoid the financial impact of workplace injuries, several new roles have been created in workplaces specialising in the safety occupation niche which provides opportunities to individuals who wish to grow with the emerging trends of the businesses.”

FNU’s OHS programmes enhance students’ capacity to initiate positive changes and apply and develop their skills and knowledge to produce strong practical outcomes.

“Students in the programmes will learn to design and implement frameworks for risk management and monitoring, manage change regarding organisation-wide initiatives, research and strategise emerging and complex risks and collaborate across the business on varying initiatives, even those seemingly unrelated to safety.”

“This is important because everyday functions that involve OHS in a workplace includes using personal protection and safety equipment as required by the employer, following safe work procedures, knowing and complying with all regulations.”

“This includes reporting any injury or illness immediately, reporting unsafe acts and unsafe conditions and participating in joint health and safety committees or as a representative.”

“We provide our students with actual case studies to learn from during classroom activities before they undertake the necessary industrial attachment before they graduate. Students join an organisation in the mining, sugar, tourism sectors or other relevant industries.”

He added that students completing the OHS courses had the option of upskilling to degree programmes in fields of study such as Human Resources, Management and Marketing.

Trade Diploma in OHS student Amelia Neitoko said it was an exciting course that amplified her interest in the discipline and enhanced her knowledge and skills.

Neitoko said this would enable her to make effective change in any organisation that she joined.

“Once I have completed the programme, I should be in a position to guide workers on safe practices at the workplace and importantly adhering to OHS standards which will be effective in reducing workplace accidents and injuries, saving companies from costly legal battles,” she stated.

“The advantage of studying this course is that it is a mandatory requirement in most industries and is becoming an integral component of any work environment.”

“Those passionate about worker safety should consider studying this programme as you can work in most industries.”