WHMIS 2015 is a comprehensive hazard identification system for workplace hazardous materials. The following FAQ document has been developed to aid in understanding changes to WHMIS legislation in Ontario and Canada. For additional information, please contact the Office of Risk Management at safety@uOttawa.ca.

1. What is WHMIS 2015?
WHMIS 2015 is the successor to a previously implemented WHMIS training and hazard identification system. WHMIS 2015 updates the way that hazardous materials are classified, identified and labelled.

2. Why is it called “WHMIS 2015”?
WHMIS 2015 is the name that Health Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development have given to WHMIS legislation that was updated in 2015 and featured a three-year transition period. To remain consistent, uOttawa has adopted the same name. The terms “WHMIS 2015”, “new WHMIS”, and “updated WHMIS” all refer to WHMIS 2015.

3. What are the principle differences between WHMIS 1988 and WHMIS 2015?
- Controlled products are now called hazardous products.
- Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) are now called Safety Data Sheets (SDS).
- There are new rules for classifying hazardous products, which are now divided into two major groups of hazards—physical hazards and health hazards— and corresponding new pictograms.
- Container label requirements have changed, including pictograms that correspond to the updated hazard classes.
- The SDS is now divided into sixteen (16) sections, rather than nine (9) sections, and contains more information.

4. How does WHMIS 2015 improve workplace health and safety?
WHMIS 2015 improves health and safety in several ways, including by:
- adding new criteria for classifying hazardous products that states the severity of the hazard;
- addressing some hazardous properties that were not addressed in WHMIS 1988;
- standardizing language on labels and safety data sheets, helping to properly interpret information can be interpreted properly and in a consistent manner, regardless of the supplier, with emergency information appearing first;
- changing the pictograms to make them more visually descriptive and easily understood;
- by facilitating and standardizing processes for international trade in hazardous products, with more than 70 countries having adopted the new hazard identification system.

5. When do the new WHMIS requirements take effect?
The transition from WHMIS 1988 to WHMIS 2015 is a three-phase process. Employer requirements take effect in Phase 3, which begins on September 1, 2018 and ends on November 30, 2018. Employers should only be receiving hazardous products with WHMIS 2015 labels and safety data sheets during Phase 3. By December 1, 2018, the transition to WHMIS 2015 will be complete and there should be no hazardous products in the workplace with WHMIS 1988 labels and/or safety data sheets. All personnel must also have completed WHMIS 2015 training.
6. What are my responsibilities?
The key responsibilities of suppliers, employers and workers found in the WHMIS 2015 legislation remain essentially the same as those they had under WHMIS 1988. Therefore,

Workers must
- Participate in required training (including WHMIS 2015 training);
- Identify and assist in controlling hazards in the workplace;
- Protect themselves and others in the workplace.

The University and its supervisors must
- Educate and train workers on the safe use of hazardous products;
- Ensure hazardous products are properly labelled;
- Prepare workplace labels and safety data sheets (as required);
- Provide access to up-to-date safety data sheets (hard copies or electronic access);
- Demonstrate due diligence in the protection of workers.

7. What do I do with containers that have old (WHMIS 1988) labels?
By December 1, 2018, product labels on containers of hazardous products must meet WHMIS 2015 requirements. If there are products with WHMIS 1988 labels in your lab, workshop or area of responsibility, the supervisor must ensure that:

1. The contents of the container are consumed and the container is properly disposed of prior to December 1, 2018; or
2. The contents of the container is safely disposed of via the uOttawa hazardous waste program prior to December 1, 2018; or
3. The WHMIS 1988-labeled product is decanted into another container and a WHMIS 2015 workplace label is applied to the new container. Workplace labels can be printed via ChemWatch or individually and must contain:
   a. Product identifier (product name matching that on the SDS),
   b. Information for the safe handling of the product*, and
   c. A statement that the safety data sheet is available

*Information for the safe handling of the product refers to precautions that a person must take to minimize potential adverse health effects or injury. These precautions can be conveyed through pictures, words, symbols or equivalent means, and are usually available on the safety data sheet.
8. There are consumer products in my area of responsibility; what are my responsibilities with respect to consumer products?

Consumer products (which are materials intended for consumer use, and provided in volume, such as cleaners, adhesives, lubricants, etc.) are not subject to WHMIS 2015 requirements. However, as an employer, product hazards and safe work procedures must be communicated to personnel using the product. In many cases, SDSs are available from the product supplier and we recommend that they be provided and made available.
9. I maintain a binder or electronic database with WHMIS 1988 MSDS sheets; what should I do to comply with new WHMIS 2015 requirements?
All MSDS (9-section) sheets, whether hard copy or electronic, must be replaced with WHMIS 2015 SDS (16-section) sheets.

10. Where can I obtained updated SDS sheets?
WHMIS 2015 SDS sheets are available from the product supplier and provided at time of purchase. Several suppliers of hazardous materials also maintain electronic copies of SDSs on their website. Generic SDS sheets are available via ChemWatch.

11. How will the WHMIS 2015 workshop be delivered?
The WHMIS 2015 workshop is entirely online. There are no in-class alternatives planned at the moment.

12. What is the passing mark for the quiz?
A user is required to achieve 75% on the quiz.

13. Will there still be categorized workshops?
Yes, two workshops (WHMIS 2015 for Office Workers and WHMIS 2015 for Lab Workers) continue to be offered.

14. How can I access the workshop?
Please use the following link to access the required workshop.
- WHMIS 2015 for Office Workers
- WHMIS 2015 for Laboratory Workers

15. How long does WHMIS 2015 take to complete?
WHMIS 2015 has been designed to take approximately 60 to 75 minutes. In some cases, the workshop may be completed in less/more time.

16. I do not have a uOttawa employee or student ID; how can I take the WHMIS 2015 workshop?
If you do not have a uOttawa employee or student ID, you may register for a guest account. A password will be emailed to the email address you provide. The account is required in order to complete the WHMIS 2015 quiz; however, the workshop content may be browsed without a guest account. The account may also be used to register for other uOttawa workshops.

17. I do not remember my password; what should I do?
Contact the IT Help Desk at ext. 6555.

18. Who is required to complete the workshop?
All workers, which includes academic and support staff and in certain cases students, are required to successfully complete the WHMIS training applicable to their exposure to hazardous materials.
If you work in a lab (for example, a science, engineering or medical lab) or if you handle dangerous products, you must complete the WHMIS 2015 training for personnel working in a laboratory. If you work in an office that deals with a lab (for example, a science, engineering or medicine lab) you must complete the WHMIS 2015 training for clerical staff. In all other cases, the Worker Health and Safety Awareness Workshop already addresses the fundamentals of WHMIS 2015. As a result, if you work in an office that does not deal with a lab, special environments or hazardous product handling, you are not required to complete additional WHMIS 2015 training unless specified by your supervisor.

19. Once I have completed the WHMIS 2015 workshop, where can I obtain my WHMIS certificate?

WHMIS 2015 certificates are sent automatically by email to your registered account (i.e. uOttawa email) immediately following successful completion of WHMIS 2015. Alternatively, certificates are also available in PDF format in your LRS learning profile.

20. If I have taken WHMIS 2015 through another employer, am I required to take it at uOttawa?

Yes: WHMIS 2015 is employer-specific and must be successfully completed at uOttawa.

21. There is a problem with my certificate; to whom should I speak?

Please contact safety@uottawa.ca.

22. I am a visiting researcher or student; can I complete the WHMIS training before arriving at uOttawa?

Yes, if you have been assigned an employee or student number, you can complete the WHMIS 2015 workshop from afar. If you have not yet been assigned an employee or student number, you can register for a guest account.

23. Where can I find more information about WHMIS 2015 requirements?

Contact the Office of Risk Management at safety@uOttawa.ca or the Faculty Health, Safety and Risk Manager. You can also find further information in the following resources:

- Ontario Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development
- Health Canada
- Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety