

Objective: To provide University staff a psychosocially safe place to work.

What is a Psychosocial Hazard?

Psychosocial Hazard are hazards that:

- Arise from or in relation to:
 - o the design or management of work
 - o the working environment
 - o plant at a workplace, or
 - o workplace interactions or behaviours; and
- May cause psychological and physical harm

Psychosocial Injury:

Psychological

Psychological harm or injuries from psychosocial hazards include conditions such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and sleep disorders.

Physical

Physical injuries from psychosocial hazards include musculoskeletal injury, chronic disease, and physical injury following fatigue-related workplace incidents.

Examples of Psychosocial Hazards:

- Job pressures relating to a position and its responsibilities
- Low level of control within a position at work
- Insufficient or inadequate support from management or peers
- Lack of role clarity or clarity of the responsibilities of a position
- Inadequate or insufficient organisational change management
- Inadequate reward and recognition
- Inappropriate or unconstructive organisational justice
- Bullying, harassment (including sexual harassment)
- Conflict within, inappropriate or unconstructive workplace relationships and interactions
- Inadequate or inappropriate physical environment at work
- Violence and aggression at work

Legislative Obligation:

Prevent Harm – This must be implemented systematically and comprehensively:

- Identify the psychosocial hazards
- Assess the risk
- Implement effective control measures to eliminate or minimise risks
- Consult effectively with staff, their representatives and others as required.

Intervene Early – Early identification and management of any risk can help minimise the potential severity of injury and time lost from work. The University:

- Must review control measures and where they are not effective, take action to rectify
- Support staff showing early signs of work-related stress and modify their work duties to suit their circumstances, and
- Provide early assistance for individuals who are an increased risk of injury. This could include providing access to appropriate mental health services.

Support Recovery – The University:

- Should provide early assistance and support to access treatment and rehabilitation services
- Must support timely and sustainable recovery at work or return to work through effective consultation, addressing any remaining psychosocial hazards and risks
- Must review the effectiveness of controls measures to ensure further harm or a new injury does not occur.

Inner Circle – Actions that should occur throughout the three stages and on an ongoing basis:

- Ensuring there is good work design and safe systems of work
- Ensuring effective control of hazards and risk and monitoring and review of controls
- Ensuring staff are adequately trained, informed, and supervised to undertake their role and responsibilities safely and well
- Consulting with relevant staff and their representatives on any health and safety risks
- Ensuring Senior Leaders and Managers are committed to WHS and demonstrate due diligence.



Responsibilities:

University's Officers (Council, ELT and AFRC members):

- Exercise Due Diligence to ensure the University complies with their duties under WHS laws
- Ensure the University has, and uses, appropriate resources and processes to eliminate or minimise risks to psychological health.

Staff, Contractors, and Visitors in the Workplace:

- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety and act in a way that will not adversely affect the health and safety of others.
- Comply, so far as they are reasonably able, with reasonable instructions and work practices.



Related Legislative Considerations¹:

Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA) – the Act sets up the health and safety duties to provide protections from hazards and risks in the workplace. The duties fall not only on the Officers of the University, but also on individual staff members.

Criminal Laws – where incidents of bullying involve an assault or other criminal behaviour, the criminal laws may apply.

Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA) – regulates against the discrimination of groups of people including sex discrimination. Under this Act, the University is required to make reasonable adjustments by making changes to allow staff with mental disorders to perform the inherent requirements of their position.

Privacy Laws – laws regulating the handling and disclosure of personal information and health records. Personal information includes information or opinion about an individual.

Fair Work Act 1994 (SA) – contains measures to address bullying at work. A staff member who is subject to bullying at work can apply to the Fair Work Commission for an order to prevent the bullying at work by an individual or a group of individuals. Under this Act, the University must not take any adverse action against a staff member or prospective staff member because of a disability (such as for accessing sick leave).

Return to Work Act 2014 (SA) – laws that provide a framework for the delivery of support services for staff that have suffered a work injury that assist them to recover from their injury and to return to work (RTW). This Act details the roles and responsibilities of staff and the University in supporting recovery and RTW.

Disclosure by an Employee During Employment – staff are not required to disclose information about a mental health condition to their manager or supervisor if the condition does not affect how they perform the responsibilities of their position or role. However, systems should be in place to ensure staff understand the importance of getting medical advice when their disability or health condition may affect their ability to perform the inherent or essential requirements of their position.

Disclosure During Recruitment Processes – having a mental health condition does not often significantly affect a person's ability to perform the inherent requirements of a role or position. However, during the recruitment process an applicant can be asked if they wish to disclose any known disability or illness (including mental health conditions) that might reasonably be expected to impact their ability to perform the inherent requirements of a position and to identify if any reasonable adjustments may be needed.



Resources Currently Available:

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Manager Assist Program
- Hazard/Incident Reporting and Investigation System
- Safety & Wellbeing at UniSA – online induction training
- Respectful Behaviour – online training (requires update)
- Safety & Wellbeing Local Action Plans
- SASH Training – online module
- BUPA Lifeskills – online Mental Health training
- Enterprise Agreement change and consultation obligations



Resources Needed:

- Due diligence training for the University's defined Officers, and all Directors of Units/Research Institutes
- Implementation Working Group – made up of identified staff within PTC and University subject matter experts



Existing Artefacts - Review and Update as required:

- Health Safety and Injury Management Policy
- Managing Workplace Health and Safety Risks (psychosocial hazard management can be included in this rather than developing a stand-alone procedure)
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Guideline
- Code of Ethical Conduct
- Privacy Policy
- Guide to Equity and Diversity: Treating People with Respect
- Legislated and Ethical Responsibilities of Stagg Guideline
- Identified Diversity and Inclusion Policies and Procedures
- LearnOnline modules (SASH, Respectful Behaviour and S&W at UniSA)



Artefacts Needed or to Consider

- Psychosocial Hazard Risk Assessment Tool ([People at Work](#)) – Organisation Risk Assessment
- Consider Unit level Psychosocial Hazard Risk Assessment – to be an action in the 2024 LAP
- Psychosocial Hazard webpage – amend existing Psychological Safety page



Implementation Plan (People at Work process):

The following Implementation Plan is based on the People at Work process and is consistent with other WHS continuous improvement models/processes that aim to identify the risk, assess the risk, implement appropriate controls and review the effectiveness. The [People at Work Implementation Timeline](#) suggests the project should take approximately 12 weeks, however depending on resourcing and time of year, it is more likely to be undertaken over 4-6 months.

Step 1: Preparing the Workplace

- Leadership Commitment
- Form Implementation Working Group
- Develop Project Plan
- Develop Communications Plan
- Develop Intranet page
- Develop FAQs

Step 2: Undertake Risk Assessment

- Develop People at Work Survey
- Promote People at Work Survey
- Undertake Survey

Step 3: Analyse the Results

- Run People at Work Survey Report
- Form Focus Groups

Step 4: Take Action

- Develop Action Plans
- Identify controls/initiatives required
- Implement Action Plans and controls

Step 5: Review and Improve

- Review Project Plan
- Review Communications Plan
- Review Action Plans
- Review controls and initiative implemented
- Identify continuous improvement opportunities

¹ This section contains extracts from the *Work-Related Psychological Health and Safety: A Systematic Approach to Meeting Your Duties* that was produced by SafeWork Australia