



## Ergonomic Risk Management Procedure

# UNDER REVIEW

<b>Related Policy</b>	<i>Work Health and Safety Policy</i>
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Executive Director – Human Resources
<b>Approved by</b>	Executive Director – Human Resources
<b>Approved and commenced</b>	April 2018
<b>Review by</b>	April 2021
<b>Responsible Organisational Unit</b>	Work Health and Safety Unit – Human Resources

### CONTENTS

1	Objective .....	2
2	Scope .....	2
3	Risk Factors.....	2
4	Procedures for Prevention .....	2
4.1	Job Design and Redesign.....	2
4.2	Duration and Frequency .....	3
4.3	Work Rates.....	3
4.4	Peak Demand.....	3
4.5	Work Breaks .....	3
4.6	Working Hours.....	3
4.7	Workplace Layout.....	4
4.8	Computer and keyboard use.....	4
5	Responsibilities.....	4
6	Definitions and Acronyms .....	5
7	Versioning .....	5

## 1 Objective

The objective of this Procedure is to eliminate the risk of harm due to ergonomic related injury where reasonably practicable and where not reasonably practicable, to minimise the risk of harm so far as reasonably practicable.

## 2 Scope

This procedure applies to ergonomic risk wherever it may arise at a University workplace, and includes risk to workers including staff, students, affiliates and volunteers.

## 3 Risk Factors

Some of the known factors associated with ergonomic risk are:

- awkward body postures;
- poorly designed workstations, equipment, machinery and tools not matched to the worker, including the effects of vibration and sudden impact forces;
- poorly designed tasks, that is, factors such as worker's position, forces required and the design and placement of equipment;
- work organisation factors which may contribute to demands placed on workers such as required output, duration and variation of tasks, number and duration of pauses and the urgency of deadlines;
- inappropriate/poor arrangement of job design, for example, the requirement to perform repetitive movements, sedentary postures, and
- new workers, or those returning to work after an extended absence, being required to perform repetitive movements without a period of adjustment.

Other important factors are the control workers have over the performance of their tasks and their level of job satisfaction and involvement.

## 4 Procedures for Prevention

### 4.1 Job Design and Redesign

Job design is an important key to reducing ergonomic risk, including occupational overuse syndrome (OOS). The aim of job design is to take into account all the factors which affect the work, and to design and arrange the work content and tasks of the whole job to reduce foreseeable risk to the health and safety of the worker.

The manager/supervisor is to ensure that where reasonably practicable, single task, repetitive jobs are avoided or redesigned to eliminate such repetitive tasks, including:

- Job design to include a mixture of repetitive and non-repetitive work. For example, a job involving long periods working at a computer may be redesigned so that job content is varied to include a number of different tasks that are at the same level of responsibility.
- Job rearrangement or redesign to encourage a number of varied activities and postures rather than sitting at one workstation. For example, a printer could be located a distance away from the workstation so that the worker has to leave their desk to retrieve work or introduce an exercise break (getting up from seated postures and stretching has a positive health impact). An important element in job redesign is to avoid sequencing similar tasks consecutively.

#### 4.2 Duration and Frequency

Similar tasks, repeated over long periods, may fatigue muscles and increase the risk of injury.

The Manager/supervisor is to consider how often, and for how long, a task is performed.

#### 4.3 Work Rates

Managers/supervisors are to consult with workers where work rates need to be established to determine realistic and safe work rates.

Worker performance varies between individuals and over time can be influenced by work and equipment factors. In determining safe work rates, some of the factors that need to be considered are:

- physical variations between individuals;
- skills, knowledge and experience of workers;
- type of work and equipment;
- introduction of new work and equipment;
- efficiency of the work process;
- duration of working time; and
- the standard of work required.

#### 4.4 Peak Demand

Many jobs have predictable peak periods of intense work activity which may result in large variations in job demand and as a result people can often spend long hours at the computer, laboratory or other workplace. The increased risks generated during these peak periods may be prevented by long term planning of resources and organisation of tasks. If possible plan and pace the work and if necessary, set limits and expectations on how long people can remain at work during these periods. Also consider ensuring that people take their meal breaks, exercise breaks and sufficient water intake are adequate to prevent fatigue and musculoskeletal disorders developing.

#### 4.5 Work Breaks

Rest breaks are to be provided where the job requires a sustained period of repetitive or static (holding or restraining) activity, and it is not possible to provide effective task variation. The exact length and frequency of such breaks will depend on the nature of the tasks which make up the job. Frequent short breaks, short periods of physical activity a few minutes every half hour are recommended rather than longer less frequent breaks.

#### 4.6 Working Hours

Managers/Supervisors and workers need to be aware of the risk and take appropriate risk mitigation actions where work involves repetitive or forceful movement or both, and/or maintenance of constrained or awkward postures, especially when associated with extended working hours, such as overtime.

#### 4.7 Workplace Layout

The Manager/Supervisor should consider the way the work is laid out for the employee, and the postures and physical demands of the task. Consider the heights of benches and whether items are in easy reach. People of different heights, ages and body dimensions may require different work layouts.

The Manager/Supervisor is to ensure that where a task can be effectively performed from a sitting position that seating matched to the individual and task is provided and maintained.

Where the work cannot be performed effectively from a sitting position and it is possible for workers to sit from time to time while performing the task, the Manager/Supervisor is to ensure that suitable seats are provided to enable workers to take advantage of these opportunities.

Posture should be varied between sitting and standing positions where possible to reduce the effects of tiredness from maintaining one position for too long.

The most appropriate work positions should be determined by consideration of:

- the tasks that are performed;
- the frequency and duration of tasks;
- the materials, equipment and tools used;
- the individuals clutter and housekeeping and the impact on the task being performed;
- the individual's ability to adopt a safe body posture.

#### 4.8 Computer and keyboard use

Where the job involves prolonged and/or repetitive computer and keyboard use, this document should be read in conjunction with the information on ergonomics located on the Work Health and Safety web page for strategies to minimise the incidence of ergonomic risk.

### 5 Responsibilities

**Worker:** To adhere to this procedure a worker must report any early signs of an ergonomic related injury to their manager/supervisor . In some instances workers must be prepared to modify their work practices and environment in accordance with recommendations for corrective actions.

**Managers/Supervisors:** Ensure this procedure is implemented within their area of responsibility. They must as part of a worker's induction discuss:

- duties;
- means of adapting the workstation to the individual's requirements
- the importance of discussing and reporting any discomfort or fatigue associated with the work

station, and the mechanisms for reporting any such discomfort.

**Officers** Provide suitable facilities and resources to ensure the effective implementation of this procedure.

## 6 Definitions and Acronyms

Term/Acronym	Definition
<b>Organisational Unit</b>	Faculty, School, Centre, College, University Institute, other University Entity, Division, Section or University Business Enterprise.
<b>Officer</b>	Members of Council, Deans of Faculties, Heads of Schools and Centres, Directors/Principals of Institutes and Heads of Divisions and Sections and Members of Boards having strategic management responsibility are considered to be Officers pursuant to Section 27 of the Work Health and Safety Act 2012.
<b>Worker</b>	Refers to any staff member, student undertaking work experience, contractor, affiliate or volunteer
<b>Manager/Supervisor</b>	An individual who assumes responsibility for the health or welfare of any other person in a workplace by providing instruction, direction, assistance, advice or service, (which includes those with responsibility for students).
<b>Occupational Overuse Syndrome (OOS)</b>	Occupational Overuse Syndrome, also known as Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) is a collective term for a range of conditions characterised by discomfort or persistent pain in muscles, tendons and other soft tissues, with or without physical manifestations. It is usually associated with tasks which involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• repetitive or forceful movement or both; and/or</li> <li>• maintenance of a constrained or awkward position</li> </ul> Occupational Overuse Syndrome can affect workers from a wide variety of occupations including keyboard operators, musicians, cleaners and maintenance staff.

## 7 Versioning

<b>Former Version(s)</b>	<p>Version 1 – <i>Prevention of Occupational Overuse Syndrome (OOS) Policy; approved March 2000; by OHS Committee. Procedure; revoked by the Work Health and Safety Committee 27 August 2013,</i></p> <p>Version 2 – Ergonomic Risk Management Minimum Standard; reviewed and updated to comply with the new Work Health and Safety Act 2012 and renamed Ergonomic Risk Management, approved November 2013;</p>
--------------------------	---

	Version 3 - Ergonomic Risk Management Procedure ( <i>current document</i> ) content translated into Procedure format to meet compliance under the University Policy Framework; amendment approved by Executive Director, Human Resources; August 2014
<b>Current Version</b>	Version 4 –Ergonomic Risk Management Procedure, approved by Executive Director, Huma Resources; April, 2018