

Managing Work-related Stress Policy

February 2015

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Managing Work-related Stress Policy

Summary

What is this Policy about?

This document sets out the Policy employees and their managers should follow to ensure that the University protects the health, safety and welfare of its employees by recognising that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and that all efforts should be made to identify and reduce workplace stressors. Managers are responsible for implementation and the University is responsible for providing the necessary resources.

Who is this Policy for?

This Policy is for all staff and managers.

How does the University check this Policy is followed?

Human Resources (HR) (including Occupational Health (OH) and Health and Safety (H&S)) will maintain an overview of the impact of the Policy and the University Health and Safety Committee and the Governors' Human Resources Committee will receive regular reports on work-related stress issues and absence.

Who can you contact if you have any queries about this Policy?

Enquiries may be directed to the appropriate HR Adviser and details are available via the HR webpages at <http://www.port.ac.uk/departments/services/humanresources/contactus/hrbusinesspartnerteams/> In addition, enquiries may be directed to the Occupational Health Service on extension 3187.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees. We recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue, acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors and accept our responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- 1.2 We will continue to develop a working environment that promotes the health and well-being of our employees and ensure that appropriate advice, support, counselling and training are provided to maximise employee well-being and assist staff with coping with stress.
- 1.3 To fulfil its commitment and obligations, the University, as far as is reasonably practicable, will provide the necessary resources to implement this Policy. In particular, it will support managers in fulfilling their obligations under this Policy and ensure that the support services referred to in this Policy are adequately resourced.

2. Scope

This Policy will apply to all staff in the University. Managers are responsible for implementation and the University is responsible for providing the necessary resources.

3. Definition of stress

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) define stress as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them'. This makes an important distinction between normal pressure, which can be a motivating factor, and stress, i.e. excessive or sustained pressure, which can be detrimental to health. Different people react to pressure in different ways, what is excessive pressure for one individual may not be for another.

4. Policy

- 4.1 The University will identify workplace stressors as set out by the HSE Management Standards and conduct risk assessments to eliminate stress or minimise the risks from stress. See Appendix A.
- 4.2 The Stress Risk Assessment Form and other relevant information can be found at <http://www.port.ac.uk/departments/services/humanresources/occupationalhealthservice/Stressinformation/> and at Appendix C.
- 4.3 The University will consult with Trade Union Health and Safety Representatives, the Health and Safety Committee and University Negotiating and Consultative Committee (UNCC) on all proposed University-wide action relating to workplace stress.
- 4.4 The University will provide training for managers and supervisory staff in good management practices.
- 4.5 The University will provide confidential counselling for staff affected by stress caused by either work or external factors through the Employee Assistance Programme.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Responsibilities of managers

Managers will, as necessary:

- 5.1.1 Conduct and implement recommendations of individual risk assessments and University-wide recommendations within their area of responsibility.
- 5.1.2 Be aware of and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing workplace stress.
- 5.1.3 Be aware of and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work e.g. bereavement or separation. Refer individuals to Occupational Health (OH) where their health is being affected by stress.
- 5.1.4 Promote good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
- 5.1.5 Facilitate training for staff.
- 5.1.6 Ensure staff are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities.
- 5.1.7 Monitor workloads to ensure that staff are not overloaded.
- 5.1.8 Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking.
- 5.1.9 Monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement.
- 5.1.10 Attend training as requested in good management practice and health and safety.
- 5.1.11 Ensure that bullying and harassment are not tolerated within their area of responsibility.
- 5.1.12 Seek specialist advice from H&S, OH and HR, if necessary, about the above.

5.2 Responsibilities of Occupational Health

Occupational Health will, as necessary:

- 5.2.1 Provide specialist advice and awareness training on stress.
- 5.2.2 Support individuals whose health has been affected by stress and have been referred to OH by their managers. Advise them and their managers and make recommendations on ways in which their health can be optimised and of any adjustments that may support this.
- 5.2.3 Refer staff on to Employee Assistance Programme counsellors or consult with other specialists as required.
- 5.2.4 Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress, in conjunction with Health and Safety.
- 5.2.5 Inform the employer and the Health and Safety Committee of any changes and developments in the field of stress at work.
- 5.2.6 Train and support managers in carrying out and implementing stress risk assessments and hold Managing Stress in the Workplace courses.

5.3 Responsibilities of Human Resources

Human Resources will, as necessary:

- 5.3.1 Give guidance to managers on the Managing Stress Policy.
- 5.3.2 Advise managers and individuals on training requirements.
- 5.3.3 Provide continuing support to managers and individuals and encourage referral to Occupational Health where appropriate.

5.4 Responsibilities of employees

Employees will, as necessary:

- 5.4.1 Be responsible for informing their manager if they feel their job is causing them stress.
- 5.4.2 Raise issues of concern with their line manager, Occupational Health, Safety Representative or HR.
- 5.4.3 Comply with reasonable requests designed to reduce stress.
- 5.4.4 Accept opportunities for counselling when recommended.
- 5.4.5 Participate in training when requested.
- 5.4.6 Attend OH appointments as requested.
- 5.4.7 Use full leave entitlement to support their well-being.

5.5 Responsibilities of Health and Safety

Health and Safety in conjunction with OH will, where possible:

- 5.5.1 Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress.
- 5.5.2 Inform the University, Governors and Health and Safety Committee of any changes and developments in the field of stress at work.
- 5.5.3 Support managers in carrying out stress risk assessments.
- 5.5.4 Monitor and review the Managing Stress Policy.

5.6 Responsibilities of Trade Union Health and Safety Representatives

Trade Union Health and Safety Representatives will be supported by the University to carry out their duties in relation to stress. This could include consultation, communication, training, involvement with the risk assessment process, linking into the implementation of the University's Managing Stress Policy and the HSE's Management Standards, identifying workplace stressors, surveys, inspections, investigations and review and monitoring.

5.7 Responsibilities of the Health and Safety Committee

University Health and Safety Committee will:

- 5.7.1 Ensure the Managing Stress Policy is implemented.
- 5.7.2 Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress.

6. Monitoring/Equality analysis

Monitoring and equality analysis is an important way of finding out whether the measures taken by the University to tackle stress are effective. Where possible, information on the prevalence of stress across the University will be collected via anonymous staff surveys. In addition, anonymous statistics will be collected from a range of sources, including Occupational Health, Harassment Advisers and the Employee Assistance Programme and reported to the Health and Safety Committee. Where patterns of stress are identified through, for example, staff surveys, sickness data, exit interviews, the University will take appropriate action to investigate and address the problem.

Appendix A

Guidance for managers and staff on handling stress

1. Purpose

The purpose of this guidance is to help both managers and staff to identify the causes of stress in themselves and/or in others and ways in which stress can be reduced.

The Policy defines stress and this guidance identifies the most common symptoms of stress, the six main causes of stress and suggested actions to minimise stress.

The University is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees. We recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue, acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors and accept our responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

2. Definition of stress

We all experience periods of pressure in our personal and working lives and short periods of pressure are not necessarily of concern. However, when pressure is sustained and/or excessive this may lead to emotional or physical problems. Stress can also result from having too few demands, as people will become bored, feel undervalued and lack recognition. Stress is not an illness but exposure to excessive and prolonged stress can lead to ill health.

3. Symptoms of stress

Stress affects people in different ways and what one person finds stressful can be normal to another. The way an individual responds to pressure can be influenced by their personality type, coping skills and the support systems they have in place. Recognition of a problem means that appropriate coping mechanisms and support can be sought at an early stage before negative effects lead to emotional difficulties – for example, anxiety and depression – or physical difficulties – for example, pain, alcohol and drug dependency and heart disease. It should be recognised that stress in someone's personal life can impact on their working life and, hence, becomes a work-related issue.

Signs that a person may be having problems can include, for example;

Symptoms:

- Constant tiredness
- Frequent headaches or other aches and pains
- Poor concentration
- Loss of confidence
- Irritability
- Tearfulness
- Poor sleep

Behaviours:

- Indecisiveness
- Poor timekeeping
- Poor performance
- Unusual absence
- Poor judgement
- Inappropriate humour
- Withdrawal
- Increased/decreased eating
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, caffeine

4. **Health and Safety Executive Management Standards for tackling work-related stress**

The HSE has identified six main causes of stress or 'stressors':

Demands of the job: This includes issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment.

Control of the work environment: How much say the person has in the way they do their work.

Support to do the job: How much support and information individuals receive from colleagues and superiors to enable them to do their job and the arrangements in place for concerns to be raised and discussed.

Relationships within the workplace: This includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

Role within the organisation: Whether people understand their role within the organisation and the organisation ensures they do not have conflicting roles.

Management of change: How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.

5. **Actions to minimise stress**

The following identifies under each stressor identified by the HSE examples of practical steps that can be taken to reduce stress. These are not exhaustive lists and there may be many more steps that can be taken depending on the work environment and the people involved. In many situations, it is the employees who know the best way to reduce stress and improve performance so their contribution to any remedy is fundamental.

5.1 **Demands of the job**

- Ensure the amount of work an individual is required to undertake is manageable.
- Ensure the individual has the capability to undertake the work and provide opportunities to develop knowledge and skills.
- Provide appropriate training for the job including training when job requirements change or new technology is introduced.
- Be clear about how the job contributes to the overall function of the department/faculty and how it links with other jobs.
- Hold regular meetings with employees to discuss work plans.

5.2 **Control of the work environment**

- Encourage employees to use their skills and initiative to do their work.
- Encourage employees to give feedback and involve them in decision making and the way work is carried out.
- Review performance with employees to identify strengths and weaknesses, agreeing personal objectives and training and development plans.
- Communicate important information to employees including job related, departmental and University-wide information.

5.3 **Support to do the job**

- Ensure employees know what support is available and how and when to access it.
- Ensure employees know how to access the required resources to do their job.
- Provide regular and constructive feedback.
- Hold one-to-one meetings so that staff have an opportunity to raise any issues and express any concerns confidentially, including personal issues.
- Conduct Performance and Development Reviews (PDR).

5.4 **Relationships within the workplace**

- Promote positive behaviours at work to avoid conflict and ensure fairness.
- Encourage the sharing of information with and between employees.
- Be familiar with policies and procedures to prevent and resolve unacceptable behaviour and where to access them.
- Create an environment where employees feel safe to report unacceptable behaviour.

5.5 **Role within the organisation**

- Ensure, as far as possible, that the different requirements expected of employees are compatible
- Provide sufficient information to enable employees to understand their role and responsibilities
- Ensure each job has an up-to-date job description.
- Ensure requirements placed on employees are clear.

5.6 Management of change

- Provide employees with timely information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes and reduce uncertainty and insecurity.
- Consult employees on changes and provide opportunities for them to influence proposals.
- Raise awareness of the probable impact of any changes to jobs and provide training to support any changes.
- Ensure employees are aware of timetable for changes.
- Provide employees with access to relevant support during changes.
- Ensure appropriate policies and procedures are followed, e.g. Organisational Change, Redeployment and Redundancy Policy (OCRR).

6. Benefits of managing stress

There are clear benefits to preventing work-related stress:

- Quality of working life: employees feel happier at work and perform better.
- Introducing change: can be easier when 'stress' is managed effectively.
- Employment relations: problems can be resolved internally with minimal confrontation.
- Attendance and sickness: attendance goes up and sickness absence goes down when stress is managed.

Appendix B

Sources of advice and support

Health and Safety Executive

Work-related stress: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/>

- Management Standards: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/index.htm>
- Tools and templates: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/downloads.htm>
- HSE Management Standards Indicator Tool: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/pdfs/indicatortool.pdf>
- Are you doing enough?: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/pdfs/suggestions.pdf>
- Line Manager Competency Indicator Tool: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/mcit.htm>

RightManagement (Employee Assistance Programme)

Staff information and advice: 0800 111 6387 (24-hour helpline)
Managers information and advice: 0800 111 6387 6385 (24-hour helpline)
Website: <http://my-eap.com/workplacewellness-home>

If you're outside of work, go to: <http://my-eap.com/workplacewellness-home> and type University of Portsmouth's unique username UPuser (case sensitive).

Human Resources Department

Please look at the HR Department's website or contact the HR Business Partner/HR Adviser for your faculty or service.

Tel: 023 9284 3141

www.port.ac.uk/intranet/humanresources/contactus/

Occupational Health Service

Please refer to the link below or contact reception.

Tel: 023 9284 3187

www.port.ac.uk/occupationalhealthservice

Health and Safety

For specific help, guidance and information regarding conducting stress risk assessments with reference to the Managements Standards.

<http://www.port.ac.uk/departments/services/humanresources/healthandsafety/healthandsafetyteam/>

Useful links

Trade Unions

Please refer to the contact details below:

Unison www.port.ac.uk/staffessentials/generalinformation/unison/

UCU www.portsmouth.web.ucu.org/home/portsmouth-branch-people/

Health and Wellbeing

University website. These pages detail the range of health and wellbeing opportunities that are offered to staff at the University of Portsmouth.

www.port.ac.uk/staffessentials/generalinformation/healthandwellbeing/

Harassment Adviser Network

Please refer to the link below or contact a member of the Equality and Diversity Unit for further information:

www.port.ac.uk/staffessentials/generalinformation/supportnetworks/harassmentadvisernetwork/

Chaplaincy

Chaplaincy can provide a means of contact to representatives of all faiths. Please refer to the link below for further details:

www.port.ac.uk/students/chaplaincy/

Equality and Diversity Unit

Dave Small, Equality and Diversity Manager

Tel: 023 9284 5774

Email: dave.small@port.ac.uk

Good Practice Know How Online Development

Provides articles, tips and guidance for managers and staff on stress related issues.

<https://app.goodpractice.net/#/uni-portsmouth-tfi/login>

ACAS

www.acas.org.uk

ACAS Stress at Work Booklet

[http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/0/9/Acas_Stress_at_work_\(APRIL_2009\)-accessible-version-July-2011.pdf](http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/0/9/Acas_Stress_at_work_(APRIL_2009)-accessible-version-July-2011.pdf)

Identifies causes, symptoms and behaviours associated with stress.

HSE Management Standards (see ACAS guidance) and their use in assessing risks.

Related policies and procedures

Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy

www.port.ac.uk/accesstoinformation/policies/humanresources/filetodownload,13116,en.pdf

Grievance Procedure

www.port.ac.uk/accesstoinformation/policies/humanresources/filetodownload,12778,en.pdf

Disciplinary Procedure

www.port.ac.uk/accesstoinformation/policies/humanresources/filetodownload,12777,en.pdf

Organisational Change, Redeployment and Redundancy

www.port.ac.uk/accesstoinformation/policies/humanresources/filetodownload,13137,en.pdf

Performance Development Review

www.port.ac.uk/departments/services/humanresources/atoz/#P

Equality and Diversity Policy Statement

www.port.ac.uk/accesstoinformation/policies/curriculumandqualityenhancement/studentadviceservices/filetodownload,13937,en.pdf

Legislation

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974


Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Employment Law

Appendix C

Stress Risk Assessment Form

This form is available at <http://www.port.ac.uk/departments/services/humanresources/occupationalhealthservice/Stressinformation/>.



Workplace Stress Risk Assessment form

Risk assessment details			
Subject of risk assessment: <i>(Individual/role/team/location/job type)</i>			
Reason or trigger for risk assessment:			
Assessor's name/title:		Date of assessment:	

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STRESS RISK FACTORS – NB For all factors, steps should be taken to ensure systems are in place locally to respond to individual concerns on a day-to-day basis			
a) Demands: <i>“Issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment.”</i>			
Issues identified	Proposed control measures	Responsibility/ Ownership	Priority level (High, Medium, Low) & Timescale
For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workload/deadlines Hours and patterns of work Individual capabilities assessed, including training needs Mechanisms to flag concerns Physical working environment (temperature, noise, light, etc.) 	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-allocate duties (temporary or permanent) Set achievable demands in relation to workloads and deadlines Give guidance over prioritisation of tasks Adjust work hours/patterns (temporary or permanent) Address training needs and allocate appropriate time for training Ensure appropriate communication mechanisms are in place and are operating effectively (individual and group) Make physical adjustments – with hazards properly controlled Encourage employees to recognise and take responsibility for raising concerns about deadlines/workloads they view as unreasonable 		

b) Control: <i>“How much say the person has in the way they do their work.”</i>			
Issues identified	Proposed control measures	Responsibility/ Ownership	Priority level (High, Medium, Low) & Timescale
For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pattern/pace of work Setting priorities Work patterns, including timing of breaks Opportunities to act on initiative and to utilise/develop skills 	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give appropriate empowerment to staff members Allow appropriate flexibility over work schedules Suggest time management training Offer flexible working Ensure appropriate communication mechanisms are in place and are operating effectively (individual and group) 		

Occupational Health Service – Workplace Stress Risk Assessment form (May 15) 3

c) Support: *"The encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues."*

Issues identified	Proposed control measures	Responsibility/ Ownership	Priority level (High, Medium, Low) & Timescale
<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff feel ill-informed about workplace issues Staff feel they do not have the opportunity to raise concerns Staff feel isolated or unsupported by management/colleagues Support for disability or illness-related issues (including stress) Failure to praise/recognise good performance 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure appropriate communication mechanisms are in place and are operating effectively (individual and group) Refer staff to appropriate existing policies and procedures within the University Make staff aware of supportive mechanisms available within department and wider University and how to access them, such as the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), the Occupational Health Service, Chaplaincy etc. Seek advice from the Occupational Health Service 		

d) Relationships: *"Promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour."*

Issues identified	Proposed control measures	Responsibility/ Ownership	Priority level (High, Medium, Low) & Timescale
<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low team spirit Staff feel bullied, harassed or victimised Staff feel no mechanism exists to enable them to raise issues Staff perceive there to be a lack of awareness of diversity and equality issues 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure appropriate communication mechanisms are in place and are operating effectively (individual and group) Encourage more team working Encourage staff to communicate verbally rather than by email Encourage appropriate communication from management to department to reinforce University position in relation to work interactions Consider management intervention to resolve specific issues appropriately and at an early stage Communicate and make reference to appropriate existing 		

e) Role: *"Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles."*

Issues identified	Proposed control measures	Responsibility/ Ownership	Priority level (High, Medium, Low) & Timescale
<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clarity over role Lack of clarity over who individuals report to Perception of being pulled in different directions by conflicting demands 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure role description clearly defines the role, expectations, reporting lines, etc. – consider any necessary revisions Ensure appropriate communication mechanisms are in place and are operating effectively (individual and group) Make effective use of PDR discussion and core training where applicable (time management and effective communication) 		

f) Change: *"How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation."*

Issues identified	Proposed control measures	Responsibility/ Ownership	Priority level (High, Medium, Low) & Timescale
<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff feel ill-informed about changes to their role/department/ University and how they may be affected by them Staff feel under-supported Staff feel they do not have a voice 	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure appropriate communication mechanisms are in place and are operating effectively (individual and group) Involve/engage/consult staff in a timely manner during key change initiatives, allowing opportunities for staff to feed in their views Explain the reasons and benefits for changes, as well as information on timescales Consider training needs Communicate information to staff in a timely manner 		

Any queries please contact the Occupational Health Service by emailing occupationalhealth@port.ac.uk or telephoning (023) 9284 3187

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