

Manager Guidance for the Stress Management Standards Review Form

What is stress?

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines stress as ‘the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them’.

These excessive pressures can come from either one main, or many differing, sources. When the person feels that they cannot cope with the pressures and their effect feels overwhelming, stress occurs. While stress is not an illness it represents a risk to a person’s well-being and performance at work and can make them ill with what are referred to as Stress Related Illnesses.

This self-directed review form, based on the HSE’s Management Standards for Workplace Stress, has been devised to help both you and any staff you line manage to identify any work concerns and agree realistic and workable ways to tackle these.

Six areas of work design have been identified by the HSE to contribute to stress at work; demand, control, support, role, relationships and change. There may be other contributing factors, which are not included under these headings, and space on the form has been provided to include other issues, which may be affecting a member of staff. Where there are personal difficulties or health problems the individual may wish this to be recorded in very general terms rather than specific details. Any personal information recorded should be managed in line with requirements for GDPR.

Any individual who is worried about stress at work should complete the review form. Individuals are encouraged to use this tool to help them prepare for a discussion with their line manager so their line manager better understands what support they may need to effect change.

We would strongly recommend you direct staff who report, or who have been absent with, stress related illness to complete this assessment.

Explore problems and develop solutions.

The following pages provide some guidance to managers on possible solutions and support to address the person’s concerns. It is for the managers, with guidance from HR, to determine what may or may not reasonably be possible within that person’s area of work.

At the end of the discussion, you should summarise the individuals concerns and any agreed actions with a date (or dates) for review to check issues are resolving.

If adjustments for work are required for a long-term health problem or disability, it may be helpful for the individual to complete the Disability Reasonable adjustments form RA1, which is available from your HR Adviser or through the HR web pages.

If necessary staff can also obtain support and guidance from the University’s Employee Assistance Programme (or EAP) or from the Occupation Health team. Further information on both is available through the Health, Safety and Wellbeing pages on Insite.

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Workload /Job Design: Questions 1.1 to 1.7

Difficulty getting through workload in time available, meeting deadlines or having competing deadlines. Needing or being required to work long hours to get through work. Reporting to or undertaking work for more than one person

Management Actions

Review work load and job design

Review work load, responsibilities and associated deadlines

- are they realistic, reasonable, similar to others in team (but do check workload is reasonable for whole team), meet work load models
- can work be scheduled to be spread more evenly across terms to avoid/minimise peaks

Remove unnecessary work

- is the person doing more than is needed

Review task/work distribution

- can work be delegated or reallocated within work team
- is there any additional support or resource available (temporarily or permanently)

Oversight of total work load where more than one manager or source of work

- communication/ negotiation on priorities between managers
- review deadlines, assist with task planning and negotiation
- cooperation within work and other teams, can it be improved
- support where delays in getting necessary information causing pressure/impacting deadlines

Management support to self-manage and organise time

Support and guidance with prioritisation and managing demands

- work planning and prioritisation, regular meetings and one to ones

Managing and reducing interruptions and distractions from casual enquiries, telephone and email

- alternative information sources/self-help for enquiries
- allocate set times for enquiries, turn taking amongst staff within customer service role
- managing and reducing emails

Manage requests for meetings

- is there a need to attend all, can written feedback/information be given instead
- work planning to allow time for actions after meetings

Quiet space and time to undertake work

- flexibility to work from home, quiet office or other space
- headphones to reduce distractions
- encourage team members to respect each other's time

University courses and support available which may be helpful

- Learning and Development: time management and assertiveness skills
- Counselling services: managing perfectionism and procrastination
- Mentoring and coaching skills and support

Communication: Questions 1.8 to 1.10

Constant communication outside work hours and perceived expectation to be available.

Management Actions

Is there a need in your area for staff to be available or keep in touch when outside work hours?

- clarify expectations, agree time to switch off phone and email, reduce or remove unnecessary out of hours work communications for whole team
- if staff chose to work in the evening ask them setup email delay so sent in morning

Work Challenges: Questions 1.11 to 1.13

Insufficient work or challenge, individual capabilities and skills for the work expected to do

Management Actions

Discuss concerns about workload and lack of challenge

- are there development opportunities to enrich role
- project work, secondment, LDC on-line and taught courses
- flexibility to rotate boring repetitive tasks

Discuss concerns around perceived lack of skills and training needs

- structured induction training for new staff
- staff training when procedures or software changed
- LDC on-line and taught courses

Learning styles and time required will vary between staff, make sure meeting individuals needs

Are there sufficiently detailed procedures for tasks

- involve staff in reviewing and updating work procedures

Rest: Questions 1.14 to 1.20

Concerns about hours of work/work load and patterns of work impacting rest

Management Actions

Is there a culture of working long hours in your area?

- clarify expectations for hours of work
- reduce and remove unnecessary out of hours work: lead by example
- review shifts patterns to ensure staff have adequate time for rest period
- consider HR policies which support flexible working (link)

Review work load and job design

- provide support and guidance with prioritisation and managing demands
- provide support with work planning and allocation of duties while away on leave

Encourage all staff to take the breaks they are entitled to during working day

- encourage staff to take meal breaks away from desk

Check all leave is being taken

- encourage staff to book annual leave and take regular breaks during year

Workplace Hazards and Work Environment: Questions 1.21 to 1.23

Concerns about physical environment, verbal and physical abuse, lone working

Management Actions

Check risk assessments been completed for the work environment and work processes in your areas

- where there are complex risks and outstanding concerns seek advice from your health and safety officer or adviser

Has all relevant health and safety training and information been provided

- health and safety induction and specific health and safety training
- health and safety information A-Z pages

Are the risks of conflict or violence in your work area adequately managed

- consider staff training on managing conflict
- LDC courses

Is there a requirement for lone working, if yes

- is there a policy and arrangements for lone working in place
- have staff been trained on safe working procedures

1. Control**Control: Questions 2.1 to 2.7**

Concerns about the amount of influence staff have on how they do their work

Management Actions

Review how work is organised with your area of responsibility and the level of management oversight needed

- is there scope for staff to set their own work routines and pace of work
- discuss those tasks where the person feels they have the skills to act on their own initiative
- encourage staff to develop new skills to help them undertake new and challenging work
- encourage staff to take responsibility and ownership for their work
- invite staff to contribute towards changes in procedure at development stage

2. Support**Support from my Manager(s) Questions 3.1 to 3.7**

Support from Peers: Questions 3.8 to 3.12 is about the resources, support and encouragement provided by your manager, your colleagues and by the University to help you manage your job

Management Actions

Are regular 1 2 1's held to give regular and constructive feedback on performance

- recognise and acknowledge when people have done a good job, celebrate success
- privacy to discuss any concerns

PDR meetings

- assist with seeking development opportunities, study leave

Regular team meetings, opportunity to ask questions

- actively involve all staff to ensure individuals not left out
- fair and honest culture

Support and encourage staff even when things go wrong

Dealing with poor performance effectively

Dignity at work policy, expected standards of behaviour

Guidelines for Personal Tutors when supporting students

LDC courses

HR policies

Support required from other areas such as HR and OH

3. Relationships

Relationships: Questions 4.1 to 4.6

are about how people work together, respect and behaviour

Management Actions

Dignity at Warwick policy

- discuss policy and expected behaviour standards in team meetings

Dignity at work contacts

Ensure that people are treated fairly and consistently

Review how and when you provide feedback on a member of staffs performance

Investigate allegations of unreasonable behaviour and bullying following HR procedures

Consider mediation (informal or formal) to resolve interpersonal disputes

Learning and Development Video Learning Resources on How to Handle Difficult Situations at Work

4. Role

Role: Questions 5.1 to 5.5

Is about understanding the purpose of your job and being clear about your responsibilities

Management Actions

Review job description is it up to date

- does it provide a clear overview of the role and responsibilities,
- is it realistic in terms of work demand and responsibilities, work load models

Talk through performance expectations and concerns

- standard of performance for jobs
- clarify priorities where conflicting roles
- clear work plans

Regular one to one and team meetings

Consider mentoring and support

5. Change

Change Q 6.1-6.5 is about being appropriately informed about changes at work that may affect you and how you are consulted when changes to your job are being considered

Management Actions

Refer to the information in The Change Framework on Learning and Development pages for further guidance on managing and communicating changes

Listen to and discuss what aspects of any changes the person is concerned about

Involve and consult staff in planning process before change

Regular team meeting and individual communications about any changes

- consultation about how jobs/roles may change and timetable for change(s)
- staff development needs
- resource and time for new initiatives
- support for individuals from manager, HR, counselling services

7. Any Other Concerns

Is there anything else that is or has been a source of stress for you, at work or at home, that may have contributed to you feeling stressed?

Management Actions

Listen to individuals concerns

Direct to other support and information as appropriate

- HR policies including flexible working options
- University counselling web pages
- Occupational health
- Chaplaincy
- Support networks and groups within University and externally

see additional information section for links and other information resources

8. Special Considerations

Do you have any illness, impairment, disability (physical or psychological) or specific learning difference which may affect you or the way you work?

Management Actions

Refer to the University Equality and Diversity policy

Review the information within the University Disability Framework. It is advised staff complete information on Disability Framework complete Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations Form (RA1 form)

Additional guidance is available from your link HR adviser and with Occupational Health referral see additional information section for links and other information resources
information on mental health at work MIND, Dyslexia etc