

## Stress Management Policy

Stress is defined as "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed upon them." There is a difference between pressure (which can be a positive state if managed correctly) and stress, which can be detrimental to health. There is a duty placed on the University under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 the University are required to carry out risk assessments and to develop and maintain suitable arrangements to minimise the potential impact of stress on members of staff. There is also a requirement to arrange for appropriate information and training to be provided.

This policy outlines the core principles and responsibilities relating to stress management and is supported by more detailed arrangements that the University has put in place to deal with work-related stressors and their impact on staff. This policy and supporting arrangements are based on the Health and Safety Executive's Stress Management Standards, and they apply to all members of staff of the University, acknowledging that stress management is a collective responsibility.

Under the provisions of Regulation 26, Safety Regulations and associated University Health and Safety Policy document, it is the duty of all staff, students and others working in the University to comply with this Policy, together with any other instructions, rules and guidance that may apply.

### Core Principles

1. A high level risk institutional assessment of risk is maintained within the University's Risk Profile Tool, which is used to inform the institutional Risk Register as reported to the University's Audit and Risk Committee.
2. Suitable and sufficient stress risk assessments must also be carried out within each department using the University's Stress Risk Assessment Form, and the findings of these risk assessments must be made available to the staff within the respective department.
3. The departmental stress risk assessment must evaluate the adequacy of existing precautions, identify any additional precautions required and include actions to take in the event of an actual or potential stress related illness or absence being reported with a department.
4. Control measures will include identification of appropriate information and training, including consideration of mental health training for staff and managers in particular.
5. Should it become apparent that a member of staff is demonstrating the symptoms of stress then reasonable steps should be taken to support them, and to make them aware of support structures within the University.
6. Should a member of staff report a stress related illness, whether they have been absent from work or not, then an Individual Needs Stress Management form must be completed by the member of staff and their manager or supervisor, calling on support from Human Resources and Occupational Health as necessary.
7. The University will provide access to appropriate confidential counselling provision for those members of staff who have been diagnosed with a stress related illness.
8. The University will consult with Trade Union Representatives on stress related matters and proposed actions relating to the prevention of workplace stress.

9. The University will provide training for all managers and supervisors in good management practices and provide adequate resources to enable managers to implement this stress management policy and supporting arrangement.

## Responsibilities

Heads of Departments are responsible for the implementation of this Policy with regard to the prevention and management of stress related issues within their respective areas, and for the completion and maintenance of departmental stress risk assessments.

Those in a management, leadership or supervisory role are responsible for demonstrating positive behaviours, for minimising the potential for stress and for taking appropriate steps should a member of their team demonstrate symptoms of stress, sign-posting the various forms of support available through the University. They must ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated.

All staff within departments must comply with this Policy and the associated arrangements, instructions and guidance, and should raise issues of concern with line managers, HR, safety representatives or occupational health. They should take an active part in the process of assessing the risk (e.g. completing surveys or providing honest feedback) and accept opportunities for counselling when recommended.

Safety representatives must be meaningfully consulted on any changes to work practices or work design that could precipitate stress, be meaningfully involved in the risk assessment and incident investigation processes, and allowed to support monitoring activities (such as inspections) to ensure that environmental stressors are properly controlled.

Human resources will help monitor the effectiveness of measures to address stress (by collating sickness absence statistics) and provide continuing support to managers and individuals, encouraging referral to counsellors where appropriate.

Occupational Health staff will provide specialist advice and support individuals who have been off sick with stress, advising them on a planned return to work as appropriate, and referring them to workplace counsellors or specialist agencies as required.

The Director of Health and Safety is responsible for advising on the standards and regulations that must be achieved in order to meet legal requirements; for keeping the University's Health and Safety website up to date with the related policy documents; and for ensuring that spot checks and audits are carried out to provide assurance that activities are being carried out in compliance with this Policy.

## Review

This policy will be reviewed when any legal requirements change or at least once every three years.

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