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**Policy on Managing Stress 2025-2028**

#### Policy Statement

##### It is the policy of the University of Chichester (“University”) to manage work related stress and implement supportive measures for Managers to identify and manage work related stress in line with recognised HSE standards for managing stress.

##### The purpose of this policy is to set out established standards for managers and staff on the identification and prevention of work-related stress and provide information in relation to supporting the implementation of these standards.

##### The implementation of this policy is monitored by the Health and Safety Committee including measures to reduce stress and promote workplace health and safety.

##### A review of the policy’s effectiveness will be carried out annually using information obtained through Health and Safety audits and absence monitoring. The Health and Safety team will be responsible for monitoring and review of this policy.

#### Definition

##### The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) defines stress as ‘the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed upon them’. This makes a distinction between ‘pressure’, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and ‘stress’ which can be detrimental to health.

##### A stress response occurs when the actual or perceived pressures on an individual are greater than their ability to cope. We all experience periods of pressure in life and work, and short periods of pressure are not necessarily of concern. However, when pressure is sustained and/or excessive, without the opportunity to recover, this may lead to emotional or physical problems. It is important to recognise the types of pressures that might contribute to feelings of stress in yourself or others and the signs that all may not be well. Pressures might come from:

###### Personal life sources

* Ill-Health
* Relationships
* Family problems
* Home environment
* Neighbour disputes
* Financial difficulties

###### Work life sources

* Lack of control over the way work is done
* Too much or insufficient work load
* Role conflict or lack of role definition
* Underused skills
* Unsatisfactory work relationships
* Lack of support from colleagues
* Lack of feedback
* Lack of clarity about expectations
* Lack of information

##### The way an individual responds to pressure can be influenced by their personality type, coping skills, and the support systems they have in place. Being self-aware can help to identify when and where extra support and personal development can help in moderating the effects of pressure. Recognition of a problem means that appropriate coping mechanisms and support can be sought at an early stage before negative effects lead to emotional or physical problems. Signs that a person may be having difficulties can include:

###### Symptoms

* Constant Tiredness
* Frequent headaches or other aches and pains
* Poor concentration
* Loss of confidence
* Irritability
* Poor sleep

###### Behaviours

* Indecisiveness
* Poor Housekeeping
* Poor performance
* Unusual absence
* Poor judgement
* Inappropriate Humour
* Withdrawal
* Increase/decrease eating habits
* Increased use of alcohol, tobacco or caffeine

##### More information about sources of help and support can be found on the Human Resources page under ‘Employee Wellbeing’ and staff are encouraged to discuss any concerns that they might have with their line manager and/or a Human Resources Officer. All staff have access to the Employee Assistance Programme which offers free emotional and practical support services, for personal and work issues including financial and legal advice, counselling, and more. It is a completely confidential and independent service. Link: [Employee Assistance Programme](https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/resources/for-individuals/)

#### Prevention

##### The University recognises that it has a duty of care towards its staff and a legal obligation to provide a safe working environmentand to ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that staff work in an environment with safe systems of work, by:

* providing a workplace free from harassment and victimisation
* developing sound management practice based on equality of treatment;
* providing a framework of employment, health, safety, and security policies and systems to support managers and staff in minimising the risk of work-related stress;
* effective workload allocation and feedback on performance;
* ensuring good communication throughout the University;
* providing information and training to enable staff to develop their skills and maximise their contribution to the success of the University;
* providing appropriate employee support services including confidential counselling for staff affected by stress caused by work and/or external factors;
* conducting risk assessments to eliminate stress or control the risk from stress in the workplace.

#### Responsibilities

##### Managers

Managers must have an active role in facilitating and supporting staff to do their job effectively and to contribute to the success of the department and the University. To minimise the risk of work-related stress, managers should:

* ensure good communication, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes;
* ensure jobs are designed to avoid conflicting demands and that expectations and the job role are clear;
* monitor workloads, working hours and overtime to ensure that people are not overloaded;
* monitor annual leave arrangements to ensure that staff are taking their entitlement;
* ensure staff are fully trained to undertake the demands of their job and can contribute to decisions about how the job is done;
* ensure there are regular opportunities for feedback on performance e.g. annual DAR reviews, ‘one to one’ meetings and team meetings;
* identify or respond to issues of concern promptly and seek constructive solutions;
* make use of the support and training resources available;
* ensure staff are provided with meaningful training and developmental opportunities;
* ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated;
* be aware of signs of problems and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work e.g. bereavement or separation;
* comply with University policies on health, safety and security;
* seek appropriate advice and support at an early stage if difficulties arise; and
* conduct and implement recommendations of risk assessments within their jurisdiction.

##### Employees

All staff may experience periods of pressure at work, and short periods of pressure are not necessarily of concern. It is the risk from sustained and/or excessive pressure, without the opportunity to recover, that needs to be assessed and measures put in place to control the risk of adverse effects. Employees play an active role in contributing to their own development, the success of the department and the University, and should utilise the resources and support available to carry out their role effectively to minimise the risk of work-related stress. Any issues of concern should be raised as soon as possible with line managers and/or a Human Resources Officer, and staff should accept opportunities for support and help, which may include training, confidential counselling or referral to Occupational Health when recommended. Employees should:

* ensure good communication with colleagues and their manager;
* support colleagues by providing appropriate information and by sharing knowledge and resources where appropriate;
* engage in discussion about their performance and act on feedback;
* raise issues of concern at an early stage and seek constructive solutions;
* make use of the support and training resources available;
* ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated;
* comply with University policies and policies on health, safety and security;
* seek appropriate advice and support at an early stage if difficulties arise.

##### Health and Safety Team:

* offers advice and support to managers in implementing stress risk assessments;
* providing and/or facilitating stress awareness learning and development opportunities, supported by the staff development team;
* monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of measures for reducing stress;
* informing the Health and Safety Committee of any changes and developments in the field of stress at work.

##### Human Resources Team:

* facilitates awareness training through the Professional Development Programme on health and wellbeing and the management of stress. Development sessions can be arranged as required.
* monitors the effectiveness of measures to address stress by collating and reviewing sickness absence statistics.
* provides support to staff on a one-to-one basis which may include referral to Occupational Health or counselling services, where appropriate.

### **5. Risk Assessment and Risk Management**

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has identified six key ‘Management Standards’ that reflect high levels of health, wellbeing and organisational performance. The HSE Management Standards provide a practical framework that the University will use to minimise the impact of work-related stress. Details are provided in full in [**Appendix**](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/docs/stress_apdx1.php)**1.**

### The standards relate:

### **Role**: whether people understand their role within the University and whether the University ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles.

### **Demands**: for example, this might include workload, work patterns, and the work environment.

### **Control:** how much say a person has in the way they do their work.

### **Support:** the encouragement, support and resources provided by the University, line managers and colleagues.

### **Relationships**: promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

### **Change**: how organisational change is managed and communicated.

### A checklist in [**Appendix**](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/docs/stress_apdx2.php) **2** has been developed, using the HSE standards, to provide managers and staff with guidance on the practical steps they can take to identify potential sources of pressure and avoid or address the risk of stress at work.

#### Support and Information

There are various sources of support that assist in the implementation of this policy including:

* Advice from a Human Resources Officer: [HR@chi.ac.uk](mailto:HR@chi.ac.uk). The team may refer to Occupational Health or counselling services, where appropriate
* Advice from the Health and Safety team: [healthandsafety@chi.ac.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@chi.ac.uk)
* Staff development events supporting health and wellbeing and/or to support development to undertake jobs effectively and to develop new skills to meet changing demands: [staffdevelopment@chi.ac.uk](mailto:staffdevelopment@chi.ac.uk)
* Union Representatives (UCU and UNISON) have a key role to play in supporting staff welfare.
* Health and Safety Co-ordinators – Communicate departmental risk assessments and action plans at department meetings.
* Online self-accessing Employee Assistance Programme at [www.educationsupport.org.uk](http://www.educationsupport.org.uk)

**Appendix 1**

**Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Management Standards**

***Standard 1:* Demands:** includes issues like workload, work patterns, and the work environment.

**The standard to aim for is:**

* Employees indicate that they can cope with the demands of their jobs; and
* Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

**What should be happening/states to be achieved:**

* Advice from a Human Resources Officer: [HR@chi.ac.uk](mailto:HR@chi.ac.uk). The team may refer to Occupational Health or counselling services where appropriate
* The University provides employees with adequate and achievable demands concerning the agreed hours and the pattern of working;
* Skills and abilities are matched to the job demands;
* Jobs are designed to be within the capabilities of employees; and
* Employees’ concerns about their work environment are addressed.

**University policies and guidance that support the achievement of Standard 1 include:**

* Guidance on Employee Wellbeing
* Flexible Working Policy
* Hybrid Working Guidance (from Sep 2025)
* Development and Appraisal Report Scheme
* Dignity at Work and Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy
* Guidance on Dealing with Capability and Performance
* Guidance on the operation of the Probationary Scheme
* Induction and mentoring
* Grievance Policy and Procedure
* Employee Handbook
* Professional Development Programme

***Standard 2:* Control:** how much say the person has in the way they do their work.

**The standard to aim for is:**

* Employees indicate that they can have a say about the way they do their work; and
* Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

**What should be happening/states to be achieved:**

* Where possible, employees have control over their pace of work;
* Employees are encouraged to use their skills and initiative to do their work;
* Where possible, employees are encouraged to develop new skills to help them undertake new and challenging pieces of work;
* The University encourages employees to develop their skills;
* Employees have a say over when breaks can be taken; and
* Employees are consulted over their work patterns.

**University policies and procedures that support the achievement of Standard 2 include:**

Those outlined under Standard 1 and also: -

* Outcomes of stress survey.

***Standard 3:* Support:** includes the encouragement, support and resources provided by the University, line managers and colleagues.

**The standard to aim for is:**

* Employees indicate that they receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and superiors; and
* Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

**What should be happening/states to be achieved:**

* The University has policies and procedures to adequately support employees;
* Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to support their staff;
* Systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to support their colleagues;
* Employees know what support is available and how and when to access it;
* Employees know how to access the required resources to do their job; and
* Employees receive regular and constructive feedback.

**University policies and procedures that support the achievement of Standard 3:**

Those outlined under Standard 1, 2 and 3,

***Standard 4:* Relationships:** thisincludes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and deal with unacceptable behaviour.

**The standard to aim for is:**

* Employees indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours, e.g. bullying at work; and
* Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

**What should be happening/states to be achieved:**

* The University promotes positive behaviours at work to avoid conflict and ensure fairness;
* Employees share information relevant to their work;
* The University has policies and procedures to prevent or resolve unacceptable behaviour;
* Systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to deal with unacceptable behaviour;
* Systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to report unacceptable behaviour.

**University policies and procedures that support the achievement of Standard 4 include:**

Those indicated under Standards 1 to 3, and also: -

* Equality and Diversity Policy
* Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Plan
* Consensual Relations Policy
* Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
* Grievance Policy and Procedure

***Standard 5*: Role:** whether people understand their role within the University and whether the University ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles.

**The standard to aim for is:**

* Employees indicate that they understand their role and responsibilities; and
* Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

**What should be happening/states to be achieved:**

* The University ensures that, as far as possible, the different requirements it places upon employees are compatible;
* The University provides information to enable employees to understand their role and responsibilities;
* The University ensures that, as far as possible, the requirements it places upon employees are clear; and
* Systems are in place to enable employees to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their role and responsibilities.

**University policies and procedures that support the achievement of Standard 5 include:**

The documents outlined in Standards 1 to 4, and also: -

* Recruitment Guidelines, including Job Profiles
* Reward, Recognition and Pay Policies and Procedures

***Standard* 6*:* Change:** how organisational change is managed and communicated in the organisation.

**The standard to aim for is:**

* Employees indicate that the University engages them frequently when undergoing an organisational change; and
* Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

**What should be happening/states to be achieved:**

* The University provides employees with timely information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes;
* The University ensures adequate employee consultation on changes and provides opportunities for employees to influence proposals;
* Employees are aware of the probable impact of any changes to their jobs. If necessary, employees are given training to support any changes in their jobs;
* Employees are aware of timetables for changes;
* Employees have access to relevant support during changes.

**University policies and procedures that support the achievement of Standard 6 include:**

* Consultation through department and one-to-one meetings with line managers
* Policy and Guidelines for dealing with Organisational Change
* Information available via University Intranet and All Staff Email

**Appendix 2**

**Managing Stress at Work Risk Assessment**

The University has a duty of care towards its staff and a legal obligation to provide a safe working environment. A risk assessment will help to provide managers and staff with guidance on the practical steps they can take to avoid or address workplace issues that might have an adverse effect on health and performance. The risk assessment will help to identify reasonable adjustments that could be implemented to reduce the risk of adverse effects and/or sources of practical and emotional support at work. A Stress at Work Risk Assessment should be undertaken by the manager with support from an HR officer/manager and with guidance from the Health and Safety Team. Via this checklist, the following steps will assist in the completion of risk assessments.

**There are five steps to any risk assessment:**

1. Identify the hazards that cause stress as explained in the HSE Standards
2. Decide who might be harmed and how
3. Assess the risk and decide if it is currently causing stress
4. Record the findings and decide on any action required to eliminate or reduce stress in the risk assessment
5. Review the assessment as required, to ensure control measures are working

### **Identifying the hazards relating to managing stress at work:**

The key work-related factors with the potential to cause stress-related illness (the risk) in the University are:

* Demands of the job
* Control of work environment
* Support
* Relationships within the workplace
* Role within organisation
* Management of change

### **Decide who might be harmed and how:**

Some people may be more vulnerable to developing work-related stress illness than others. In particular, those who:

* have a history of significant or physical health problems
* have been absent from work due to work-related stress or difficulties with coping in the past
* have personal difficulties which may be unrelated to work
* are inexperienced in their role
* are of a personality type that tends towards overwork or being unable to cope with pressure
* there may be additional factors which will need to be handled sensitively and in confidence

Support and advice are available for managers on how to complete a stress risk assessment with advice provided on how to assess risks and the actions that may be put in place to manage potential and known risks. *It is recommended that each Head of School nominate a member of staff to undertake the British Safety Council on-line training in stress risk assessment.* <https://www.britsafe.org/p/british-safety-council-certificate-in-stress-risk-assessment>

**Assess the risk and decide if it is currently causing stress**

Once potential stressors have been identified, assess the impact of stress on employees. This can include:

* Evaluating physical and mental health indicators, such as reported symptoms or illnesses.
* Analysing employee engagement and job satisfaction levels.
* Examining productivity, performance, and quality of work.
* Considering the effects of stress on workplace relationships and team dynamics.

This will help to prioritise the areas that require the most attention and resources.

#### Record the findings and decide on any action required to eliminate or reduce stress in the risk assessment.

Record significant findings, including.

* the hazards (things that may cause harm)
* who might be harmed and how
* what you are doing to control the risks

**Review the assessment as required, to ensure control measures are working**

You must regularly review the controls you have put in place to make sure they are working. Reviews should be undertaken in conjunction with an HR officer/manager. You should also review the controls if:

* they may no longer be effective
* there are changes in the workplace that could lead to new risks