

Work related Stress Risk Assessment Form

Unit : College of Life Sciences	Individual/Group : Academic staff (Research)	Name of assessor :
Activity : Scientific research	Unique role :	Signed:
Date of assessment :	Date Staff informed:	Date for formal review:

Stress is a natural reaction when actual or perceived demands exceed an individual's ability to cope at anytime. Symptoms of stress can be experienced in physical and/or psychological effects.

A College of Life Sciences (CLS) assessment of the potential/actual causes of work related stress within the activities of academic staff whose primary role is research, and measures/actions for control or resolution.

Type of Stressor: Control

How much say a person has in the way they do their work. Stress may occur if there is: (1) insufficient control over how or when tasks are done; (2) little participation in decision making; (3) highly prescriptive work regimes.

Stressor	Who is Affected?	Control measures	Risk	Further Action	Persons Responsible
Academic staff are required to apply for external funding to support their research, and are the Principal Investigators (PIs) on these grants. A significant proportion of their time can, therefore, involve preparing these applications, and as a result, they are dependent on others to carry out research work within the grant schedule. Working to deadlines (for funding applications, preparation of research material for publication or presentation at conferences etc) is a frequent occurrence.	Academic staff	As PIs, academic staff have control over how the work is carried out, and they make the final decisions regarding research projects. Division and group meetings are held regularly and progress is constantly monitored. Staff have an annual appraisal meeting with their Head of Division (HOD), or, in the case of HODs, with the Director of Research and Dean. Information about deadlines for funding applications is available on the web and from the College Administrator.	L	HODs will continue to encourage PIs to submit funding applications. The College Administrator and HODs will ensure that information required for this is disseminated in good time.	PIs, HODs, College Administrator
Senior academics are involved in management at College and University	Senior academic	Senior academics have access to secretarial and other support services within the College where	L	The College Administrator and other support staff will continue to give advance notice of	Head of College, HODs,

levels and are required to attend meetings and meet deadlines for these roles.	staff	appropriate. Meetings are generally scheduled in the academic calendar so there is adequate notice of these.		meetings and deadlines where possible.	Director of Research and Dean
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Type of Stressor: Demands

Stress may be caused by difficult environmental conditions, workload, work patterns, monotonous work, physically tiring work, work or responsibilities beyond the individual's skills, capacity or capability, high work intensity or pressure to achieve, having too much to do in too little time, too little/too much training for the job, boring or repetitive work or too little to do.

Stressor	Who is Affected?	Control measures	Risk	Further Action	Persons Responsible
Workload is a major issue for academic staff, particularly those who are senior and have commitments beyond their own research group. The nature of life sciences research requires that researchers frequently work outwith normal working hours. The lack of fixed hours can be a cause of stress, particularly to new staff who may feel pressure to work very long hours.	Academic staff	PIs are managers of their own research groups and, as such, have more control than other staff groups over their working hours. They are able to have time off during normal hours and to work at home if they choose. New staff can be guided by more experienced staff or by their HOD. Staff Development runs courses which may be helpful e.g, Time Management.	L/M	All staff should ensure that they take proper breaks and holidays as laid down in their contracts.	PIs, HODs
Unsuitable work environment. Laboratory work is sometimes hazardous and this may be the cause of stress to some staff.	Academic staff	Risk assessments are carried out and acted on. Training in health and safety is given to all staff. Academic staff are experienced lab workers, but basic training relating specifically to the College is given on day one and further training given at induction courses which are held regularly.	L	HODs and PIs are responsible for the health and safety of their researchers and will continue to liaise with the lab manager and H & S personnel to ensure a suitable working environment. Prompt action is taken on any reported problems with heating, ventilation etc.	HODs, PIs, Estates, lab managers
Scientific research is a highly competitive field and there is great pressure to achieve. Funding bodies look for returns for their investment in the form of published papers, scientific advances and possible commercial spin-offs. The future career of an academic researcher is dependent on progress and success. This is a particular	Academic staff	Academics are encouraged to attend and to present papers at relevant scientific meetings. There are regular in-house seminars and research groups hold regular meetings, at which researchers present their data and there is input from other members of the group.	M	The College will continue to encourage PIs to participate in local, national and international meetings, where their work can be widely publicised within their field. The need to publish in the relevant literature will continue to be a high priority.	PIs, HODs, College Administrator.

stress for academics who are on limited term contracts.					
New PIs may be inexperienced in applying for funds, supervising research staff and delegating tasks which, as post-docs, they would have done themselves.	New academic staff	All new PIs are part of a division. Both the HOD and more experienced PIs are available to assist and offer advice	L	HODs will continue to be available for consultation	HODs, PIs
New PIs normally have very little, if any, undergraduate teaching to do, but, if they have, may find the demands of preparing and giving new courses stressful.	New academic staff	College policy is that new PIs are “protected” from any significant teaching commitments for the first two years.	L	College policy will continue to be that new PIs have few, if any, teaching duties.	Head of College, Dean of Learning and Teaching
<p>Type of Stressor: Support <i>The encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues. Stress may be due to inadequate training, isolation from others, remote management, pressure from covering for absence, lack of support from management and coworkers, not being able to balance the demands of work and life outside work.</i></p>					
Stressor	Who is Affected?	Control measures	Risk	Further Action	Persons Responsible
Isolation, remote management or lack of support from management or co-workers.	Academic staff	Interaction and collaboration between individuals and divisions is actively encouraged. There is a seminar programme and the College has an annual residential symposium at which staff meet people from other divisions both professionally and socially. Staff also have the opportunity to meet in coffee rooms and the cafeteria. Each PI is a member of a research division and is responsible to the Head of Division, the Director of Research and Dean and the Head of College. Divisional meetings are held regularly and the Director of Research and Dean and the Head of College are available for discussions. All academic staff have an annual appraisal carried out by their HOD or, in the case of HODs, by the Director of Research and Dean. Personnel Services are also available for consultation.	L	Individual staff who find this a problem should speak to their HOD in the first instance. The College will continue to encourage contacts between colleagues through the seminar programme, the College symposium and social events.	PIs, Head of College, Director of Research and Dean, Personnel Services

Unable to balance life at work and outside work. Many academic staff choose to work additional hours at home, but some may feel pressure to do so and in these cases it may become a problem.	Academic staff	The University has family friendly policies and seeks to help people with this issue if this can be done whilst meeting the organisational needs of the College. The Personnel Officer holds clinics on-site and can provide advice and support, and the University Counselling Service is available to all staff. The Institute of Sport and Exercise also run classes that may be of help.	L/M	Individual staff members should approach their HOD or the Personnel Officer before the problem becomes an emergency.	PIs, HODs, Personnel Services
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Type of Stressor: Relationships

Promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour. Stressors may originate from bullying, harassment and conflict, perceived inequitable treatment, poor management control of workplace behaviour, certain management / supervisory styles, or poor relationships with colleagues.

Stressor	Who is Affected?	Control measures	Risk	Further Action	Persons Responsible
Bullying, harassment, conflict	Academic staff	The University has policies covering all these issues. Personnel Services and the Counselling Service are available for consultation. Bullying and harassment are not tolerated in the College or University	L	Staff will be reminded at intervals that these policies exist and should be used if required. Management to be on the lookout for such behaviour and to deal with it promptly at a local level. Staff should report such incidents at an early stage.	HODs, Personnel Services
Poor management control of workplace behaviour, management/supervisory styles, poor relationships with colleagues	Academic staff	Staff can approach their HOD about this and they will take it further if it cannot be dealt with locally. If the HOD is the perceived problem, the head of College, Director of Research and Dean or Personnel Services can be approached	L	The College will continue to monitor behaviour of all the staff, recognising good practice and dealing with inappropriate behaviour using the University procedures.	Head of College, PIs, HODs, Director of Research and Dean, Personnel Services

Type of Stressor: Role

Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles. Stress may be caused by role conflict, unclear objectives, conflict of demands or additional duties. Staff may feel that their job requires them to behave in conflicting ways at the same time. There may be confusion about how everyone fits in.

Stressor	Who is Affected?	Control measures	Risk	Further Action	Persons Responsible
Conflict of demands or additional duties can be an issue for research academic staff who are required to take on teaching, administrative or managerial roles e.g. Head of Division, These individuals have research groups to run as well as their other roles, and are under the same research pressures as other PIs.	Academic staff	Each division has a secretary and a lab manager and the Head of Division has first call on their services. HODs also have senior post-docs in their labs who can deal with the day to day issues relating to the research activities. The Director of Research and Dean and the Head of School have similar support staff in the College Office. In regard to teaching, most staff who are research-active have relatively small teaching loads and teach mostly senior students in topics that are close to their research interests. Staff Development make available various management courses	L/M	Staff Development will continue to advertise and arrange management courses, both internal and external to the University, and all in managerial positions are encouraged to attend these where suitable.	HODs, Head of College, Director of Research and Dean

Type of Stressor: Change

How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation. When an organisation is planning major change, staff are likely to be discussing job security, whether they will need to relocate, and whether their work environment or terms and conditions will change. These are all potential sources of stress.

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As the College of Life Sciences has developed in the last 5 years, relocation of research groups and other changes have been necessary. This situation is likely to continue	All staff	HODs and PIs are, variously, members of College and University Committees (e.g. Senate, College Executive Management Group) and are therefore aware of future plans. These plans are made known to the PIs at division meetings. Every effort is made to keep staff informed and minimise disruption	M	Senior management will continue to keep staff informed of proposed changes and relocations and discuss with individuals how their research programmes will be accommodated.	Head of College, Director of Research and Dean, HODs, PIs