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EIS-ULA Stress Toolkit



**The Educational Institute of Scotland
Further & Higher Education Office
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Universities – psychosocially dangerous places to work

The first part of this document seeks to define workplace stress and give some background information on workplace stress. The second – and most important – part of this document is a *workplace stress toolkit* for members. The toolkit should help members to identify potential workplace hazards causing stress and then identify ways in which the risk of these hazards may be reduced.

Reducing workplace stress will not only improve members' health and wellbeing, but also the quality of their work, which is naturally in the interests of staff, students and their Institutions. The design of the workplace (including organisation, roles, structures, communications etc) is the key in considering workplace stress, together with the principles of openness and transparency in the workplace that should underpin all activity.

Duties of the Employer

The UK has had a tradition of Health and Safety at Work for over 150 years, with the present system being underpinned by the Health & Safety at Work Act of 1974. Employers have legal responsibilities in respect of the health and safety of their employees; a duty of care under civil law and criminal liability under the Health & Safety at Work Act.

ACAS guidance¹ states that "*Employers have a duty of care to their employees, which means that they should take all steps which are reasonably possible to ensure their health, safety and wellbeing.*" An employer's duty of care to its employees includes mental as well as physical well-being.

Employers have a duty to identify potential cases of stress and reduce these before they have an impact on employees. This is set out in the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999), which requires employers to undertake suitable and sufficient risk assessments on all risks to employees, including the risk of stress related ill health arising from work.

The use of the Health & Safety Executive's (HSE) Management Standards is recommended by the EIS², including the HSE Management Standards Indicator Tool.

Personal Injury Claims & Workplace Stress

Personal injury claims may be made by employees who have suffered an injury or illness caused by an employer's negligence. The EIS supports members with personal injury claims, which must be lodged in the civil courts. Personal injury claims sometimes lead to compensation for members, although they are usually settled out of court.

A personal injury can be a physical injury, disease, illness, or a psychological injury or illness. An employee with a psychological injury caused by workplace stress by a negligent employer may raise a personal injury claim against their employer.

Whilst there are precedents for workplace stress related personal injury claims, the stress route is regarded as being difficult with some generally accepted hurdles. These hurdles being

¹ <http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3751>

² EIS Stress at Work Policy (2012)

the severity of the psychological injury and its causation, together with the fact that such an injury should have been foreseeable to the employer.

Employers may also be criminally prosecuted if they have breached Health & Safety legislation, potentially leading to fines and imprisonment³.

Defining Workplace Stress

The Health & Safety Executive's formal definition of work related stress⁴ is: *"The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them at work"*.

One of the underlining principles of the Health & Safety at Work Act is that no occupation or workplace is inherently unsafe. In other words, no employer can simply rely on the nature of the work to explain away workplace injuries; this would include injuries caused by workplace stress.

Symptoms of workplace stress

Stress can manifest in individuals in many ways including physical symptoms, changes in normal behaviour and emotional symptoms. These symptoms can develop into health conditions including depression and anxiety, heart disease and irritable bowel syndrome.

Physical symptoms

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• palpitations• raised blood pressure• tightness of chest/chest pains• headaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• abdominal cramps• nausea• sleep disturbance/tiredness• aching and tense muscles/neck and backache
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Behavioural symptoms

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• becoming withdrawn and not wanting to socialise• increased alcohol, nicotine or drug intake• under-eat or over-eat• become accident prone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• become impatient, aggressive or compulsive• working longer hours – not taking breaks• no longer having time for leisure activities
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³ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-33444514>

⁴ <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/furtheradvice/whatisstress.htm>

Emotional symptoms

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• irritability• anger• negative thoughts• restlessness• increased anxiety• increased alertness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• unnecessary guilt• panic• mood swings• tearful• loss of motivation
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Stress can also manifest in groups and collective group symptoms are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• poor performance• increased workplace disputes within group• increased grievances and complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• increased sickness absence• increased staff turnover
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How Significant is the Workplace Stress Problem?

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) began its latest (2009) European Risk Observatory Report⁵ with:

"Work-related stress is one of the biggest health and safety challenges that we face in Europe. Stress is the second most frequently reported work-related health problem, affecting 22% of workers from the EU 27 (in 2005), and the number of people suffering from stress-related conditions caused or made worse by work is likely to increase.

Studies suggest that stress is a factor in between 50% and 60% of all lost working days. This represents a huge cost in terms of both human distress and impaired economic performance".

The Health and Safety Executive reports on the stress-related and psychological disorders in Great Britain 2014 using the latest estimates from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), the main findings are copied below⁶:

- *The total number of cases of work-related stress, depression or anxiety in 2013/14 was 487,000 (39%) out of a total of 1,241,000 cases for all work-related illnesses.*
- *The number of new cases of work-related stress, depression or anxiety in 2013/14 was 244,000.*
- *The rates of work-related stress, depression or anxiety, for both total and new cases, have remained broadly flat for more than a decade.*
- *The total number of working days lost due to stress, depression or anxiety was 11.3 million in 2013/14, an average of 23 days per case of stress, depression or anxiety.*

⁵ <https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/reports/TE-81-08-478-EN-C> OSH in figures stress at work

⁶ <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/stress/>

- *The industries that reported the highest rates of total cases of work-related stress, depression or anxiety (three-year average) were human health and social work, education and public administration and defence.*
- *The occupations that reported the highest rates of total cases of work-related stress, depression or anxiety (three-year average) were health professionals (in particular nurses), teaching and educational professionals, and health and social care associate professionals (in particular welfare and housing associate professionals).*

It is worth noting that teaching professionals are regularly cited as an occupation with a high amount of work-related stress.

The 2014 EIS survey of members found that 60% of EIS-ULA members stated that they were 'occasionally stressed' and a further 33% stated that they were 'stressed all of the time'.

Workplace Psychosocial Hazards & Risks

The 1960's saw the emergence of psychosocial work environment research and occupational psychology. During this time, there was a paradigm shift away from looking at workplace stress from the individual workers perspective, to an examination of the whole work environment on worker's health – including work design and psychosocial hazards arising from work.

Cox and Griffiths (1995) provide a simpler definition of psychosocial hazards: "*... those aspects of work design and the organisation and management of work, and their social and environmental context, which may have the potential to cause psychological or physical harm*".

EU-OSHA carried out a survey on new and emerging risks (ESENER⁷) that explored how health and safety risks are managed in workplaces, with a particular focus on psychosocial risks. The survey's Report⁸ was published in 2010 and stated;

"In particular, work-related stress, violence and harassment are now widely recognised as major challenges to occupational health and safety. The concern about these risks is growing due to the magnitude of the problem".

In 2014, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) published its second European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER-2⁹). Psychosocial risk factors are perceived as more challenging than others; almost one in five of the establishments that report having to deal with difficult customers (including students) or experiencing time pressure also indicate that they lack information or adequate tools to deal with the risk effectively.

The EU Reports have been distilled into parts of the EU-OSHA website. Psychosocial risks are well detailed on their website¹⁰ and worth quoting at length:

⁷ <https://osha.europa.eu/en/surveys-and-statistics-osh/esener> EU-OSHA's European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER) is an extensive survey looking at how safety and health risks are managed in European workplaces

⁸ https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/reports/esener1_osh_management

⁹ <https://osha.europa.eu/en/tools-and-publications/publications/reports/esener-ii-summary.pdf/view>

¹⁰ <https://osha.europa.eu/en/topics/stress/index.html>

"Psychosocial risks arise from poor work design, organisation and management, as well as a poor social context of work, and they may result in negative psychological, physical and social outcomes such as work-related stress, burnout or depression. Some examples of working conditions leading to psychosocial risks are:

- *excessive workloads;*
- *conflicting demands and lack of role clarity;*
- *lack of involvement in making decisions that affect the worker and lack of influence over the way the job is done;*
- *poorly managed organisational change, job insecurity;*
- *ineffective communication, lack of support from management or colleagues;*
- *psychological and sexual harassment, third party violence.*

When considering the job demands, it is important not to confuse psychosocial risks such as excessive workload with conditions where, although stimulating and sometimes challenging, there is a supportive work environment in which workers are well trained and motivated to perform to the best of their ability. A good psychosocial environment enhances good performance and personal development, as well as workers' mental and physical well-being.

Workers experience stress when the demands of their job are greater than their capacity to cope with them".

Universities – why so increasingly stressful?

Traditionally, academic staff within universities were regarded as making up a low stress occupation¹¹ arising from high levels of job control on teaching and research (i.e. autonomy), low management oversight and high levels of job security. This reflected a collegiate¹² manner of working associated with universities, with a distributive model of management.

In recent times, universities have become regarded as more stressful places for staff. From the 1990's onwards, a number of articles¹³ began to identify the increasingly stressful nature of academic work within universities – both within the UK, and other countries.

In the EIS workload and wellbeing survey of 2014, EIS-ULA members were the highest scoring group of EIS members with respect to workplace stress. The same survey identified the two clear aspects of work that gave EIS-ULA members the most work were; 'workload' (42%) and 'dealing with management' (23%), the next two closest factors were 'dealing with colleagues' (6%) and 'dealing with students' (6%).

In terms of the amount casework support carried out by the EIS for EIS-ULA members, the number of work related stress cases is disproportionately high. Some potential stressors that may lead to high levels of workplace stress in universities staff are:

¹¹ Fisher, 1994; French et al, 1982; also <http://www.personneltoday.com/hr/stress-in-the-world-of-academia/>

¹² Gmelch et al, 1984

¹³ Winefield, 2000; Fisher, 1994 Book: *Stress in Academic Life*, Gillespie, 2001

1. Hierarchical management practices – leading to an erosion of job control
2. The importance of inter-personal relationships with line managers and peers – with increasing levels of conflict
3. Variable and inconsistent workload allocation
4. Unrealistic deadlines
5. Pressure to publish internationally recognised peer reviewed articles¹⁴ – some Scottish universities are converting non-publishing lecturers to teaching fellows
6. Pressure to obtain grant funding – and to show 'impact'
7. Staff turnover – particularly the effect on remaining staff with increasing numbers of staff leaving on voluntary severance deals
8. Limited mentoring or professional career development – no career pathway with staff often left to 'sink or swim'.
9. Increasing student power (aka the Student Voice)
10. Increasing student to staff ratios
11. Email communications, large volume of emails with expectations of a rapid response and inappropriate use of emails
12. Contractual insecurity arising from casual contracts including zero hours contracts

The impact on academic staff of year-on-year real terms pay cuts is also an on-going stressor, as evidenced by consistent votes of the EIS-ULA membership in support of industrial action to pursue improved pay.

Career development is a particular stressor for many EIS members. Post-92 Universities are teaching orientated and promotions for lecturers involve taking greater responsibility for running programmes or courses. The older universities in Scotland tend to promote lecturers on the quantity and quality of peer reviewed research articles and research grants. These two different approaches lead to limited staff crossover between the pre-92 and post-92 HEIs. For teaching fellows in any university, career development or prospects of promotion are bleak.

The over-reliance on emailed communications is a stressor for many staff. Many Institutions do not have communication protocols and do not guide staff and students as to what is reasonable in terms of response times or email content. Emails should not replace meetings. Emails sent outwith normal working hours should be considered as being sent the following working day – and responded to in due course. Checking and responding to workplace emails outwith normal working hours is unhealthy in the view of the EIS.

¹⁴ Colloquially known as “publish or perish”

Work Design

The WHO website states:

"Work-related stress can be caused by poor work organisation (the way we design jobs and work systems, and the way we manage them), by poor work design (for example, lack of control over work processes), poor management, unsatisfactory working conditions, and lack of support from colleagues and supervisors".

The ILO (International Labour Office) states¹⁵:

"Work-related stress is determined by psychosocial hazards found in: work organization, work design, working conditions and labour relations".

An effective workplace design encompassing organisation and work design can reduce stress. A well designed workplace therefore goes far beyond the physical environment of the workplace. Although the physical environment can be an important contributor to occupational stress, such as lack of control over the environment, distractions from co-workers in open plan/shared working environments, lack of privacy, noise, crowding, and environmental deprivations (lack of sunlight etc).

A well designed workplace should include the element of 'Job Design' (within a wider 'work design') incorporating social psychological concepts. The 'Job Characteristics Theory' (JCT) model designed by Hackman and Oldham¹⁶ is based on the idea that the design of a job – and therefore its tasks – is key to employee motivation.

Health & Safety Executive – Dealing with Workplace Stress & Stress Indicator Tool

The importance of 'work design' is reflected in the Health and Safety Executive's "Management Standards"¹⁷ that define the characteristics, or culture, of an organisation where the risks from work related stress are being effectively managed and controlled.

The Management Standards cover six key areas of work design that, if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and well-being, lower productivity and increased sickness absence. In other words, the six Management Standards cover the primary sources of stress at work. These are:

Demands – this includes issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment.

Control – how much say the person has in the way they do their work.

Support – this includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.

Relationships – this includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

¹⁵ [http://www.ilo.org/safework/areasofwork/workplace-health-promotion-and-well-being/WCMS_108557/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/safework/areasofwork/workplace-health-promotion-and-well-being/WCMS_108557/lang-en/index.htm)

¹⁶ Hackman and Oldham, 'Organizational Behavior and Human Performance' Volume 16, Issue 2 1976

¹⁷ <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/>

Role – whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles.

Change – how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.

Clearly the application of these Management Standards can help make a better workplace and the EIS commends them to universities.

The HSE has developed a stress indicator tool¹⁸ that can be used to measure how an organisation is meeting the stress standards. The stress indicator tool includes a survey consisting of 35 items that ask about 'working conditions' known to be potential causes of work related stress. These working conditions correspond to the six stressors of the Management Standards. The employee answers according to how they feel about these aspects of their work. **The EIS commends the annual use of the HSE stress tool within universities.**

If an Employer does not use the HSE's Stress Indicator Tool they still have a legal requirement to generate a risk assessment on workplace stress.

The EIS also commends the work of HESH¹⁹ which has its membership drawn from the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA), the Trade Unions and the HSE. The EIS believes that HEIs should implement HESH guidance and recommendations. The CHASTE project formerly supported health and safety in the Scottish tertiary sector – and the EIS hopes that such a project could be restarted to provide additional support to the tertiary sector.

The EIS believes that members in Higher Education are very susceptible²⁰ to workplace stress, and to situations involving bullying due to workload, poor work design and poor management within universities.

The Work Foundation released the report "Stress at Work"²¹ which sets out the view that workload (i.e. first Management Standard) is the most significant cause of workplace stress. The Report found that:

- Workload is the most pervasive factor linked to work-related stress.
- Factors other than workloads include cuts in staff, change, long hours, bullying, shift work and sexual or racial harassment.
- There is little change in the relative importance of any of the factors linked to work-related stress since 2000.

Membership surveys are leading the EIS to become increasingly convinced that the single largest factor in workplace stress is workload, closely followed by dealing with management.

¹⁸ <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/step2/surveys.htm>

¹⁹ <http://www.ucea.ac.uk/en/empres/hands/hesh/>

²⁰ An internal review of the EIS' serious cases involving HE staff between 2009 and 2014 found that 77 of the 114 cases involved allegations of bullying or management treating the complainant less favourably than colleagues

²¹ http://www.theworkfoundation.com/downloadpublication/report/69_69_stress_at_work.pdf

Absenteeism and Presenteeism

Historically, employers have been worried with staff taking too much time off work and have implemented attendance policies to monitor, influence and control time-off due to illness and other reasons. There is a view that sickness absence for academic staff is under-reported, potentially because attendance at the workplace is not a requirement for most academics on a day-by-day basis. Any under-reporting of sickness should be a concern for both staff and Institutions as it makes identifying emerging trends difficult and it masks information that could trigger an Institutional support mechanism – such as Occupational Health or discussions on workload.

Presenteeism²², the act of attending work whilst sick or when the person should normally be absent, is an increasing problem in the workplace. Some recent reports²³ estimate that employers have greater losses in productivity from presenteeism than from absenteeism, identifying that staff attending work whilst sick make less of a contribution (i.e. are less productive). The contagious effects of sickness on healthy colleagues should also not be ignored. Institutions also need to be more willing to recommend or to instruct their staff to go home if they believe it is appropriate.

The EIS recommends staff take time-off whilst ill and avoid the pitfalls of presenteeism.

The EIS also recommends that staff report illnesses that they suffer during their annual leave to employers. There are two advantages to this, firstly some of the annual leave may be converted into sick leave thus safeguarding annual leave and secondly it ensures that employers knows about their employees' history of illnesses which it should monitor – and use to support staff.

²² <http://www.choixdecariere.com/pdf/6573/2010/Johns2010.pdf> is an excellent introduction to presenteeism

²³ In 2011, the UK's Centre for Mental Health calculated that presenteeism from mental ill health alone costs the UK economy £15.1 billion per annum, while absenteeism costs £8.4 billion (<http://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/managing-presenteeism>) similar statistics have been generated elsewhere, eg Booz & Company 2011 estimated that in general, the annual sickness and presenteeism cost per employee in Germany to be €1,199 and €2,399 respectively.

EIS-ULA Toolkit to Mitigate Workplace Stress in the University Sector

University lecturers and researchers should be amongst the most autonomous of professions as they are largely responsible for planning and delivering their work by exercising their professional judgement.

Several factors affect workplace stress, some of these factors can be influenced and changed by individuals whilst other factors can only be influenced and changed at an institutional level – and should be approached through the EIS-ULA Branch.

In Tables 2 and 3, column 3 outlines the employers' duties and suggested good practices. It is the EIS Branch's role to ensure these are implemented across the HEI – and applied to individual staff.

Sadly, members cannot always rely on their employer to actively protect them from workplace stress and therefore column 4 of Tables 2 and 3 sets out how individuals may act to reduce the likelihood of suffering from workplace stress.

EIS recommends that members who suffer from stress symptoms or are advised by family/friends/colleagues that they may be suffering from stress should seek medical advice and notify their employer as soon as possible.

The EIS also recommends members attend any Occupational Health (OH) or counselling service that is offered by an employer if they feel that they are suffering from the symptoms of workplace stress. All too often members suffer in silence for too long - thinking things will get better – whilst their health suffers.

The EIS also recommends members seek advice from their EIS Branch Representative or EIS Health & Safety Representative on workplace stress and support in advising the University.

EIS-ULA Workplace Stress Toolkit

Table 1: Health

Whilst your employer has a legal duty to maintain your health and welfare, members should not overly rely on employers to do so since most employers are reactive rather than pro-active in the area of workplace stress. Whilst the EIS Branch will be acting to make your HEI a better employer and pushing for the Employer to follow through on good practices identified in the first column, staff should monitor their health – and seek medical advice at an early opportunity. They should also inform their employer if there are any health issues – including the symptoms of workplace stress.

If you do not notify your employer i.e. your manager and/or HR that you are suffering workplace stress then they may not be held legally responsible for any subsequent personal injury.

The Employer's responsibilities and good practice	The Employee's role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Institution needs to monitor its staff's health and individual record of absences with a view to support staff wellbeing ○ The Institution should have a mechanism for identifying staff showing the symptoms of work-related stress and supporting them ○ The Institution should use the HSE's Stress Survey Tool each year and follow up on its findings ○ Managers who notice that their staff, or that are told by other staff of health concerns, should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Discuss workload and other stressors ➤ Make referrals to Occupational Health or counselling ○ The Institution should have a properly resourced and funded return to work strategy supported by HR for those persons returning to work from any prolonged absence caused by illness or bereavement – which should generate an agreed return to work plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff need to inform their employer of any serious illnesses, even those that take place during annual leave – thus enabling annual leave to be considered as sick leave thus restoring annual leave entitlement and also to ensure the Institution has a clear idea of staff health • Staff who return to work after any illness or bereavement are more likely to have workplace stress symptoms – and thus need to manage their returns carefully, and ensure a phased return with a reduced workload • Staff should ensure that they do not ignore the symptoms of illness and should seek medical advice at the earliest opportunity • Staff should not feel that they must attend work even if they feel ill or sick – i.e. avoid presenteeism

Table 2: Content of the Work

The EIS Branch will be acting to make your HEI a better employer and pushing for it to implement the duties, responsibilities and good practices identified in the third column.

The final column sets out ways in which the employee can reduce the risk of suffering from workplace stress.

Job Characteristics	Psychosocial Hazards to Employees	Reducing risk from psychosocial hazards – the Employer’s role & responsibilities	Reducing risk from psychosocial hazards – the Employee’s role
Job content	Lack of variety, fragmented or meaningless work, under use of skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Activity Plan (or equivalent) is crucial in determining the work content, workload (i.e. amount), pace and means of control (i.e. review) ○ An academics Activity Plan (or equivalent) should be agreed with the academic – resulting in agreed objectives Academic’s work should be varied involving a mix of teaching and research ○ The teaching load also needs to be mixed delivering a range of courses at a range of levels ○ Proper matching of academic’s skills with her/his work ○ Workload allocation needs to be transparent with staff within the same areas being aware of each other’s work ○ The Institute and staff should critically review how work is done and whether it is best way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff need to ensure that they understand their contracts and whether their workload allocation procedure is contractual (such as HE2000²⁴) and whether their agreement is required or whether it may be imposed by their manager • Staff need to be willing to robustly discuss the content of their workload and decline work that they think is unsuitable if their agreement is needed • Staff need to ask for additional training or time for new areas and not be afraid to compare what they do with others in the department • Staff should seek to undertake teaching at all levels, even if this means pushing one’s ‘comfort zone’ • Critically review how their own work is done and whether it is best way

²⁴ HE2000 contracts in place in the Post-92 sector have workload allocations that must be agreed between the manager and the academic staff member

Job Characteristics	Psychosocial Hazards to Employees	Reducing risk from psychosocial hazards – the Employer’s role & responsibilities	Reducing risk from psychosocial hazards – the Employee’s role
Job content	Performance management / appraisal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Performance management/appraisal needs to be honest and robust with a view to improving staff’s work – and should be a constructive experience ○ Performance monitoring and feedback should be an ongoing activity and not simply an annual event ○ Where possible, performance management/appraisal needs to be evidence based ○ Concerns about a staff member’s work should be raised with them directly and no change made with discussing the reason for that change honestly – e.g. no academic should be blocked from teaching a Master’s programme due to quality concerns without these concerns being raised in the past ○ The concept of early intervention should be practiced with quality concerns thereby giving staff the opportunity to improve or address the concerns before any change is imposed by the Institution ○ The Institution should not rush into disciplinary or capability proceedings and use them as a last resort by seeking to deal with issues as quickly, constructively and informally as possible ○ The institution should monitor the implementation of its disciplinary, capability and grievance policies and address any ‘hotspots’ within the Institution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff should be aware of their Institution’s view of their strengths and weaknesses, thereby preventing any misconceptions • Staff should be honest about their strengths and weakness and be willing to engage with the Institution on a continual improvement basis • Staff who identify that they are being treated differently from colleagues e.g. lower level teaching, less research, fewer opportunities need to address this with their line managers etc • It is in the interests of staff and the Institution as a whole to engage with any early intervention programme • Staff and in particular managers should only initiate formal procedures such as disciplinary, capability and grievance policies in the last resort

Job Characteristics	Psychosocial Hazards to Employees	Reducing risk from psychosocial hazards – the Employer’s role & responsibilities	Reducing risk from psychosocial hazards – the Employee’s role
Workload and work pace	Work overload or under load, pacing, high levels of time pressure, continually subject to deadlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Effective workload (volume) allocation structure which fairly allocates work between staff ○ The Institution needs to have an effective means of measuring and quantifying work ○ Volume of work should be agreed between the academic and the Institution ○ Institutional calendar of activities/deadlines should be shared with staff in the previous year ○ The workload must be matched to time available for each task, and the time allocated should be based on contracted weekly hours without relying on weekend or evening work ○ The Institution needs to have the appropriate resources including the appropriate number of staff to ensure that staff’ workload is not excessive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff should use their experience to identify bottlenecks of excessive activity such as assessment and work with line managers to mitigate their effects • Staff need to plan their work in advance using the Institutional/Departmental calendar of activities to create their own individual calendar of activities which is then aligned to their diary • Staff need to ask for support - or extended deadlines - if they find they are unable to meet deadlines • Staff need to approach their Institution if they feel their workload is excessive - one sign of this is significant and regular work at night or over weekends

Job Characteristics	Psychosocial Hazards to Employees	Reducing risk from psychosocial hazards – the Employer’s role & responsibilities	Reducing risk from psychosocial hazards – the Employee’s role
Workload and work pace	Teaching, research, scholarly activity and administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lecturers and HE2000 contract holders have a contractual entitlement to carry out research and the Institution should ensure staff have a fair balance of lecturing and research ○ A number of institutions have research and innovation offices and academic practise development teams both of which should be resources for managers and individual academics to call on ○ Institution should provide access to mentors and coaches to support staff personal development, especially in research ○ It should be recognised that failure to carry out research and publish peer reviewed articles may lead to a loss of skills and stymie career development ○ Research activity should be encouraged by all Institutions by the use of research mentors, use of co-authorship or acting as research assistant, access to networks to meet other researchers in same field, regular overview of progress and targeted support ○ Teaching loads must be appropriate and fairly distributed, with sufficient time to allow preparation and assessment ○ Scholarly activity should not be considered as a substitute for research ○ Teaching fellows (or equivalent) should not be considered as second class academics and they should have a clear career path allowing advancement and promotion ○ Teaching fellows should be supported to gain PhD or doctorates ○ If the first rung of promotion is to an unpaid course leader role, such duties should be offered to all and not be in the sole gift of a line manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful research tends to be integrated with and flow from learning and teaching activity, and should not be seen as an ‘add-on’ • Successful research tends not to be carried out during weekends and summer vacations and individuals should strive to ensure that it is a core part of their duties, this may mean appealing HE2000 Activity Plans • An early career academic should gain experience with colleagues and should consider being co-author with other more experienced colleagues or in the first instance a research assistant to build up experience • Access to a research mentor should be sought to support research or other mentors as appropriate • In determining whether an individual’s workload is balanced & fair relative to her/his colleagues then transparency on work allocations is needed – and the information needs to be sought by individuals if necessary, by looking at timetables etc • The EIS encourages all academic staff that do not hold a doctorate to obtain one and expects every Institution to support this process with paid leave and remission from teaching

Job Characteristics	Psychosocial Hazards to Employees	Reducing risk from psychosocial hazards – the Employer’s role & responsibilities	Reducing risk from psychosocial hazards – the Employee’s role
Work schedule	Inflexible work schedules, unpredictable hours, long or unsociable hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Institutional calendar of activities needs to be prepared and shared with staff in advance of being implemented ○ Calendar of activities well planned with sufficient time to meet deadlines ○ Individuals’ calendar of activities needs to be efficiently aligned to the institutional calendar ○ The individuals’ work deadlines need to be sufficiently planned to prevent ‘bottlenecks’ and enable achievable deadlines within contracted hours ○ The effect of travelling between campi in multi-campus universities should be factored into workload ○ The effect of any foreign work on behalf of the University should also be properly considered including ensuring a reasonable break from teaching immediately after long haul flights ○ Sufficient time should be allocated to allow for research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff need to plan their work in advance using the Institutional/Departmental calendar of activities to create their own individual calendar of activities which is then aligned to their diary • Overseas travel should only be agreed to if the Institution’s expectations are reasonable • Research should be an intrinsic work of all academic’s work and not done in evenings or whilst there are no students at the Institution • The workload allocation method must include a reasonable amount of research time

Job Characteristics	Psychosocial Hazards to Employees	Reducing risk from psychosocial hazards – the Employer’s role & responsibilities	Reducing risk from psychosocial hazards – the Employee’s role
<p>Environment and equipment</p>	<p>Inadequate equipment availability, suitability or maintenance, poor environment conditions such as lack of space, poor lighting, excessive noise</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff must have a designated office space with low noise levels, with sufficient daylight and minimal interruptions from staff and students passing by ○ Office plans and staff locations must be designed to ensure that personal relationship problems between staff are not magnified – as sometimes happens with open plan or pod working ○ There should be a protocol for dealing with staff relationship problems within shared spaces or offices ○ Working spaces should not be overcrowded and have sufficient storage space ○ Ideally the office space should be private enough to allow meetings with other staff and students – or be close to a bookable meeting room - which should be easy to use ○ Staff should have the technology to help them with their work with easy access to printing and library resources etc ○ Review and reduce any unnecessary paperwork and administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff should find the best possible working environment to suit their needs – including home working if possible • Staff should raise any problems such as excessive noise, repetitive strain injury, eye strain with their employers so as to create a record of their concerns • The EIS Health & Safety Reps should be contacted if there is no resolution with the above • Open plan working, pods and shared offices can raise inter-personal relationship problems with people who would not choose to work together having to sit next to each other for hours every day – staff are recommended to discuss any resulting problems quickly before they escalate • Staff need to ensure that they transfer as many administrative tasks as possible to their support staff and not waste time making bulk photocopies or writing out lists etc

Table 3: Context to work

The EIS Branch will be acting to make your HEI a better employer and pushing for it to implement the duties, responsibilities and good practices identified in the third column.

The final column sets out ways in which the employee can reduce the risk of suffering from workplace stress.

Job Characteristics	Psychosocial Hazards to Employees	Reducing risk from psychosocial hazards – the Employer’s role & responsibilities	Reducing risk from psychosocial hazards – the Employee’s role
Control	Low participation in decision-making, lack of control over workload, pacing, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Academic staff should be treated as professionals and to a large extent, as autonomous workers – they should not be micro-managed ○ Staff should be led and managed by other staff – who understand the workload, pressures and priorities of being a successful academic ○ The timetable of work should be agreed by staff and their line managers and be achievable and balanced ○ Management control should be based on distributive model of management and leadership, enabling a collegiate ethos. ○ Make use of performance appraisal and supervision sessions to acknowledge positive contributions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The annual activity plan/performance appraisal meeting needs to be prepared for with a clear personal objective – and approached from a consensus view • There will be a greater <i>buy-in</i> from staff to agreed objectives than to imposed objectives • Staff need to plan effectively for their meetings and take evidence to support their arguments – especially on setting deadlines • Staff need to take responsibility for agreed deadlines and tasks • Staff should not only raise potential issues with their managers but also look to provide potential solutions and innovative ways of resolving issues

Job Characteristics	Psychosocial Hazards to Employees	Reducing risk from psychosocial hazards – the Employer’s role & responsibilities	Reducing risk from psychosocial hazards – the Employee’s role
<p>Organisational culture and function</p>	<p>Poor communication, lack of definition of, or agreement on, organisation objectives –</p> <p>i.e. what staff are working on</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All staff need to feel valued and feel that they have a stake in the institution ○ The values of the Institution must be academic led and resonate with staff and consider itself first and foremost an educational body for the advancement of learning and knowledge ○ The Institution should have clear communication procedures – including an email policy setting out staff and student expectations ○ Prevent staff from hearing messages from other sources first rather than receiving information from credible sources within the organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff often feel more valued when they can provide their views so that they feel that their views are heard and considered • Staff are more likely to implement policies/procedures that they feel they have contributed to – i.e. procedures with a sense of staff ownership rather than imposed procedures • Work emails should be succinct and to the point. Emails should not replace conversations and thus do not need instantaneous replies • Avoid sending emails in the evening, on weekends or during annual leave. If you cannot normally carry out all your work in your contracted work hours – then your workload is too high or you are emailing too much • Emailing outwith of office hours increases your own stress by forcing you to think about work – and may also affect the recipients’ wellbeing • All staff should use most appropriate medium of communications; emails written in haste become a permanent record existing without the context of the background of the email • Staff meetings and bilateral meetings are important events and should be prepared for • Staff should also not be afraid to ask for an adjournment to any meeting to give time to reflect or consider a fuller response – do not feel bounced into any decision

Job Characteristics	Psychosocial Hazards to Employees	Reducing risk from psychosocial hazards – the Employer’s role & responsibilities	Reducing risk from psychosocial hazards – the Employee’s role
Interpersonal relationships at work	Social or physical isolation, poor relationships with superiors, interpersonal conflict, lack of social support, bullying/harassment/violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Institutions must recognise that all staff must not only feel safe at work but also be able to thrive at work ○ The Institutions must have a dignity at work policy that sets out expected behaviour and must state that it will not tolerate bullying behaviours ○ The Institution will investigate breaches of the dignity at work policy fairly without prejudice towards any group of staff ○ The concept of early intervention should be practiced with concerns arising from inter-personal relationship, so as to prevent these problems festering and becoming worse ○ Facilitated independent mediation should be offered quickly and early to staff with interpersonal relationship problems ○ Managers should utilise the most appropriate medium of communication when delivering messages ○ Prevent staff from hearing messages from other sources first rather than receiving information from credible sources within the organisation ○ The Institution’s efforts to resolve disputes will initially be informal and then become formal if unsuccessful. The Institution will follow a range of strategies to resolve interpersonal relationship issues – including mediation and redeployment. ○ Training needs to be provided to all line managers so that they can support their managed staff fairly and effectively ○ Human Resources should be part of the Institution’s support mechanisms for staff and should play a constructive role in facilitating change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an implied duty on all employees to try and get on with other employees – and all staff should understand this • Where a interpersonal relationship becomes difficult or under strain then there is an onus on both parties to try and resolve issues together and ensure they do not affect the workplace • Where relationship issues are not resolved then staff should seek support from the Institution at an early stage – i.e. support an early intervention doctrine • Seeking mediation where relationships are beginning to break down • If an academic feels that they have been treated unfairly or been offended by a behaviour – then the academic should normally raise this with the offender first • If an academic witnesses unfair or unprofessional conduct then it should be reported to the Institution – otherwise such a culture will fester and pervade the Institution

Job Characteristics	Psychosocial Hazards to Employees	Reducing risk from psychosocial hazards – the Employer’s role & responsibilities	Reducing risk from psychosocial hazards – the Employee’s role
Role in the organisation	Role ambiguity, role conflict, and responsibility for people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There must be clear lines of accountability for both staff and tasks i.e. staff must have a clear understanding of the work that they do and to whom they report to for each aspect of their work ○ No academic will be responsible for an area of work (such as a course or module) unless they have the authority to manage staff in that area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff should know to whom each aspect of their work is responsible to • If an academic accepts responsibility to coordinate a task or module then they should ensure that they have sufficient authority over others to complete the task

Job Characteristics	Psychosocial Hazards to Employees	Reducing risk from psychosocial hazards – the Employer’s role & responsibilities	Reducing risk from psychosocial hazards – the Employee’s role
Career development	Career stagnation and uncertainty, under promotion or over promotion, preparing people for career development, poor pay, job insecurity, low social value to work & research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All staff have a right to career development and expectation of career progression ○ Institution’s needs to disseminate what career development opportunities are available and the criteria in which promotions are decided ○ Where career progression comes from a successful research record then universities need to provide support for staff (especially newly appointed staff) to succeed in publishing peer reviewed articles ○ Where career progression comes from taking on extra responsibilities such as course management, the onus is on the university to ensure that staff have equal opportunities ○ If having a PhD is a requirement for career progression then the Institution needs to support staff in obtaining PhDs ○ Promotion processes must be transparent, honest and provide meaningful feedback to unsuccessful applicants ○ CPD must be equitably facilitated, considering the academic’s needs as well as the Institution’s needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff should consider in which direction they wish their careers to progress and how the Institution can support them in their wishes • Staff must ensure they understand the realpolitik of how promotions are made, whether by publication record, role profile, teaching record, management experience or interpersonal relationships • HEIs are poor at providing support for staff to succeed in research – and staff should consider a more proactive approach • Research support for staff (especially newly appointed) should include mentoring, being included as a researcher or co-author in articles, access to colleagues’ networks and regular review of progress – some of these may need to be sought by the academic • Staff should seek to have face to face and written feedback from unsuccessful promotion applications to enable them to improve subsequent applications

Job Characteristics	Psychosocial Hazards to Employees	Reducing risk from psychosocial hazards – the Employer’s role & responsibilities	Reducing risk from psychosocial hazards – the Employee’s role
Work-Life Balance	Conflicting demands of work and home, low support at home, dual career problems, insufficient staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Institution’s needs to acknowledge that healthy staff produce better work and that Institutions have a role in keeping staff healthy as part of their ‘duty of care’ ○ Institutions should ensure that the Institution’s staffing is sufficient for its work and that all staff have an achievable balance of teaching and research ○ Employers need to develop and implement agreed staff email policies, where email expectations of other staff, students and other stakeholders are clear and reasonable – this includes no expectation of evening/weekend emails or instant emailed responses ○ Employers should encourage employees to rest at night, over weekends and holidays. One way that this may be done is for employers to switch off email servers at night, holidays and weekends and possibly when staff are ill ○ Monitor staff working hours ○ Employers should also monitor annual leave and support any staff that feel that they do not have sufficient time to take all their annual leave. Untaken annual leave may be a sign of excessive workload or building stress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff should periodically consider the impact of their work on their health, family life and personal life • Staff that feel their workload is excessive or unmanageable should advise their Institution • Workplace stress is a common injury and the body’s natural reaction to excessive workload or strain – there is no shame in seeking medical advice for it and notifying your Institution as your employer • Staff should use their holiday entitlement in full • Staff should not normally check their work emails or send work emails outwith of normal working hours – nor should they feel pressured to respond quickly to emails which others send outwith of normal working hours

This document will be updated in the future, and members are encouraged to email their experiences (good and bad) to EKemp@eis.org.uk so that they may inform an updated toolkit.

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