

WHS PSYCHOSOCIAL RISK MANAGEMENT

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Title:	WHS Psychosocial Risk Management framework
Guideline Owner:	Associate Director WHS and Wellbeing, People and Culture
Keywords:	Work Health and Safety, Psychosocial Risk, Resources, Accountabilities, Responsibilities
Supports:	This guideline supports the University to operationalise the Work Health and Safety Policy [PL139] and must be complied with.

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1. INTENT

- 1.1. This document outlines ECU's Psychosocial Risk Management framework, which sets out the University's approach to identifying, managing and preventing psychosocial risks in the workplace.
- 1.2. The framework has been developed in compliance with the WA Work Health and Safety Act 2020, the Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations (WA) 2022, and related Codes of Practice, and aligns with ISO 45003:2021. It provides a clear and consistent approach to preventing work-related psychological injury and supporting the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone at ECU.
- 1.3. This framework is intended to support the University Council, Executive, Schools and Service Centres in making informed decisions about psychosocial risk, and to help all staff understand ECU's obligations, the processes in place, and their role within them.

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2. ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

- 2.1. This framework applies to all ECU Officers, staff and visitors. It includes specific guidance for people leaders, who play a key role in the day-to-day management of psychosocial risks.

3. DEFINITIONS

The [University Glossary](#), the [WHS Definitions Register](#) and the following definitions apply to these guidelines:

Term:	Definition:
Psychosocial Risk	The likelihood of harm occurring as a result of exposure to a work-related psychosocial hazard, combined with the potential severity of that harm.
Psychosocial Hazards	Aspects of work that can lead to psychological or physical harm. These hazards arise from the way work is designed, organised, managed and supervised, including job demands, working relationships, the work environment, and social factors at work.
Psychological Injury	A range of cognitive, emotional and behavioural symptoms, such as anxiety, depression or burnout, that affect how a person feels, thinks and functions. Also referred to as a mental health condition or mental health disorder.
Work-Related Stress	The physical and psychological response that occurs when the demands of work exceed a person's ability or resources to cope. Stress is not itself an injury, but if prolonged or severe it can lead to one.
Primary Prevention (Protect)	Measures taken to prevent psychological harm before it occurs, by addressing the root causes of psychosocial hazards through changes to work design, structure and conditions.
Secondary Prevention (Promote)	Early intervention strategies to reduce the impact of psychosocial hazards or address emerging psychological health concerns before they escalate, including identifying risks early, implementing controls promptly, and supporting staff to prevent reinjury.
Tertiary Prevention (Respond)	Support and recovery interventions for staff who have been affected by psychosocial hazards or psychological

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Term:	Definition:
	injury, focused on managing ongoing health impacts, improving quality of life and supporting return to function.

4. GUIDELINES CONTENT

Leadership Commitment

- 4.1. ECU demonstrates its commitment to psychological health and safety through the following:

Leader Involvement

- 4.2. Leaders actively participate in the University's WHS Consultative Committees at both University and local School/Centre levels, including the University WHS and Wellbeing Committee. Leaders also engage with People and Culture to coordinate the identification and management of psychosocial risks.

Policy Integration

- 4.3. WHS policies are embedded across all operational areas through coordinated WHS Committees, ensuring staff involvement and effective risk management.

People and Culture Directorate

- 4.4. The [People and Culture directorate](#) promotes and supports a proactive culture where psychological safety is a priority, appropriate systems and processes are in place, psychosocial risks are well managed, and learnings from audits and incidents are communicated across the University.

Protection Against Reprisals

- 4.5. ECU's policies protect the confidentiality of staff and ensure that anyone who reports a psychosocial hazard, incident or risk is protected from reprisal.

The Framework

- 4.6. This framework outlines the structures and processes ECU uses to manage psychosocial risks, including how risks are identified, escalated, reported and addressed.
- 4.7. The framework is built around three levels of intervention, illustrated in Figure 1 and supported by the Psychosocial Risk Management Process outlined in Figure 2.

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Figure 1:

Psychosocial Risk Management Framework

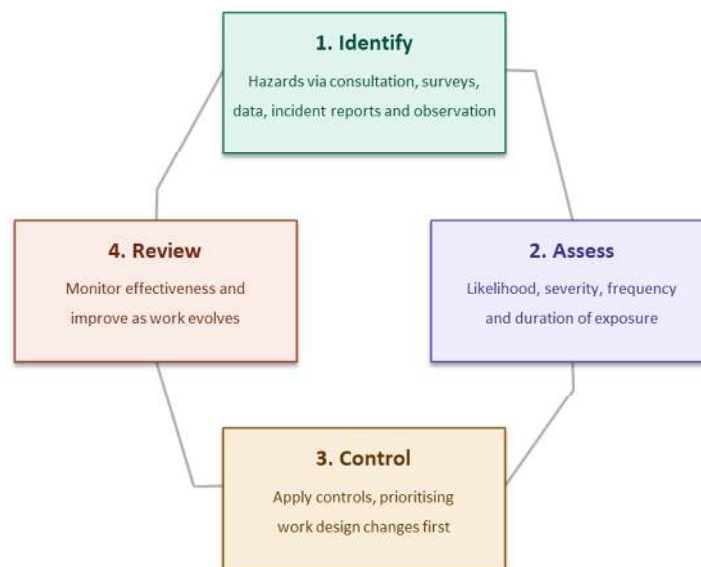
Level	Description	Examples
Protect Primary prevention	Addresses root causes by making changes to how work is structured, designed and managed. The most effective level of intervention.	• Greater autonomy for staff • Clearly defined job roles • Manageable workloads • Realistic expectations
Promote Secondary prevention	Focuses on early identification and intervention, supporting staff showing early signs of stress or psychological strain before issues escalate.	• Regular check-ins with teams • Mental health resources • Training leaders to recognise early warning signs
Respond Tertiary prevention	Provides support and recovery pathways for staff affected by psychosocial hazards. Most effective when used alongside Protect and Promote.	• Employee Assistance Program (EAP) • Counselling services • Return-to-work programs

The Psychosocial Risk Management Process

- 4.8. ECU's Psychosocial Risk Management Process provides a consistent, step-by-step approach to managing psychosocial risks across the University. It reflects best-practice risk management principles and aligns with the requirements of the WA WHS Act 2020 and ISO 45003:2021.
- 4.9. The process involves four key steps, applied on an ongoing basis:

Figure 2:

Psychosocial Risk Management Process



These steps form a continuous cycle of improvement, applied on an ongoing basis.

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- 4.10. Detailed guidance on each step is provided in the Risk Identification and Assessment and Management of Psychosocial Risk sections below.

Risk Identification and Assessment: Hazard Identification

- 4.11. Psychosocial hazards are identified through a range of methods, drawing on both organisational data and direct input from staff. Common identification methods include:
- 4.11.1. Staff engagement surveys and psychosocial safety climate assessments
 - 4.11.2. Incident and hazard reports submitted through Riskware
 - 4.11.3. De-identified HR data, including sick leave trends, turnover rates and workers' compensation claims
 - 4.11.4. Direct observation of working conditions
 - 4.11.5. Feedback through WHS and Wellbeing Committees and other staff consultation channels
- 4.12. Psychosocial hazards can arise from organisational conditions, the work environment, or team and individual dynamics. It is important to note that hazards rarely occur in isolation. Multiple hazards interacting with one another can significantly compound the risk to a staff member's psychological health.

Risk Assessment

- 4.13. Once a hazard has been identified, a risk assessment determines the level of risk and what action is required. Risk is assessed by considering:
- 4.13.1. Likelihood: how probable is it that harm will occur?
 - 4.13.2. Severity: how serious could the impact on a staff member's psychological health be?
 - 4.13.3. Frequency: how often is the staff member exposed to the hazard?
 - 4.13.4. Duration: how long has the staff member been, or is likely to be, exposed?
- 4.14. Cumulative effects must also be considered, as psychosocial hazards frequently overlap and interact. ECU uses the [ECU Risk Matrix](#) to guide this assessment.

Incident Reporting

- 4.15. All staff can report psychosocial hazards and incidents confidentially through Riskware, ECU's online health and safety reporting system. Reports are directed to the appropriate person for follow-up and action.
- 4.16. Refer to Riskware Information Sheet: [How to report a Hazard](#). Step-by-step instructions for reporting a hazard through Riskware.
- 4.17. Refer to Riskware information Sheet: [How to Report an Incident](#). Step-by-step instructions for reporting an incident through Riskware.

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Staff Consultation

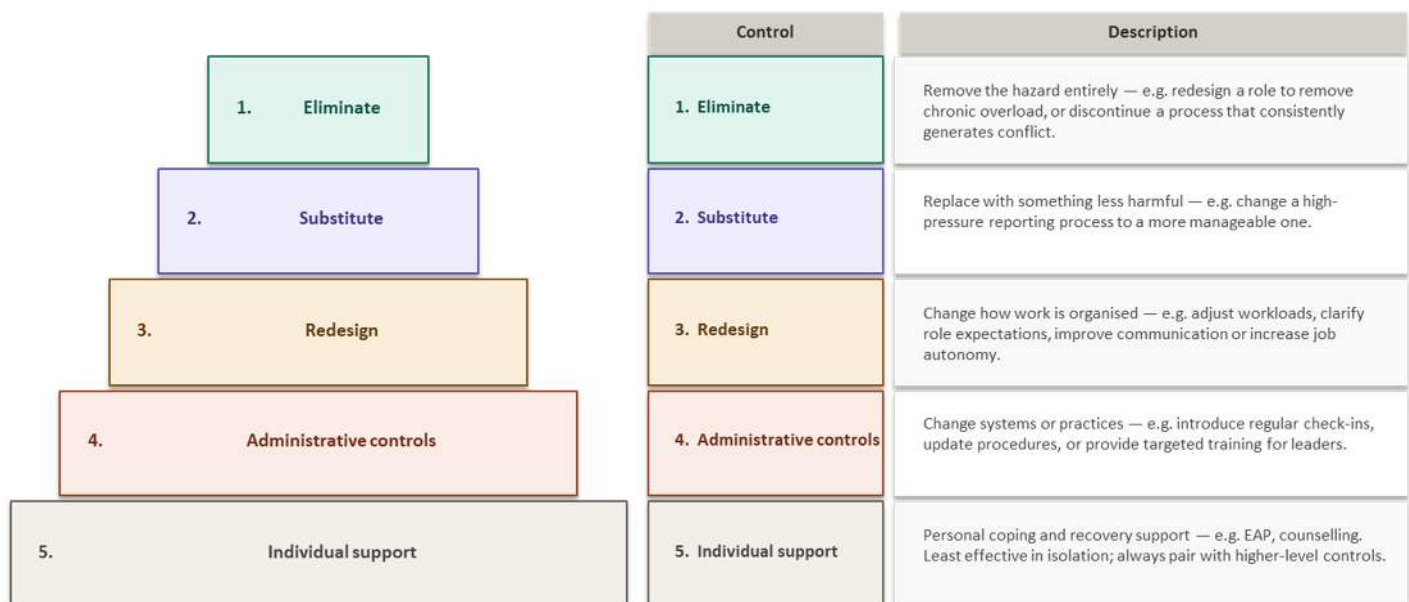
- 4.18. ECU is committed to ongoing consultation with staff to monitor and measure psychosocial risks across the University. Consultation activities include staff engagement surveys, analysis of de-identified HR data, and feedback through WHS and Wellbeing Committees. Staff input is essential to ensuring risks are accurately identified and effectively managed.

Management of Psychosocial Risk

- 4.19. When a psychosocial hazard has been identified and assessed, appropriate controls must be implemented to eliminate or reduce the risk. ECU applies a hierarchy of controls, which prioritises the most effective interventions first. Controls are grouped into two areas of focus: changes to the work, and changes to support the staff member.
- 4.20. Controls should be applied in the following order of priority:

Figure 3:

Management of Psychosocial Risk: Hierarchy of Controls



The most effective outcomes are achieved by addressing the source of the hazard, not only its effects on the individual.

- 4.21. The most effective and sustainable outcomes are achieved by addressing the source of the hazard, not only its effects on the individual.
- 4.22. For Leaders more information on investigating an incident, refer to:
- 4.22.1. [Riskware Information Sheet: Complete an Investigation and Action Plan](#)
- 4.22.2. [Monitoring and Reviewing Controls Fact Sheet](#): A checklist of data and indicators to help track whether controls are working effectively.

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4.22.3. [Incident Investigation Manual](#) for guidance on completing a psychosocial incident investigation.

ECU's Actions to Protect, Promote and Respond

4.23. ECU's actions to address psychosocial risk are organised across the three levels of intervention introduced in The Framework section above. Together, these actions form an integrated approach to preventing harm, supporting early intervention and providing recovery pathways.

Protect: Primary Prevention

ECU Wellbeing Framework

4.24. The ECU Wellbeing Framework is ECU's overarching commitment to staff wellbeing. People-focused and evidence-based, it complements this framework by supporting staff to thrive across six dimensions: Body, Mind, Community, Finances, Culture and Purpose. Further information is available on the [Wellbeing at ECU SharePoint](#).

Workplace Culture and Communication

4.25. ECU maintains open communication and consultation channels to ensure staff can raise concerns about psychosocial risks without fear of stigma or retaliation. This is supported by WHS and Wellbeing Committees, the Staff Peer Support Program, and appointed health and safety representatives across the University.

Promotion of Respect

4.26. ECU is committed to a workplace culture that values inclusion, respect and psychological safety for all staff. This includes actively preventing and managing psychosocial hazards such as bullying, harassment and discrimination.

Leadership Commitment

4.27. ECU expects leaders at all levels to lead by example, prioritising staff wellbeing, modelling healthy work practices, and actively contributing to a psychologically safe working environment.

Promote: Secondary Prevention

Psychologically Healthy Work Environment

4.28. ECU supports work-life balance through flexible work arrangements, including flexible hours, hybrid and remote working options, and part-time roles. Staff also have access to on-campus health services, sports and fitness programs, and a range of holistic wellbeing initiatives.

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Training for Leaders

- 4.29. ECU provides leaders with the training and information necessary to fulfil their role in psychosocial risk management. This includes training in identifying, reporting and addressing psychosocial hazards, as well as mental health awareness training to support early recognition of and response to staff distress. Further information is available on the [Wellbeing SharePoint](#) and [ECU LMS](#).

Staff Education

- 4.30. ECU provides education for all staff on psychosocial safety, including how to identify and report psychosocial hazards and how to access available support. Further information is available on the [Wellbeing SharePoint](#) and [ECU LMS](#).

Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation

- 4.31. ECU monitors psychosocial risks on an ongoing basis through incident reporting in Riskware, staff engagement surveys, de-identified HR data analysis, and WHS and Wellbeing Committee feedback. This data informs improvements to the framework and enables prompt responses to emerging concerns. Staff are encouraged to speak with their [People and Culture Business Partner](#) for further tailored guidance.

Respond: Tertiary Prevention

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

- 4.32. ECU provides all staff and their immediate family members with free and confidential access to professional counselling and support services through the EAP. This service is available for both work-related and personal issues. For further information visit the EAP SharePoint site or contact your [EAP provider](#).

Workplace Mental Health Resources

- 4.33. ECU offers a range of mental health resources throughout the year, including health checks, wellness programs, mental health literacy training, and the Staff Peer Support Program. For further information see Mental Health Staff Resources.

Emergency Mental Health Response

- 4.34. ECU maintains clear emergency mental health response protocols to ensure the prompt and coordinated support of staff, students and visitors in crisis.
- 4.35. For immediate support, please contact:
- 4.35.1. People and Culture
 - 4.35.2. WHS and Wellbeing Team: whs@ecu.edu.au | (08) 6304 2302
 - 4.35.3. Emergency and First Aid Response
 - 4.35.4. SASH: for on-campus emergency mental health support

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[ECU Staff Wellbeing: Support and Resources Quick Reference List](#)

[Supporting Staff: A Staff Guide](#)

[Supporting Students: A Staff Guide](#)

Review and Continuous Improvement

Strategy Review

- 4.36. A regular review cycle for the strategy ensures it remains relevant and effective in addressing emerging psychosocial risks. The Associate Director, Work Health, Safety & Wellbeing is responsible for developing and monitoring a Work Health Safety and Wellbeing Plan every three years as outlined in the WHS Management System Guideline.

Continuous Improvement

- 4.37. ECU will achieve continuous improvement through targets and measures informed by systematic data collection, ongoing staff feedback, and current best practices in workplace psychological health. ECU's established guideline sets Work Health and Safety targets, measures, and improvement plans. This guideline outlines the process for developing improvement plans to assist in achieving these targets and measures, supporting the operationalisation of the Work Health and Safety Policy.

5. ACCOUNTABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1. Accountabilities and responsibilities for psychosocial risk management at ECU are outlined in the [ECU WHS Management System RASCI Matrix](#).
- 5.2. ECU operates a two-tiered WHS and Wellbeing Committee structure to support consultation, communication, and the implementation of WHS policies and objectives, and to provide a mechanism for hazard resolution. For further information on the structure, terms of reference and procedures, refer to the [ECU WHS Consultative Committee Structure](#) and the [University WHS Consultative Committees Procedure](#).

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Legislation

Work Health and Safety Act 2020 (WA)

Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations (WA) 2022

Relevant WHS legislation for any other jurisdiction where ECU work is undertaken

Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Commonwealth)

Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003

Criminal Code Act Compilation Act 1913

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)

Equal Opportunity Act 1984

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Fair Work Act 2009 (Commonwealth)
Industrial Relations Act 1979
Minimum Conditions of Employment Act 1993
Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003
Public Sector Management Act 1994 (State Government Departments)
Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Commonwealth)
Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Commonwealth)

Codes of Practice

Psychosocial Hazards in the Workplace 2022, Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety WA
Violence and Aggression at Work 2022, Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety WA
Workplace Behaviour 2022, Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety WA
Mentally Healthy Workplaces for FIFO Workers in the Resources and Construction Sectors 2019, Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety WA

By-Laws, Statutes and Rules

Not applicable

Policies

Work Health and Safety Policy PL139
Staff Code of Conduct
Fitness for Work Guidelines
Injury and Illness Management Procedure
Compliance Guidelines

Corporate Governance Documents

Not applicable

Operational Documents and Resources

ECU WHS Management System RASCI Matrix
ECU WHS Management System Framework
Work Health and Safety Wellbeing Plan
Work Health and Safety Resources, Accountabilities and Responsibility Guideline

7. CONTACT INFORMATION

For queries relating to this document please contact:

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Guidelines Owner	Associate Director WHS and Wellbeing, People and Culture
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8. APPROVAL HISTORY

Approval authority	The Guidelines Owner as listed in this document
Date guidelines first approved	<insert date when the guidelines were first approved, in the format D MMM YYYY, e.g., 1 March 2025>
Date last modified	<insert date when the guidelines were last modified, in the format D MMM YYYY, e.g., 1 March 2025>
Revision history	<this section reflects approvals to the guidelines and a brief summary of the approved changes>
Next revision due	<this is set at the discretion of the Guidelines Owner, generally up to a maximum of 3 years and ideally standardised to 1 June 20xx to align with the policy review cycle.>