

HEARING CONSERVATION PROCEDURE

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 CQUniversity has an obligation to provide a work environment without risks to health and safety, so far as is reasonably practicable. This obligation includes eliminating or minimising, so far as is reasonably practicable, the risks associated with working in noisy environments.
- 1.2 This procedure provides guidelines for noise management, noise exposure and control measures.
- 1.3 This procedure should be read in conjunction with the [Managing Noise and Preventing Hearing Loss at Work Code of Practice](#).

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This procedure applies to employees, students, contractors and their employees, and visitors who participate in CQUniversity business operations and activities.

3 PROCEDURE

Noise assessment and management

- 3.1 Noise assessments vary depending on the severity of the risks at the workplace, the number of persons at risk and the information already available on noise levels. Reported noise hazards will be evaluated against the relevant legislation and appropriate Australian Standards. The Safety and Wellbeing Unit can provide advice and assistance on reported noise hazards, and if the need arises, for noise measurements to be undertaken.
- 3.2 A noise assessment will be conducted by a competent person in accordance with the Australian Standard AS/NZS 1269.1:2005 Occupational Noise Management: Measurement and Assessment of Noise Immission and Exposure.
- 3.3 A Noise Hazard Identification Checklist (Appendix C in the [Managing Noise and Preventing Hearing Loss at Work Code of Practice](#)) will be completed and a copy provided to the Safety and Wellbeing Unit for further attention.

- 3.4 If indicated by the assessment, practical action will be taken to control and reduce noise emissions in that area.

Hearing protection use areas

- 3.5 Areas as designated 'hearing protection use areas', where excessive noise cannot be practically controlled by engineering or administrative strategies, will display signage at all entry points as per Australian Standard AS 1319-1994 Safety Signs for the Occupational Environment.
- 3.6 Entry to such areas is prohibited unless appropriate personal hearing protection (e.g. ear muffs or ear plugs) providing suitable attenuation is available. Advice on the appropriate selection of such personal protective equipment is available from the Safety and Wellbeing Unit.
- 3.7 A decision concerning the provision of hearing protection to students who are required to work in 'hearing protection use areas' can be made by the respective business area.

Employees audiometric testing

- 3.8 New employees who may be required to work in, or in the vicinity of a 'hearing protection use area' will undergo a baseline audiometric test within two months of their commencement and will be re-tested on a two-yearly basis. These will be organised by and costed to the respective organisational unit.
- 3.9 Current employees who are new to working in, or in the vicinity of a 'hearing protection use area' will undergo an initial baseline audiometric test prior to their commencement and will be re-tested on a two-yearly basis. These will be organised by and costed to the respective business area.
- 3.10 With each audiometric test, the employee's result will be provided to the Safety and Wellbeing Unit and kept confidential. Provision of this information is prohibited without the written approval of the employee concerned.
- 3.11 In the event of abnormal results, the employee may be requested to undergo a repeat test after at least 16 hours in quiet (less than 75 dB(A)) conditions, or have a follow up test at the date set by the specialist. If a hearing impairment is confirmed, the employee will be offered a specialist audiological or medical referral. Test results and their implications will be made known to the employee.
- 3.12 At cessation of employment with CQUniversity, employees who work in or in the vicinity of excessive noise will undergo a final audiometric test. The employer's supervisor will ensure the final test is conducted and will submit an email request to the Safety and Wellbeing Unit upon receipt of the employee's resignation.

Noise induced hearing loss

- 3.13 A noise induced hearing loss (NIHL) may be acquired through exposure to excessive noise in the work environment and/or other activities. A comprehensive noise assessment of the employee's workplace and audiometric testing is required to determine if the hearing loss may be related to noise exposure in the CQUniversity work environment.
- 3.14 If a NIHL has been diagnosed:
- the employee is entitled to lodge a compensation claim
 - a CQUniversity Incident Report and a supporting medical certificate must be lodged
 - CQUniversity will provide audiometric test results to the assessor, and
 - the assessor will advise the Safety and Wellbeing Unit concerning the acceptance of the claim.
- 3.15 If the claim is accepted, the Rehabilitation team within the Safety and Wellbeing Unit will manage the compensation claim.

Education and training

- 3.16 All individuals who are required to work in 'hearing protection use areas' will be provided with information regarding the noise levels and the requirements for suitable attenuated hearing protection for the respective area.
- 3.17 Work Area Supervisors responsible for the supervision or teaching of employees and/or students will ensure that individuals under their supervision:
- are educated in this procedure to ensure that health risks associated with noise exposure is understood and that they comply
 - understand the risks involved and compliance with this procedure, and
 - advise their supervisor concerning difficulties in achieving compliance.
- 3.18 Training objectives must result in:
- detailing the risks to hearing
 - providing the steps that can be taken to reduce such risks, and
 - the use and maintenance of hearing protection equipment.

Considerations of noise control measures

New plant and workplaces

- 3.19 Invitations for tenders to supply new plant should specify a maximum acceptable level of noise emission if there is any potential for exposure standards to be reached. Suppliers should provide noise emission data. Table 5 in the [Managing Noise and Preventing Hearing Loss at Work Code of Practice](#) provides the suggested pro-forma.
- 3.20 New workplaces, and installation sites for new plant in existing workplaces, are to be designed and constructed to ensure exposure to noise is as low as possible. If new plant is likely to expose persons to excessive noise, design features are to include engineering noise control measures.

Existing plant and workplaces

- 3.21 Once a noise assessment has been conducted and the need to reduce noise exposure is established, the task of controlling the noise can be addressed. Priority should be given to those noise sources that contribute to higher noise exposure levels to the largest number of individuals.
- 3.22 The two basic engineering noise control measures for managing noise levels are:
- engineering control of the source – the preferred method of permanently removing the noise, and
 - engineering control of the noise transmission path – diverting airborne energy (noise) and structure-borne energy vibrations.
- 3.23 The need for controls should be considered with production methods and/or processes and may involve modification, partial redesign or replacement of noise-emitting objects.

4 RESPONSIBILITIES

Compliance, monitoring and review

- 4.1 Management, employees, students, contractors and visitors at CQUniversity worksites (including any work activities that are conducted off-site) have a duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and must not adversely affect the health and safety of other person. They must comply with relevant instruction and cooperate with any reasonable legislation or policy document relating to health and safety at the workplace. For further information on an individual's roles and responsibilities for safety and health, refer to the [Work Health and Safety Roles and Responsibilities Procedure](#).
- 4.2 The Director People and Culture and Safety and Wellbeing Unit are responsible for implementing, monitoring, reviewing and ensuring compliance with this procedure.

Reporting

- 4.3 Non-compliances with this procedure are to be reported and investigated as an incident under the [Incident and Hazard Reporting and Investigation Procedure](#).

Records management

- 4.4 Employees must manage records in accordance with the [Records Management Policy and Procedure](#). This includes retaining these records in a recognised University recordkeeping information system.
- 4.5 University records must be retained for the minimum periods specified in the relevant [Retention and Disposal Schedule](#). Before disposing of any records, approval must be sought from the Records and Privacy Team (email records@cqu.edu.au).

5 DEFINITIONS

- 5.1 Terms not defined in this document may be in the University [glossary](#).

6 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

Australian Standard AS/NZS 1269.1:2005 Occupational Noise Management: Measurement and Assessment of Noise Immission and Exposure

Australian Standard AS/NZS 1269.4:2005 Occupational Noise Management: Auditory Assessment

Australian Standard AS 1319-1994 Safety Signs for the Occupational Environment

[Managing Noise and Preventing Hearing Loss at Work Code of Practice](#)

[Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#) (Qld)

[Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011](#) (Qld)

7 FEEDBACK

- 7.1 Feedback about this document can be emailed to policy@cqu.edu.au.

8 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor and President
Delegated Approval Authority	N/A
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Administrator	Director People and Culture
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Notes	This document was formerly known as the Safety Health Environment WorkCover Sustainability (SHEWS) Hearing Conservation Procedure (16/03/2016).