

Control of Noise and Vibration at Work Policy

Version Control History

Version Number	Date of Change	Summary of Revisions Made
1.0	November 2023	Merging of QUAL066 Control of Noise at Work Policy and QUAL113 Control of Vibration at Work Policy. (Original documents archived).
1.1	February 2024	Removal of reference to Quality Manager in Section 5.

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Control of Noise and Vibration at Work Policy

1 Purpose

The **Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005** and **The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005** require employers to prevent or reduce risks to health and safety from exposure to noise and vibration at work.

This document will outline responsibilities and how this will be managed.

2 Scope

This Policy applies to all College employees and any person who may be affected by the work activity conducted by the College. This includes students, visitors, contractors and the general public.

3 Definitions

3.1 Noise Exposure Limit Values and Action Values:

The lower exposure action values are:

- A daily or weekly personal noise exposure of 80dB (A-weighted) and a peak sound pressure of 135dB (C-weighted), taking **no** account of hearing protection.

The upper exposure action values are:

- A daily or weekly personal noise exposure of 85dB (A-weighted) and a peak sound pressure of 137dB (C-weighted), taking **no** account of hearing protection.
- Where the noise exposure is between lower and upper action values, hearing protection must be provided but not compulsory to be worn.
- Where the noise exposure is at or above the upper action values, hearing protection must be provided and is compulsory to be worn.

The exposure limit values are:

- A daily or weekly personal noise exposure of 87dB (A-weighted) and a peak sound pressure of 140dB (C-weighted), taking into account hearing protection.

3.2 **Decibel (dB):**

Is the unit of measurement for the intensity of a sound, an increase of 3dB will double the intensity of the sound.

3.3 **Hand Arm Vibration:** is vibration transmitted in workers' hands and arms from the use of hand-held or hand guided power tools, such as nail guns, drills, sanders, metal cutters, jig saws, leaf blowers etc. Signs and symptoms include tingling or numbness in the fingers/thumbs, loss of strength in the hands, fingers going white (blanching).

- **Exposure Limit Value (ELV):** is the maximum amount of vibration an employee may be exposed to on any single day: 5m/s^2 A(8) (exposure averaged over a single day).
- **Exposure Action Value (EAV):** is the level of daily exposure to vibration above which an employer is expected to take certain actions to reduce exposure 2.5m/s^2 A(8) (exposure averaged over a single day).

3.4 **Whole Body Vibration (WBV):** is vibration transmitted through the seat or feet of workers who drive mobile machines, or other work vehicles, over rough and uneven surfaces as a main part of their job. Types of vehicles include forklift trucks.

- **Exposure Limit Value (ELV):** is the maximum amount of vibration an employee may be exposed to on any single day: 1.15m/s^2 A(8) (exposure averaged over a single day).
- **Exposure Action Value (EAV):** is the level of daily exposure to vibration above which an employer is expected to take certain actions to reduce exposure 0.5m/s^2 A(8) (exposure averaged over a single day).

4 **Key Principles**

The College will:

- Assess the risks to employees and others that may be affected by noise and vibration that is created by its work activities with particular attention to the adverse effects upon expectant mothers and young persons.
- Take appropriate action to reduce the noise and vibration exposure that produces those risks so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Provide employees and students with hearing protection if noise exposure cannot be reduced sufficiently by using other methods ie layout of workplace, replacing noisy equipment, fitting anti vibration mounts to machines, reducing employee exposure times.

- Give suitable training and instruction on the correct fitting, maintenance and storage of hearing protection when it is provided.
- Provide employees and students with information, instruction and training on the risks from noise and vibration exposure and the control measures being implemented.
- Provide health surveillance to employees where there is a risk to health from noise and/or vibration exposure.
- Identify and label noisy machines where operators are required to wear hearing protection.
- Display appropriate signage in areas where the wearing of hearing protection is mandatory (hearing protection zones).
- Consider noise levels when installing or relocating equipment or activities, and where possible make adjustments to minimise noise production.
- Consider and take into account noise and vibration levels when purchasing new equipment and where possible specify and purchase quieter equipment.

5 Responsibilities

The organisational structure for the implementation and management of the College's statutory health and safety duties are described in detail in the Health and Safety Policy.

Specific duties relating to this policy are detailed below.

5.1 Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

It is the responsibility of the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development to review and update this policy and ensure an EQIA is carried out on this policy.

5.2 Sector Development Directors, Managers

It is the responsibility of all Sector Development Directors, and Managers to:

- Ensure their employees are aware of this Policy.
- Ensure compliance with the Policy.
- Ensure that noise and vibration hazards are identified in risk assessments.
- Consider noise and vibration levels when purchasing new equipment and where possible specify and purchase quieter equipment.
- Consider alternative processes/working methods which reduces their employees exposure to noise and vibration so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Seek advice from the Estates Department and/or the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Adviser when planning installation or relocating equipment or activities, so that noise levels can be considered.

- Make hearing protection available to employees/students if the lower exposure action values are reached or exceeded ie 80dB (A-weighted) and peak sound pressure of 135dB (C-weighted).
- Designate hearing protection zones and ensure that hearing protection is used and maintained if the upper exposure action values are reached or exceeded ie 85dB (A-weighted) and a peak sound pressure of 137dB (C-weighted) by providing adequate supervision when appropriate.
- Consider alternative processes/working methods which will make the work quieter or mean peoples' exposure is reduced.
- Provide suitable information, instruction and training about noise risks, any control measures in place and safe working practices to employees and students.
- Refer employees to the Occupational Health Service for health surveillance (audiometry checks) if they are likely to be regularly exposed above the upper exposure action values or are at risk for any reason eg they already suffer from hearing loss or are particularly sensitive to damage.
- Refer employees to Occupational Health Service for health surveillance if they are likely to be regularly exposed to vibration above the Exposure Action Value 2.5 m/s² for HAV's or 0.5 m/s² for WBV or if they are at risk for any reason eg they already suffer from HAVs.
- Report any concerns they have regarding noisy machinery to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Adviser so that appropriate action can be taken eg noise measurements and risk assessment.
- Report defective/faulty equipment to the Estates department (SharePoint Self Service Portal) so that appropriate action can be taken. **Note:** You must ensure no one uses faulty/defective equipment that is under your control.

5.3 Head of Estates

Head of Estates will ensure:

- That this policy is brought to the attention of any contractors they engage to conduct College business and make them aware of any noise 'hazard' areas.
- Arrange suitable timings to carry out 'noisy' work with contractors to ensure minimum disruption to employees, students and members of the public.
- There is a programme of planned preventative maintenance to ensure that equipment and machinery continues to operate properly and does not increase in noise and vibration due to wear and tear over time.
- Consider vibration levels when purchasing new equipment/machinery and where possible specify and purchase equipment/machinery with reduced levels of vibration.

5.4 Human Resources

Human Resources will:

- In conjunction with the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Adviser identify and arrange any training as is necessary.
- When notified by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Adviser arrange health surveillance as is necessary via the College's Occupational Health Provider.
- In conjunction with the Occupational Health Provider advise and support employees that are referred onto specialists as a result of the findings of health surveillance.

5.5 Occupational Health Provider

The College Occupational Health Provider will:

- Carry out health surveillance as agreed with HR.
- Provide HR with the results of health surveillance and highlight any concerns they may have on employees' health as soon as practicable.
- Advise the employee to attend their GP for referral onto specialists when necessary.

5.6 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Adviser

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Adviser will:

- Carry out, assist with or arrange noise or vibration surveys and risk assessments of all relevant areas and keep records of all noise and vibration surveys undertaken.
- Provide survey findings and risk assessments to the relevant Head of Department and provide advice on any necessary remedial actions.
- Give appropriate training and/or advice on noise and vibration related issues.
- Notify Human Resources of employees (groups of employees) that require health surveillance due to exposure to noise or vibration.
- In conjunction with Human Resources identify and arrange any training as is necessary.
- Report cases of ill health associated with the use of hand-held vibrating tools as per RIDDOR requirements to the HSE.

5.7 All College Employees

- Shall familiarise themselves and comply with this policy.
- Shall undertake any training that is identified as necessary by their manager, Human Resources and/or the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Adviser.
- Shall use all equipment and machinery in accordance with any information, instruction and training they have received.
- Report any defects to equipment or machinery they are aware of to their line manager.
- Shall not use any defective equipment or machinery.
- Shall undertake Pre-Exposure HAVS Self-Assessment and Annual HAVS Self-Assessment.
- Shall use hearing protection provided for mandatory use in designated hearing protection zones.
- Attend health surveillance if requested to do so by HR and/or the College's Occupational Health Provider.

5.8 Students

- Shall use all equipment and machinery in accordance with any information, instruction and training they have received.
- Report any defects to equipment or machinery they are aware of to their lecturer, technician or PAT.
- Shall not use any defective equipment or machinery.
- Use hearing protection provided for mandatory use in designated hearing protection zones and when instructed to by their lecturer/technician etc.

5.9 Contractors and their Employees

People working with or on behalf of the College are also required to comply with this Policy.

- Contractors and their employees must operate in accordance with College Health and Safety standards, and all appropriate health and safety legislation.
- They must use the controls measurements identified by their risk assessments, this includes the wearing of personal protective equipment eg ear plugs, muffs.
- Arrange suitable timings to carry out 'noisy' work with Estates Department to minimise disruption to employees, students and members of the public.
- Failure to comply with policy will mean immediate suspension of work activities until such time appropriate controls are in place.

6 **Linked Policies/Related Documents**

UHI Perth Health and Safety Policy and Arrangements

HSE publications:

Noise – Don't Lose your Hearing! INDG363 (rev2)

Sound advice – Control of Noise at Work in Music and Entertainment HSG260

Controlling Noise at Work

Myth-buster – Noise in Music and Entertainment Sectors (HSE)

Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005 L140 – Hand – Arm Vibration

Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005 L141 – Whole – Body Vibration

7 **Relevant Legislation**

Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998

Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 (as amended)

Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005

Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013

Title: Control of Noise and Vibration at Work Policy

Version/Status: 1.1/Final

Approved by/Date: HSC

Issue Date: 01/03/2024

Owner: Depute Principal

Lead Author: Head of HR and Organisational Development

Lead Editor: Health, Safety and Wellbeing Adviser

EQIA Approval Date: 08/02/2024