ERGONOMICS IN THE UNIVERSITY WORKPLACE

Commencement Date: 31/10/2007

1. Application/Exceptions
   The provisions of this policy and procedure are applied to all University staff and their workplaces.

2. Definitions
   ‘workplace’ is defined as any location where an employee works or is likely to be in the course of their work and includes vehicles, aircraft, ships and all fieldwork.
   ‘manual handling’ means any activity requiring the use of force, such as lifting, carrying, pushing and pulling.
   ‘hazard’ in relation to a person, means anything that may result in injury to the person, or harm to the health of the person.
   ‘risk’ in relation to any injury or harm, means the probability of that injury or harm occurring.
   ‘ergonomic’ describes any item of furniture or equipment designed to be compatible with the limitations and capabilities of workers and their working environment.

3. Minimum Standards
   These minimum standards are compulsory for University staff to ensure safety is maintained and legislative requirements are met. Section 4 shall be treated as a guide to assist with meeting these standards.

   3.1 Manual handling tasks in all workplaces will have any associated hazards and risks identified.
   3.2 Practicable control measures will be applied to any identified manual handling hazards and risks.
   3.3 Each area will provide a budget for the maintenance of the working environment and appropriate equipment provision to enable manual handling tasks to be carried out safely.
   3.4 All staff undertaking manual handling tasks will be provided with information and training relevant to the risk.
   3.5 All staff will be provided with ergonomic office furniture in their workplace.
   3.6 All staff will have available to them instruction as to the ergonomic set up of office furniture.
4. Guidelines

4.1 General Provisions

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<th>Provision</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
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<td>▪ The University maintains responsibility for ensuring that staff are provided with a safe working environment.</td>
<td>All Managers</td>
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Table 4.1 Guidelines for managers and staff for the implementation of the ‘minimum standards’

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<tr>
<th>Minimum Standard</th>
<th>Managers</th>
<th>Staff</th>
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<tr>
<td>3.1 Manual handling tasks in all workplaces will have any associated hazards and risks identified.</td>
<td>▪ Ensure all manual handling hazards and risks are identified (the Manual Handling Checklist, in the <a href="#">Making the Workplace Safe</a> document, will assist in measuring the risk). Managers can consider also staff report, Safety and health representative report and past injury records when identifying manual handling hazards and risks.</td>
<td>▪ Report any known hazards to the manager/supervisor and/or the area’s <a href="#">Safety and Health representative</a>, and/or Curtin <a href="#">Health &amp; Safety</a>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>3.2</td>
<td>Practicable control measures will be applied to any identified manual handling hazards and risks.</td>
<td>• Ensure appropriate controls are applied to manual handling hazards and risks. Ideas for controls can be accessed via the Manual Handling Checklist in the <em>Making the Workplace Safe</em> document, via the area’s Safety and Health representative, and/or by contacting Health &amp; Safety. • Comply with any instruction for safe working procedures.</td>
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<td>3.3</td>
<td>Each area will provide a budget for the maintenance of the working environment and appropriate equipment provision to enable manual handling tasks to be carried out safely.</td>
<td>• Managers are responsible for the provision and maintenance of a safe working environment and equipment in their respective areas and must ensure this through their cost centre. Refer to Schedule 1 (the Staff Office Ergonomic Checklist) for a guide to office furniture/equipment that may be required, and consider specific manual handling risks for relevant manual handling equipment provision. Nil</td>
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<td>3.4</td>
<td>All staff undertaking manual handling tasks will be provided with information and training relevant to the risk.</td>
<td>• Ensure staff are provided with information and training for all manual handling tasks, relevant to the risk, on induction and for any changes to duties/procedures. Assistance with training can be arranged by contacting Health &amp; Safety. • Attend manual handling training sessions arranged by managers. • Comply with any instruction for safe working procedures.</td>
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<td>3.5</td>
<td>All staff will be provided with ergonomic office furniture in their workplace.</td>
<td>• Managers are responsible for the provision of ergonomic office furniture and equipment for all staff, and must ensure this through their cost centre. For advice as to what equipment may be needed beyond a standard desk and ergonomic chair, refer to the Office Safety Checklist in the <em>Making the Workplace Safe</em> document and/or contact Health &amp; Safety. • Report any specific furniture/equipment requirements/issues to their manager/supervisor and/or their area’s Safety and Health representative, or by contacting Health &amp; Safety.</td>
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<td>3.6</td>
<td>All staff will have available to them instruction as to the ergonomic set up of office furniture.</td>
<td>• Managers are responsible for ensuring staff are provided with instruction as to the ergonomic set up of their office, on induction, following office relocation/refurbishment, and on reporting of any symptoms. Assistance with ergonomic set up instruction can be arranged by referring staff to Schedule 1 (the Staff Office Ergonomic checklist) and/or by contacting Health &amp; Safety. Refer also to the Injury Management policy for guidelines for reporting/managing injuries/illnesses. • Comply with any instruction for safe working procedures. • Report any symptoms at work to the manager. Refer to the Injury Management policy for guidelines for reporting injuries/illnesses.</td>
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## REVISION HISTORY:

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<tr>
<th>Revision Ref. No.</th>
<th>Approved/Rescinded</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Committee/Board</th>
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SCHEDULE 1

STAFF OFFICE ERGONOMIC SET UP CHECKLIST

1. **Workstation**
   - There is adequate leg space to allow free movement under the workstation (remove boxes or obstacles from under the desk).
   - The computer monitor and keyboard are positioned directly in front of the office chair and the screen is not directly in front of or behind a window, or is suitably managed, such as by the use of blinds/window coverings.

2. **Chair**
   - The chair and backrest must be height adjustable and have a 5 star castor base.
   - Adjust the backrest height so the bulge of the cushion sits in the small of the back (around belt height).
   - Adjust the chair height so the forearms are parallel to the floor when the hands are on the keyboard (bent elbows should be slightly above desk height).
   - Thighs should be parallel to the floor – a height adjustable **footrest** may be required when the chair is raised to the correct height for the keyboard.
   - If the seat slopes downward unnaturally, the seat angle may need to be adjusted so the seat is parallel with the floor.
   - If armrests prevent you from getting close to the desk, they may need removal.

3. **Screen, keyboard and mouse**
   - The screen is positioned at comfortable reading distance (about arm’s length)
   - The top of the writing on the screen is at eye level or slightly lower.
   - The screen is not tilted so much that it produces glare.
   - The keyboard is in front of the screen.
   - The mouse is close the keyboard and can be used with the elbow bent and forearm supported.
   - Consult with the **Health & Safety team** for advice re alternatives to the standard mouse and keyboard.

4. **Other equipment**
   - If there is a regular requirement to copy from/refer to hard copies, consider the purchase of a **document holder** that can be positioned between the keyboard and screen.
   - If there is a regular requirement to access information/take notes whilst on the telephone, consider the trial of a **telephone headset**.
   - Consider the need for window coverings if glare is present.

*Contact your **Safety and Health representative** and/or **Health & Safety** for assistance with set up, if required.*