

Health and Safety Procedure - Psychosocial Safety Management

Section 1 - Key Information

Policy Type and Approval Body	Administrative - Vice-Chancellor
Accountable Executive - Policy	Chief Operating Officer
Responsible Manager - Policy	Senior Manager, Health and Safety
Review Date	2 June 2027

Section 2 - Purpose

(1) La Trobe University is committed to protecting, promoting and supporting the health, safety and wellbeing of our community.

(2) This Procedure sets out processes and responsibilities for:

- a. identifying, assessing, minimising and managing psychosocial hazards and risks arising from University activities;
- b. supporting staff, supervisors/managers, and other relevant parties to reasonably address, manage and control workplace factors and hazards to maintain a psychosocially and culturally safe workplace for all; and
- c. implementing a variety of preventive measures to protect all members of the La Trobe University community, with the goal of fostering a psychologically healthy, safe and supportive environment.

(3) This Procedure provides the process and guidance for La Trobe University to identify and manage psychosocial hazards and ensures compliance with:

- a. Victorian [Occupational Health and Safety Act \(2004\)](#)
- b. Model Code of Practice: Managing psychosocial hazards at work ([Safe Work Australia](#))
- c. [A Psychologically Healthy and Safe Workplace: Psychosocial Risk Management Guide](#) (La Trobe University)
- d. La Trobe University's [Framework for Psychosocial Risk Management](#)
- e. The University's [Code of Conduct](#) and [Student Behaviours Policy](#)
- f. The University's [Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Policy](#)

(4) This Procedure is not intended to limit academic freedom and political freedom of speech, as per La Trobe University's [Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Policy](#).

Section 3 - Scope

(5) This Procedure applies to:

- a. all staff and members of the University Community (including Council members, volunteers, students, contractors and associates);
- b. all University campuses and research areas that are managed and operated by La Trobe University; and
- c. aspects of university work and/or study which may be undertaken remotely by staff and students.

(6) This Procedure does not provide for:

- a. support or direction on all primary prevention responses with respect to psychosocial hazards relating (but not limited) to gender-based violence and sexual violence, or reporting requirements and mechanisms that align with the University's approach to trauma-informed and person-centred disclosures and reporting – contact Safer Community or People & Culture;
- b. long-term management of psychological injury or disability – refer to the [Injury Management Policy](#);
- c. the process or advice for the immediate management of a mental health crisis situation – this is managed by staff Health, Wellbeing and Inclusion;
- d. performance management processes as these are managed as per the [Workforce Management Policy](#) and the [Performance Procedure - Annual Performance Cycle](#).

Section 4 - Key Decisions

Key Decisions	Role
Raising unsafe work environment and/or reporting psychosocial hazards that pose a threat to health and safety.	Staff member
Contacting staff member to provide support and guidance on the process and seek further information (issue dependent).	Direct Line Manager, or team member from People & Culture or Health and Safety

Section 5 - Policy Statement

(7) This Procedure forms part of the [Health and Safety Policy](#) suite which governs its application.

Section 6 - Procedures

Part A - University leadership and commitment

(8) The University is committed to fostering a healthy, safe, supportive and inclusive environment for all members of our University community.

(9) This Procedure outlines the University's commitment to creating a psychologically healthy and safe environment where psychosocial hazards are identified and minimised, and a positive and inclusive organisational culture is fostered and maintained.

(10) The University is committed to providing and maintaining a psychologically healthy and safe environment for all stakeholders identified in the scope of this Procedure. The University expects all stakeholders to take reasonable care of their personal psychosocial health and safety and that of others by adhering to all relevant policies and procedures.

Part B - Psychosocial hazards and risks

(11) Psychosocial hazards at work are aspects of work and situations that may cause a stress response and could lead

to psychological or physical harm and injury. These hazards can stem from a range of factors:

- a. the way tasks or jobs are designed, organised, managed and supervised;
- b. tasks or jobs where there are inherent psychosocial hazards and risks;
- c. the equipment, working environment or requirements to undertake duties in physically hazardous environments;
- d. social and/or cultural factors in the workplace, such as workplace relationships and social interactions.

Part C - Responsibilities

(12) Managers and leaders are responsible for:

- a. utilising and following the controls identified in the relevant Safety Management Plans (SMPs);
- b. ensuring safe work practices are followed and encouraged including ongoing training and education alongside prevention and protection initiatives and processes;
- c. consulting with staff, Health and Safety Business Partners, staff Health, Wellbeing and Inclusion, P&C Business Partners and subject matter experts, where necessary;
- d. leading by example and promoting an environment of psychosocial safety.

(13) Members of the University community, including staff and students are responsible for:

- a. completing the available training and education to explore, understand and manage psychosocial hazards and risks;
- b. engaging in preventative and protective initiatives and processes to manage psychosocial hazards and risks for themselves;
- c. engaging in self-care initiatives, practices to foster a safe and supportive environment which are also in line with the staff [Code of Conduct](#) and/or [Student Behaviours Policy](#);
- d. reporting hazards and incidents immediately and engaging in support as required.

(14) The staff and student Health and Wellbeing teams are responsible for:

- a. providing appropriate mental health services and support to the University community;
- b. providing advice and working cross functionally with stakeholders on education, prevention and early intervention practices for the university community;
- c. providing instruction, mentoring and coaching in relation to psychosocial risks and wellbeing and supporting the Health and Safety team with the risk management process;
- d. driving incident response and investigation processes.

(15) The Health and Safety Team are responsible for:

- a. working cross functionally with the Health, Wellbeing and Inclusion team to provide advice and related health and safety information, focusing on prevention practices through risk management;
- b. providing instruction, mentoring and coaching in relation to psychosocial risks and supporting the Health and Wellbeing teams with the risk management process;
- c. supporting incident response, investigation and sharing the lessons learned.

(16) People & Culture are responsible for:

- a. contributing to the psychosocial risk assessment and management process at the School or Division level;

- b. engaging the Health and Safety and the staff Health, Wellbeing and Inclusion teams to support the identification of risk and the implementation of risk controls and recommendations;
- c. assisting with the identification and integration of any additional organisation and legislative requirements for psychosocial risk management and record keeping.

Part D - Organisational Risk Management

(17) The University will manage psychosocial risk in accordance with regulators requirements. This includes:

- a. identifying hazards
- b. eliminating or minimising risk
- c. maintaining and reviewing control measures with the view to optimising the psychosocial safety climate (PSC).

Identifying psychosocial hazards

(18) Managers and supervisors have a responsibility to identify reasonably foreseeable psychosocial hazards in the work area that could risk the health and safety of the people within the University community.

(19) Managers and supervisors will, where applicable, consult with staff and Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) (if applicable) when identifying psychosocial hazards.

(20) Psychosocial hazards can be identified through a combination of:

- a. analysis of the Employee Experience Survey (EES) results or Pulse Survey results;
- b. regular worksite safety inspections that involve discussion and consultation with staff;
- c. incidents and injury data/reports;
- d. Staff Wellbeing Connect and Employee Assistance Program (EAP) utilisation;
- e. discussions with staff (e.g. team meetings and individual discussions);
- f. complaints and grievances from staff;
- g. issues raised at Health and Safety Committee meetings;
- h. leave patterns and turnover/attrition rates;
- i. planned or unplanned changes to work conditions (e.g. organisational change, unexpected workload changes).

Reporting psychosocial hazards and incidents

(21) All staff have a responsibility for contributing to and maintaining a physically and psychosocially safe workplace ensuring reasonable care for the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves and others. This includes psychosocial and any other hazards and incidents.

(22) All psychosocial hazards and incidents will be reported via the Incident and Hazard Reporting System, which is monitored by the Health and Safety team (see also the [Health and Safety Procedure - Hazard and Incident Reporting](#)).

(23) All incidents will be managed according to the [Health and Safety Procedure - Incident Investigation](#).

(24) Incidents that detail allegations of bullying, harassment, staff misconduct or other inappropriate behaviour will be escalated to People & Culture for review and investigation under the [Workplace Behaviours Policy](#).

Safety Management Plans

(25) [Safety Management Plans](#), developed across schools and divisions will maintain a hazard register for the University, capturing both physical and psychosocial hazards.

- a. captured hazards for each school/division and will quantify the risks and document the current controls;
- b. objectives for strengthening or introducing new controls will drive continuous improvement;
- c. plans will be reviewed and updated periodically, capturing and responding to the changes in the risk profile.

Part E - Protection and Promotion Practices

(26) In addition to the risk management practices above, the University will draw upon and analyse data from many sources to determine the University's overall level of risk. These data sources may include the Employee Experience Survey, exit surveys, Workcover claims, EAP utilisation, personal leave rates and other relevant sources to determine people risk.

Protect Practices

(27) The University has available training and education programs for staff and students to promote the prevention of psychosocial hazards and incidents, focusing on increasing awareness, enhancing understanding of psychosocial risks, and equipping individuals with practical skills to recognise and address such issues effectively.

Promote practices

(28) The University provides a number of accessible interventions to support staff and students including access to confidential counselling through EAP, Staff Wellbeing Connect and Student Counselling Services to provide early intervention and support.

Part F - Multidisciplinary Incident Management

(29) Psychosocial incidents reported to the University will be reviewed by a multidisciplinary team. This team can include representatives from the Health, Wellbeing and Inclusion teams, discipline or divisional areas, Health and Safety, People & Culture, Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs), and the Union to ensure a comprehensive and collaborative approach.

(30) The review process will focus on identifying and implementing corrective measures to address the immediate issue and prevention strategies to support continuous improvement.

Section 7 - Definitions

(31) For the purpose of this Procedure:

- a. Controls/control measures: actions that are implemented to prevent or mitigate the occurrence of a risk or the impact it may cause and/or provide support to those who have been impacted by the risk.
- b. Cultural Safety: creating environments where individuals, especially those belonging to marginalized or diverse cultural groups, feel safe, respected, and valued.
- c. HSRs: Health and Safety Representatives.
- d. Mental health: a state of wellbeing in which an individual can realise their own potential, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and make a contribution to the community.
- e. Psychological health and safety: promoting mental health and preventing psychological harm at work – typically focused on the identification of, mitigation of and prevention of psychosocial risk.
- f. Psychological injury: (or mental injury) includes a range of cognitive, emotional and behavioural symptoms that interfere with a staff member's life and can significantly affect how they feel, think, behave and interact with others.
- g. Psychosocial safety: integrates key aspects of psychology and sociology to understand and manage human

dimensions of safety. This is typically measured within organisations as the Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC).

- h. Psychosocial safety climate: the shared belief held by workers that their psychological safety and wellbeing is protected and supported by senior management. PSC is evident from organisational practices, policies and procedures that promote psychological safety and wellbeing of others.
- i. Psychosocial hazard: hazards that arise from, or relate to, the design or management of work, or a work environment, or equipment/facilities/infrastructure at a workplace, or workplace interactions or behaviours, and may cause psychological harm (whether or not it may also cause physical harm).
- j. Psychosocial incident: an event that has led to, or might lead to, psychological injury resulting from exposure to psychosocial risk.
- k. Wellbeing: wellbeing is not just the absence of disease or illness. It's a complex combination of a person's physical, mental, emotional and social health factors. Wellbeing is strongly linked to happiness and life satisfaction.

Section 8 - Authority and Associated Information

(32) This Procedure is made under the [La Trobe University Act 2009](#).

(33) Associated information includes:

- a. [La Trobe's approach to Psychological Health and Safety](#)
- b. [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#)
- c. [Employee Experience Survey](#)
- d. [Exit Surveys](#)
- e. [Injury Management](#)

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	2nd June 2025
Review Date	2nd June 2027
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor
Approval Date	2nd June 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Manager - Policy	Spomenka Krizmanic Senior Manager, Health and Safety 61 3 9479 2186
Enquiries Contact	Health and Safety

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"student" - Student is defined in the La Trobe University Act 2009 as: (a) a person enrolled at the University in a course leading to a degree or other award; or (b) a person who is designated as a student or is of a class of persons designated as students by the Council.

"staff" - Staff means any person employed by the University as per the definition in the La Trobe University Act 2009 (Vic).