

# Hearing Conservation Procedure

## Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) The University of Queensland (UQ) is committed to managing hazardous noise in the workplace and its adverse effect on hearing. This Procedure supports UQ's [Health, Safety and Wellness Policy](#), which provides UQ's commitment to continuous improvement in the prevention of injuries, illness and incidents through an effective health and safety management system.

(2) This Procedure applies to all UQ workers that work in areas exposed to hazardous noise and outlines the measures in place at UQ to manage the risk of hearing loss to these workers. For the purposes of this Procedure, the definition of UQ workers is broad – including staff, students, visitors, volunteers and contractors – and is intended to ensure UQ meets its responsibilities under the [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#) (WHS Act). The definition of UQ workers is provided in the appendix at section 7.

### Context

(3) UQ is legally obliged under the [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011](#) (WHS Regulation) to manage the risk of hearing loss to its workers associated with workplace noise.

(4) UQ workers are responsible for taking reasonable care for their own health and safety and not adversely affecting the health and safety of others. UQ workers must comply with this Procedure and any other reasonable instructions relating to health and safety at UQ.

## Section 2 - Process and Key Controls

(5) Heads of Organisational Units are responsible for ensuring:

- a. a risk assessment is undertaken in workplaces where UQ workers may be exposed to hazardous noise levels; and
- b. measures are implemented to control hazardous noise and its effect on UQ workers.

(6) UQ workers must wear appropriate hearing protection if hazardous noise in the workplace cannot be eliminated or minimised to acceptable levels, or as required by the Organisational Unit.

(7) UQ workers deemed to be working in areas where they are routinely exposed to hazardous noise are required to have their hearing monitored through regular audiological testing administered by the [UQ Health and Rehabilitation Audiology Clinic](#).

## Section 3 - Key Requirements

### Managing Noise Exposure Risks

(8) Organisational Units are responsible for the identification, control and ongoing management of hazardous noise in the workplace in accordance with the Queensland Government's [Managing Noise and Preventing Hearing Loss at Work](#)

(9) The Code of Practice provides practical guidance on:

- a. how noise affects hearing;
- b. how to identify and assess exposure to noise;
- c. information, training and instruction for workers exposed to hazardous noise (including the use of personal protective equipment); and
- d. how to control health and safety risks arising from hazardous noise.

(10) The UQ [Hearing Conservation Guideline](#) provides Organisational Units with further practical information to assist with the management and control of hazardous noise and prevent the occurrence of noise induced hearing loss in the workplace at UQ.

(11) UQ managers, supervisors and workers should refer to the Code of Practice and Guideline for information on how to achieve the standards of health, safety and welfare required under the WHS Regulation in relation to workplace noise.

## **Risk Assessment**

(12) Assessment of potential exposure to hazardous noise, including nuisance noise, is to be undertaken by Organisational Units as part of workplace occupational health and safety risk assessments.

(13) The risk assessment of noise exposure will:

- a. help to determine if UQ workers are at risk of excessive noise exposure;
- b. identify the noise sources that contribute to the risk of hearing loss;
- c. support management and implementation of noise control measures; and
- d. assist development of noise management plans.

## **Audiological Testing**

(14) Audiological testing is an important part of managing the risks from hazardous noise exposure in the workplace. UQ workers routinely exposed to hazardous noise must have their work environment assessed to confirm need for referral to audiological testing.

(15) Supervisors must ensure that UQ workers routinely exposed to hazardous noise in the workplace, as identified through the risk assessment process, attend audiological testing as follows:

- a. new UQ workers must undergo an initial full reference audiological test within the first three months of appointment; and
- b. UQ workers must undergo ongoing audiological testing at least every two years following initial appointment.

(16) Organisational Units are responsible for meeting the costs associated with audiological tests for UQ workers. Guidance on the process for new appointees, ongoing testing, and managing test results are outlined in the UQ Hearing Conservation Guideline. Audiological testing is currently conducted by the [UQ Health and Rehabilitation Audiology Clinic](#) in accordance with AS/NZS 1269.4:2005 (Occupational noise management - Auditory assessment).

## **Noise-induced Hearing Loss**

(17) Where a UQ worker has been diagnosed with noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL), UQ will conduct a comprehensive workplace noise assessment and medical assessment to determine whether the NIHL was due to the UQ worker's

noise exposure at UQ.

# Section 4 - Roles, Responsibilities and Accountabilities

## Heads of Organisational Units

(18) The Head of Organisational Unit is responsible for ensuring:

- a. resources are provided for the ongoing identification, control and management of hazardous noise in the workplace;
- b. costs for UQ workers to attend audiological tests in accordance with clauses 14-16 of this Procedure are met by the Organisational Unit; and
- c. the monitoring and control of hazardous noise in the workplace in accordance with the [Managing Noise and Preventing Hearing Loss at Work Code of Practice 2021](#) and UQ [Hearing Conservation Guideline](#).

## Health, Safety and Wellness Division

(19) The Director of the Health, Safety and Wellness Division is responsible for the co-ordination of medical screening, audiological testing, noise monitoring, advice regarding noise control measures and education programs in relation to noise hazards in the workplace.

## Health, Safety and Wellness Managers and Work Health and Safety Coordinators

(20) Health, Safety and Wellness Managers (HSW Managers) and Work Health and Safety Coordinators (WHSCs) are responsible for assisting UQ workers with the identification and management of risks, implementation of this Procedure and the UQ Hearing Conservation Guideline and informing managers and supervisors of their responsibilities.

## Managers and Supervisors

(21) Managers and supervisors are responsible for:

- a. ensuring that UQ workers are aware of the requirements of this Procedure and the [Managing Noise and Preventing Hearing Loss at Work Code of Practice 2021](#);
- b. advising their Head of Organisational Unit of constraints in achieving compliance;
- c. referring UQ workers who may be exposed to hazardous noise for audiological testing (see the UQ [Hearing Conservation Guideline](#) for details);
- d. incident and hazard report follow-up; and
- e. seeking advice from their HSW Manager or WHSC or, where not available, the Health, Safety and Wellness Division.

## UQ Workers

(22) UQ workers in areas that are exposed to hazardous noise are responsible for:

- a. assisting to control and manage hazardous noise in the workplace (refer to the UQ [Hearing Conservation Guideline](#));
- b. attending audiological tests in accordance with clauses 14-16 of this Procedure; and
- c. reporting hazardous noise in the workplace to their supervisor directly and through [UQSafe](#) Incident.

# Section 5 - Monitoring, Review and Assurance

(23) The Director of the Health, Safety and Wellness Division is responsible for the implementation and communication of this Procedure, including ensuring that Heads of Organisational Units are informed of their hazardous noise and hearing conservation management obligations.

(24) The Health, Safety and Wellness Division will:

- a. review this Procedure as required to ensure that it remains accurate and relevant to the management of hearing conservation at UQ; and
- b. monitor UQ workers' compliance with audiological test requirements and report attendance results to Heads of Organisational Units.

# Section 6 - Recording and Reporting

(25) The Health, Safety and Wellness Division will liaise with the UQ Health and Rehabilitation Audiology Clinic on UQ workers' hearing test results. Where appropriate, the Occupational Health Nurse and Occupational Hygiene Advisor will maintain records of test results and sound level measurements. An overall report will be included in the HSW Annual Report under Hearing Conservation Program.

(26) The Health, Safety and Wellness Division maintains [UQSafe](#) Incident. [UQSafe](#) is an incident and hazard reporting database maintained by UQ:

- a. to meet legal obligations under the [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#); and
- b. as an important component in hazard control, risk management and incident prevention.

(27) The Health, Safety and Wellness Division provides [UQSafe](#) reports to UQ's health and safety committees and to senior management committees when required or requested.

# Section 7 - Appendix

## Definitions

Term	Definition
Hazardous Noise	For the purposes of this Procedure, hazardous noise means noise that exceeds the exposure standard for noise in the workplace as defined in the <a href="#">Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011</a> .
Nuisance Noise	Includes high levels of background noise (e.g. from computers, scientific instrumentation or building works) and certain types of sound (e.g. high pitched, irregular, intermittent or rhythmic) that can interfere with verbal communication and affect work efficiency.
Organisational Unit	A formal grouping of staff established to conduct a discrete set of activities within a functional area of UQ.
UQ workers	For the purposes of this Procedure includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• staff - continuing, fixed-term, research (contingent funded) and casual staff;</li><li>• contractors, subcontractors and consultants;</li><li>• visiting academics and researchers;</li><li>• affiliates - academic title holders, visiting academics, emeritus professors, adjunct and honorary title holders, industry fellows and conjoint appointments;</li><li>• higher degree by research students; and</li><li>• volunteers and students undertaking work experience.</li></ul>

## Contacts

(28) Relevant UQ contacts:

- a. Occupational Health Nurse Advisor - email: [ohna@uq.edu.au](mailto:ohna@uq.edu.au)
- b. Occupational Hygiene Advisor - email: [hsw@uq.edu.au](mailto:hsw@uq.edu.au)
- c. Work Health and Safety Coordinators - [UQ Safety Network Contacts](#)

## Status and Details

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<b>Effective Date</b>	3rd September 2020
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<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Health, Safety and Wellness Division