

Hazardous Noise Risk Management 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, higher degree by research students and visiting academics (see Section 7 for full definition for this Procedure), across all UQ campuses and sites, including Controlled Entities – and is intended to ensure UQ meets its responsibilities under the [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#) (WHS Act).

Context

(3) The [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011](#) (WHS Regulation) requires a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) 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) Risk assessments are undertaken in workplaces where UQ workers may be exposed to hazardous noise levels.

(6) Measures are implemented to control hazardous noise and its effect on UQ workers.

(7) The hierarchy of control is used to manage the risk of workplace induced hearing loss.

(8) 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.

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

Section 3 - Key Requirements

Managing noise exposure risks

(10) 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](#)

[Code of Practice 2021](#) and the UQ [Hazardous Noise Risk Management Guideline](#).

(11) 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.

(12) The UQ [Hazardous Noise Risk Management 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 (NIHL) in the workplace at UQ.

(13) Hearing protection should be used secondary to noise reduction controls, not as the primary control.

(14) 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.

Risk assessment

(15) Assessment of potential exposure to hazardous noise is to be undertaken in [UQSafe](#) by supervisors and managers in the Organisational Units. The UQ HSW Division can provide advice on risk assessment.

(16) The risk assessment of noise exposure will:

- a. help to determine if UQ workers are at risk of excessive noise exposure and therefore potential hearing loss;
- 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 requirements

(17) The WHS regulations require employers to provide audiometric testing for workers who are exposed to hazardous noise levels that exceed the prescribed exposure standards.

(18) Audiological testing is an important part of managing the risks from hazardous noise exposure in the workplace. Where it is perceived that UQ workers may be routinely exposed to hazardous noise (and in some circumstances, exposure to ototoxic substances), an assessment of their work environment must be undertaken to confirm the need for referral to audiological testing.

(19) 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. Baseline audiometric testing is conducted within 3 months of the UQ worker commencing work in a hazardous noise environment.
- b. Follow-up testing is conducted at least every 2 years thereafter.

(20) 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 [Hazardous Noise Risk Management 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).

(21) Further guidance on the Audiometry Testing Program is included in the [Hazardous Noise Risk Management Guideline](#).

Noise-induced hearing loss

(22) Where a UQ worker has been diagnosed with NIHL, UQ will conduct a comprehensive workplace noise risk assessment and medical assessment to determine whether the NIHL was associated with the UQ worker's noise exposure at UQ.

Section 4 - Roles, Responsibilities and Accountabilities

Heads of Organisational Units

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

- a. a risk assessment is completed to determine if an area is classified as a hazardous noise environment;
- b. controls are implemented to reduce hazardous noise and exposure as low as reasonably practicable using the hierarchy of control;
- c. resources are provided for the ongoing identification, control and management of hazardous noise exposure in the workplace;
- d. costs for UQ workers to attend audiological tests are met by the Organisational Unit; and
- e. the ongoing 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 [Hazardous Noise Risk Management Guideline](#).

Health, Safety and Wellness Division

(24) The Senior Manager (Specialist Services) of the Health, Safety and Wellness Division (HSW Division) is responsible for the medical screening/audiological testing and noise monitoring program that includes the following:

- a. the occupational hygienists in the Specialist Services team providing advice regarding noise control measures, noise monitoring and education programs in relation to noise hazards in the workplace.
- b. the Occupational Health Nurse Advisor co-ordinating medical screening and audiological testing.
- c. where an audiogram identifies a NIHL, the Occupational Health Nurse Advisor submitting an incident report through UQSafe requiring the relevant manager/supervisor to evaluate hazardous noise exposure controls.
- d. where a UQ worker has an indication of hearing loss due to hazardous noise, the Occupational Hygiene Advisor and/or the Occupational Health Nurse Advisor will work with the organisational area to provide advice on how to minimise further workplace exposure to the worker.
- e. facilitates the audiological testing conducted by the [UQ Health and Rehabilitation Audiology Clinic](#).

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

(25) Health, Safety and Wellness Managers (HSW Managers) and Work Health and Safety Coordinators (WHSCs) are responsible for:

- a. assisting local supervisors and UQ workers with the identification and management of risks and implementation of controls regarding hazardous noise exposure in their area of responsibility;

- b. implementation of this Procedure and the UQ [Hazardous Noise Risk Management Guideline](#) and informing managers and supervisors of their responsibilities.

Managers and Supervisors

(26) Managers and supervisors are responsible for:

- a. completing risk assessments for areas within their responsibility to determine those that may have hazardous noise and implement control measures using the hierarchy of control;
- b. ensuring that UQ workers are aware of the requirements of risk assessment, this Procedure and the [Managing Noise and Preventing Hearing Loss at Work Code of Practice 2021](#);
- c. monitoring compliance with controls and facilitating improvements where necessary;
- d. proactively reporting constraints with compliance and suggesting other ways to protect UQ Workers from hazardous noise;
- e. initiating referral of UQ workers who may be exposed to hazardous noise for audiological testing (see the UQ [Hazardous Noise Risk Management Guideline](#) for details), including completion of the related Health Monitoring and Hazardous Noise Assessment Form (from the [Health Monitoring](#) website);
- f. incident and hazard report follow-up;
- g. working with UQ workers on implementing higher order controls, or minimising exposure to hazardous noise where audiometric results indicate workplace noise induced hearing loss; and
- h. seeking advice on hazardous noise exposure controls from their local HSW Manager or WHSC and supervising compliance with hazardous noise exposure controls.

UQ Workers

(27) UQ workers in areas who are exposed to hazardous noise are responsible for:

- a. complying with instruction regarding noise exposure control measures, including the appropriate use of hearing protection;
- b. assisting to control and manage hazardous noise in the workplace (refer to the UQ [Hazardous Noise Risk Management Guideline](#));
- c. attending audiological tests in accordance with this Procedure if required; and
- d. reporting hazardous noise in the workplace to their supervisor directly and through [UQSafe](#).

Section 5 - Monitoring, Review and Assurance

(28) The Director, HSW is responsible for the communication of this Procedure to relevant stakeholders.

(29) The HSW 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

(30) The HSW 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 in accordance with UQ Privacy requirements. An overall report will be included in the HSW Annual Report.

(31) Audiometry test results are maintained within the Workday Health Monitoring System.

(32) The HSW Division maintains [UQSafe](#) which is an important component in UQ's occupation health and safety management system and is where noise risk assessments and noise exposure incidents are recorded.

(33) The HSW Division provides reports to UQ's health and safety committees and to senior management committees regularly and when required or requested.

(34) Relevant UQ contacts:

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

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 Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 .
Organisational Unit	A formal grouping of staff established to conduct a discrete set of activities within a functional area of UQ.
Ototoxic substances	Are chemicals that if absorbed into the bloodstream, may damage the cochlea (inner ear) and/or the auditory nerve pathways to the brain - which may lead to hearing loss and tinnitus.
UQ workers	For the purposes of this Procedure includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• staff - continuing, fixed-term, research (contingent funded) and casual staff;• visiting academics and researchers;• affiliates - academic title holders, visiting academics, emeritus professors, adjunct and honorary title holders, industry fellows and conjoint appointments;• higher degree by research students.

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