

IMPERIAL



STAFF GUIDE

IDENTIFY YOUR WORK STRESSORS

If you feel your work is causing you to feel overwhelmed and stressed, it can be difficult to pinpoint the factors which make you feel this way. In a fast-paced environment, it can be easy to be caught up in the momentum of the activity. Pausing to reflect can help you avoid developing behaviours which can have a negative impact in the long term.

STAFF GUIDANCE

A self-directed tool has been devised to help you, based on the Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards for Workplace Stress. Six areas have been identified to contribute to stress at work: demand, control, support, role, relationships and change. There may be contributing factors, which are not included under these headings.

By informing yourself about the specific contributory factors, you can begin to plan a way forward and make some small changes to help you manage these demands. Additionally, you can use this tool to help you prepare for a discussion with your line manager. Think beyond your reaction to being stressed and try to understand the contributory factors. Information has been prepared to assist your line manager to understand what support you may need.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

Allow yourself time and space to think. It is ok to use the tool as a guide and make notes as you read through, use whatever approach you are most comfortable with.

Read through the form, selecting any point you think is relevant to you and in the free text area at the end of each section, document how those issues are affecting you and give examples. If you are able, give an indication of how important this issue is for you. If you have ideas on how some of these issues may be resolved you should also make a note of the, this may be helpful for you to reflect on later as well as help to keep you focused if you wish to discuss them with your line manager.

When complete, you should try to categorise what you can do to help yourself and what you will need support with. When you are ready you should request a meeting with your manager/supervisor to discuss your concerns.

You do not need to share this information, but you may wish to.

DEMAND

Include such things as your workload, working patterns and your work environment.

Select each statement which you consider applies to you.

WORKLOAD/JOB DESIGN

- I have difficulty getting through my workload in the time available.
- I have difficulty in meeting deadlines.
- I have competing deadlines which makes it difficult to prioritise.
- I work long hours to get through my work.
- I report to / undertake work for more than one person.

COMMUNICATION

- There is constant communication when I am 'off-duty' by e-mail, text and phone.
- I feel that I am expected to monitor emails whilst not at work — in the evening, at weekends and when on holiday.
- I prefer to keep in contact with work on days off and when I am on holiday.

SKILLS, TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

- I don't feel I have the necessary skills for the work I am expected to do.

REST

- I work long hours, starting early and finishing late.
- I feel that there is no time to take breaks and holiday.
- I worry about not being able to cope with my back log when I return from holiday.
- I feel it is important to be seen to work long hours.

WORKPLACE HAZARDS AND ENVIRONMENT

- I have an unpleasant work environment.
- I am concerned about my unsafe work environment.
- I am concerned about unsafe behaviours in my work area.

INSUFFICIENT CHALLENGE

- I do not have enough work to do.
- I do not consider my work challenging.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- I feel under pressure to take on additional work to assist my career progression - International conference/ collaboration etc

Record your thoughts on “Demand”, giving specific examples and dates, thinking about how often these issues may affect you and how important they are to you.

CONTROL

The amount of influence you feel you have over how you do your work. Select each statement which you consider applies to you

- I have rigid work routines or rotas.
- I have limited opportunity to organise my work in a way which suits me.
- I would like to have a Hybrid work pattern to help me better focus on parts of my work

Record your thoughts on “Control”, giving specific examples and dates, thinking about how often these issues may affect you and how important they are to you.

SUPPORT

The resources, support and encouragement provided by your manager, your colleagues and by College to help you manage your job.

- I have rigid work routines or rotas.
- I have limited opportunity to organise my work in a way which suits me.
- I do not feel able to talk to my manager if I have a problem with my work.
- I do not feel able to ask colleagues for help if needed.
- I do not have sufficient opportunity to attend training or take up development opportunities.
- I think I would benefit from more information on Neurodiversity or have access to support for Neurodiversity at work

Record your thoughts on “Support”, giving specific examples and dates, thinking about how often these issues may affect you and how important they are to you.

ROLE

Understanding the purpose of your job and being clear about your responsibilities

- I am not clear about the purpose of my job.
- I am not clear about what is expected of me either some or most of the time.
- I find myself procrastinating over tasks I am unsure about
- I feel I have conflicting roles.

Record your thoughts on “Role”, giving specific examples and dates, thinking about how often these issues may affect you and how important they are to you.

RELATIONSHIPS

How people work together, respect and behaviour

- Relationships with colleagues or my manager are strained.
- I think I am being harassed or bullied by a colleague.
- I feel I am treated unfairly or with a lack of respect.
- I am concerned that the College values are not visible in my department
- I feel my skills and knowledge are not appreciated.

Record your thoughts on “Relationships”, giving specific examples and dates, thinking about how often these issues may affect you and how important they are to you.

CHANGE

Do you feel appropriately informed about changes at work that may affect you and how you are consulted when changes to your job are being considered?

I have not been informed of significant changes to my work until they were introduced.

I have not been given an opportunity to comment on changes to my job.

I feel uncertain over the effects of a change to my job.

I am concerned about my job security.

Record your thoughts on how “Change” to your role or to the work of your team may be affecting you.

OTHER ASPECTS

Are there any other aspects of your work or personal concerns which are contributing to your experience of stress?

NEXT STEPS

You should have a better understanding of the issues which may be contributing to your experience of workplace stress. You may now prioritise the areas you wish to discuss with your manager and those over which you have some control. It is important to note that your manager is responsible for managing you and your work. If you choose not to inform then, there is very little they can do to assist you. However, if you feel unable to speak to your manager, contact Human Resources or a Staff Supporter or your Trade Union Representative for advice.

Before you proceed it will also be important to consider what aspects of your life away from work could be contributing to this feeling. Family circumstances, health or financial worries may be very stressful.

If you are struggling to cope, this may affect how you respond to workplace stressors and visa-versa. It is up to you how much you share with your manager, but understanding its potential impact will be important for you to develop coping strategies or an action plan to help you improve your resilience.

As a starting point take some small steps to improve your wellbeing. Think about the three key areas- diet, exercise and sleep.

If you are worried about discussing the points you have highlighted with your manager, you can call Confidential Care for advice on preparation.

SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR STAFF AT IMPERIAL

Confidential Care

Tel 0800 085 4764 or +44 (0) 207938 0881

Email: assist@ciwellbeing.com

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/health-and-wellbeing/advice-and-support/confidential-care/>

Ele wellbeing platform:
<https://imperial.elewellbeing.co.uk/>

Human Resources

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/human-resources>

Occupational Health

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/occupational-health/>

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Centre (EDIC)

EDI volunteers (Dyslexia Champions, Staff Harassment Support Contacts, Staff Supporters)

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/equality/support-for-staff/>

The Early Career Researcher Institute

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/leadership-and-strategy/provost/vice-provost-research/vpre-led-initiatives/early-career-researcher-institute/>

Self- help information

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/mental-wellbeing>

Mental Health First Aiders

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/health-and-wellbeing/mental-health/mental-health-first-aid/>

People and Organisational Development

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/staff-development/>
<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/staff-development/courses-and-programmes/wellbeing-at-work/>