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| C:\Users\susanb\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.Word\PRIMARY_A_Vertical_Housed_RGB.PNG | health & safetyWORKING in ISOLATION REQUIREMENTS |

# 1 Purpose

To ensure the health and safety of staff and students working in isolation in workplaces under the management or control of The University of Melbourne.

# 2 scope

This requirement applies to all staff, students, contractors and others at workplaces under the management or control of the University of Melbourne.

This requirement describes research and teaching commitments that will include access to facilities or equipment in isolation.

This requirement does not include field work and/or off campus travel.

# 3 definitions

**Isolation:**

Isolation includes staff and students who are working alone and are unable to get immediate assistance from colleagues or other people. Examples include, but are not limited to:

* staff or students conducting research in a University building on the weekend; and
* staff working alone in an office area after hours

# 4 REQUIREMENTS

## 4.1 Risk assessments

Staff and students shall not work in isolation without approval from the relevant manager/supervisor. Approval shall not be provided prior to undertaking a risk assessment.

The manager/supervisor shall ensure that all work in isolation is subject to a risk assessment, which includes the activity undertaken, the competency and training of staff and/or students, and possible emergency situations that may arise.

Risk assessments are entered and stored into the Enterprise Risk Management System (ERMS). A University username and password is required to access ERMS via the Staff Hub or directly from web site: [Enterprise Risk Management System](https://www.riskcloud.net/prod/default.aspx).

Hard copy risk assessment forms are available where access to ERMS is not available. These can later be transposed to ERMS.

The manager/supervisor shall record/document that all controls have been completed and the work in isolation is approved. This approval can be documented by completing the [Health & Safety: Working in isolation form](https://safety.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0018/2010762/working-in-isolation-form.docx).

For long term projects, where the work is similar for the term of the project, the risk assessment may be completed for a 12 month period. A review at the end of the 12 months must take place to ensure that the controls implemented are effective and still relevant.

## 4.2 Laboratory and office areas

The Head of School/Division shall ensure that laboratory and office areas where working in isolation may occur will include the following:

* scheduled regular workplace inspections;
* recorded (such as log book or white board) name, location, time and date of entry;
* access to a phone in case of emergency;
* procedures for securing access arrangements, such as keeping corridors locked, switching on lights; and
* training and instruction (including local induction) for staff and students.

The requirement for personal panic alarms for staff and students working in remote or isolated areas such as animal houses or in facilities should be assessed.

The manager/supervisor shall ensure that:

* activities have a documented risk assessment and that no activities, where the residual risks are assessed as high or extreme, are undertaken in isolation; and
* control measures shall be adequate to reduce the risk of activities to a medium or low risk.

Staff and students will be aware of local procedures including, reporting conditions that may give rise to a dangerous or life threatening situations.

## 4.3 Unsupervised student laboratory and study areas

The Head of School/Division shall ensure that areas where staff and students are working in isolation have regular workplace inspections. Refer to [Health & Safety: Workplace monitoring and inspection requirements](https://safety.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0003/2110278/workplace-monitoring-and-inspection-requirements.docx) for more information.

For areas open to students working alone and without supervision the following should occur:

* the area assessed for security camera operation
* the access to the area should be in the form of a swipe/proximity card or controlled key access
* prior to the provision of a swipe card or key, students should be advised of the appropriate safety and security procedures, such as:
* contacting Security;
* initiating emergency procedures;
* reporting conditions that may give rise to a dangerous or life threatening situations to their manager/supervisor; and
* other responsibilities.

## 4.4 High to extreme risk activities

Working cannot occur where the residual risk for the activity is high or extreme. High to extreme risk activities that can be suitably controlled, where the residual risk is medium or below, can normally be undertaken in isolation.

The following list of high to extreme risk activities cannot be undertaken in isolation irrespective of the controls and the residual risk:

* operating plant or equipment capable of inflicting serious injury, such as chainsaws, firearms, lathes and power saws;
* handing venomous reptiles, insects, arthropods or fish;
* working with or near, highly toxic or corrosive substances where there is a significant risk of exposure to the substances, taking into account the volume used;
* working with large animals other than for the purpose of feeding or observation;
* using apparatus that could result in explosion, implosion, or the release or high energy fragments or significant amounts of toxic or environmentally damaging hazardous material;
* climbing high towers or high ladders;
* working with exposed energized electrical or electronic systems with powers exceeding 100 VA and voltage exceeding 40 V; and
* Working in environments not at atmospheric pressure.

# 5 References

*Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic)

[Health & Safety: Workplace monitoring and inspection requirements](https://safety.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0003/2110278/workplace-monitoring-and-inspection-requirements.docx)

[Enterprise Risk Management System](https://www.riskcloud.net/prod/default.aspx)

# 6 Responsibilities

Head of School/Division

Manager/supervisor

# 7 Associate documentation

## 7.1 Processes

[Health & Safety – Working in isolation](https://au.promapp.com/unimelb/Process/Minimode/Permalink/D9f0ZCfCHi3Qpxl7Av5Gbg)

## 7.2 Forms

[Health & Safety: Working in isolation form](https://safety.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0018/2010762/working-in-isolation-form.docx)

## 7.3 Guidance

[Health & Safety: Working in isolation guidance](https://safety.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/2010767/working-in-isolation-guidance.docx)