

HRP12: Fitness for Work

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) This Procedure aims to ensure Southern Cross University (SCU) management, employees, students, and others know the risks associated with fitness for work in the workplace and relevant management strategies for the risk mitigation process.

(2) All employees, students, and others must follow this Procedure.

(3) This Procedure applies to all SCU Work Units and sites.

Section 2 - Definitions

Days between Resets	Number of consecutive shifts.
Disciplinary Procedure	Actions that are taken when an employee has unsatisfactory work performance.
Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	A confidential, professional counselling service available to SCU employees.
Fatigue	A state of mental and/or physical exhaustion that reduces a person's ability to perform work safely and effectively.
Fatigue risk management system	Fatigue risk management system (FRMS).
Fit for Work	An individual is in a state (physically, mentally and emotionally) that enables the employee to perform assigned tasks competently and in a manner that does not compromise or threaten the safety or health of themselves or others.
Short Break Duration	Time between shifts.
Sufficient sleep	At least 5 hours of sleep in the previous 24 hours and at least 12 hours in the last 48 hours.

Section 3 - General Principles

(4) SCU's duty of care is to ensure that all individuals are fit for work while undertaking activities on SCU's behalf.

(5) Fitness for work may be affected by:

- a. Medical Conditions.
- b. Use of Alcohol and Other Drugs.
- c. Fatigue.

(6) If an individual is believed to be unfit for work, intervention is necessary to manage the risk to health and safety.

Medical Conditions

(7) If an employee has a medical condition that could affect their fitness for work, they must inform their supervisor about the potential impact of the condition on their work. However, the employee is not required to disclose confidential medical information that does not affect their ability to perform their duties safely and effectively.

(8) Special attention should be given to the appropriate medication use. Individuals must ensure that both prescription and non-prescription medications are taken safely. This includes:

- a. Discuss the nature of their duties with the prescribing medical practitioner and understand any possible side effects of medication that may impact their safety or performance at work.
- b. Notifying their manager or supervisor of any medication they are taking that could affect their safety or performance at work.
- c. Taking medication strictly under the medical practitioner's or manufacturer's recommendations.
- d. Reporting any side effects that may impact their safety or work performance to their medical practitioner and their manager or supervisor.

Alcohol & Drugs

(9) Employees must ensure they are fit for work by managing their drug and alcohol use. This entails:

- a. Complying with the conditions and terms outlined in the SCU Code of Conduct.
- b. Ensuring that any prescription or non-prescription medication is taken safely and does not cause impairment.

Fatigue

(10) SCU operates under a shared responsibility framework for fatigue management. This framework outlines a dual duty of care. It is the responsibility of SCU to:

- a. Develop and maintain appropriate safe systems of work.
- b. Ensure that rosters provide sufficient time away from the workplace for employees to have enough sleep. This may include bio-mathematical modelling and roster dimension analysis, and workgroup and employee circumstances must be considered.
- c. Provide appropriate fatigue training for employees, managers, supervisors, and schedulers.
- d. Ensure that there is at least one appropriately qualified individual to oversee the development, implementation, and monitoring of the fatigue risk management system (FRMS).
- e. Ensure appropriate consultation concerning rostering, fatigue risk management, and implementing new systems.
- f. Develop achievable milestones for implementing FRMS requirements, including specific deliverables and deadlines.

(11) It is the responsibility of employees to:

- a. Undertake relevant training and education as determined by SCU.
- b. Implement and utilise relevant fatigue risk management documentation.
- c. Adhere to the fatigue risk management procedure.
- d. Use the time away from work to obtain sufficient sleep and balance personal commitments such as volunteer work.
- e. Use appropriate channels to report if they have had insufficient sleep in the previous 24 or 48 hours or are experiencing any signs or symptoms of fatigue.

- f. Apply the SCU Outside Work Policy where applicable.

Rostering Hours of Work Guidelines

- (12) Ordinary duty hours for professional staff employees will be 35 per week, to be worked during the regular hours of operation of the University, between 9.00 am to 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday inclusive (as per EA 2024: Clause 430).
- (13) The work hours for employees working shifts will be 35 hours per week, averaged over 12 weeks (as per EA 2024: Clause 461).
- (14) Shift patterns may be fixed or rotational, provided no roster will be established requiring an employee, including a casual employee, to work a fixed night shift. The standard shift duration to be worked on any day will be 10 hours, but by agreement may be extended to a maximum of 12 hours. The minimum shift duration to be worked on any day will be four hours. Subject to the variation of the maximum shift duration under the clause. No employee will be required to work more than four 10-hour shifts in any one week (EA 2024 Clauses 463-466).
- (15) No employee must work more than five 4-8-hour shifts in one week. There will be a minimum 10-hour break between concluding one shift and commencing the next.
- (16) There may be instances where an employee is directed to resume duty without having taken a 10-hour break between shifts, including a situation where the employee did not have a 10-hour break because they were required to work overtime at the end of the preceding shift (as per EA 2024 Clauses 467 and 468)

Overtime Guidelines

- (17) Wherever practicable, employees will be given 48 hours' notice of the requirement to work overtime. An employee is entitled to refuse the requirement to work overtime if the overtime would be unreasonable, having regard to any risk to the employee's health and safety and the employee's circumstances, including any family responsibilities.
- (18) The University does not condone or encourage employees to work unreasonable overtime. Unreasonable overtime is defined as working more than 20% of an employee's ordinary hours averaged over three months (as per EA 2024 Clauses 411 and 412).
- (19) Maximum of 12 hours worked continuously (overtime and ordinary hours) with a minimum break of 10 hours after ceasing overtime.
- (20) Any occurrence of an employee working more than 12 hours must complete an Incident report in RiskWare.

Training and Education

- (21) There are four levels of training:
- a. Employee training.
 - b. Leader, supervisor.
 - c. Scheduler training.
 - d. Training of a FRMS suitably trained individual.
- (22) Training should be conducted per the Fatigue Management Training and Education Scope.

Risk assessment and mitigation

- (23) Risk assessments must be performed if the Rostered Hours of Work guidelines are exceeded or before they are

exceeded.

(24) Any employee demonstrating any signs of fatigue must complete a Fatigue Risk Assessment described in this section, and an Incident report must be recorded in RiskWare.

(25) Note: Where an employee has had fewer hours of sleep than 5 hours in 24 or 12 hours in 48 hours, they must report to their manager/supervisor and complete a fatigue risk assessment.

Fatigue likelihood

(26) To calculate an individual fatigue likelihood score, use the one-minute fatigue self-assessment 'Fatigue Safe' app. Speak to your supervisor to discuss controls if your rating is amber or greater.

Fatigue Monitoring and Evaluation

(27) Monitoring and evaluation must be undertaken to ensure that:

- a. The fatigue risk management system outlined in this document functions as intended (i.e. is fatigue risk being managed under this procedure - compliance).
- b. It effectively mitigates the risk of fatigue-related errors (functionality).

(28) In determining compliance and functionality, the following metrics should be used:

- a. Actual hours of work compared with planned rosters.
- b. Overtime.
- c. Fatigue Risk Assessments.
- d. Hazard, incident, and injury data.
- e. Use and efficacy of control measures.
- f. FRMS compliance data.
- g. Further opportunities for improvement.

Support for Fitness to Work

Management of an Employee Not Fit for Work

(29) If an employee is identified or assessed as unfit for work, the Manager will determine the proof needed to manage the fitness for work issue and decide under what circumstances the employee can return to work. Fitness for work management may include:

- a. Restrictions or modifications of duties/tasks.
- b. Provision of alternative duties, if available.
- c. Time off from work.
- d. Case management will align with SCU's Injury Management Process, where appropriate.
- e. Modified or restricted duties allow employees to return to work or stay at work while performing tasks appropriate to their functional capabilities.
- f. Provision of alternative duties, if available.
- g. Temporary or permanent medical deployment may be considered when an injured worker cannot fully and safely perform their usual duties.
- h. Time Off from work.

(30) If employees cannot work and suitable duties are unavailable, they will use accumulated personal leave. They can

use annual leave, rostered days off, or flex time if no personal leave is available. If all leave entitlements are exhausted, the employee will be placed on leave without pay.

Disciplinary Action

(31) The Fitness for Work Procedure aims to support employees in addressing fitness issues. However, ongoing fitness issues, refusal to attend medical assessments, or breaches of this procedure may lead to disciplinary action. Procedures outlined in the SCU enterprise agreement will be followed before taking disciplinary action against an employee for misconduct or serious misconduct.

Employee Treatment and Support

(32) Some employees may need treatment and support for illness, injury, fatigue or substance abuse. Employees needing assistance or identified by SCU management as needing assistance will be encouraged to seek help through:

- a. Employee Assistance Program.
- b. Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinators.
- c. External Medical Practitioners.

Education and Awareness

(33) Employees, contractors, and visitors will be informed of this procedure during induction and throughout their employment.

Section 4 - Roles and Responsibilities

(34) Refer to [WHSMP13: Responsibility and Accountability Statement](#).

Section 5 - Records of Documentation

(35) All relevant documentation will be recorded and kept in accordance with WHS Legislation and other legislative obligations, including:

- a. Training records.
- b. Risk assessment must be kept for 28 days after the work to which it relates is completed.
- c. Notifiable incident: all records must be kept for two years after the incident.

Section 6 - Revision and approval history

(36) This procedure will be reviewed as per nominated review dates or because of other events, such as:

- a. Internal and external audit outcomes.
- b. Legislative changes.
- c. Outcomes from management reviews.
- d. Incidents.

Section 7 - References

Work Health and Safety Act (in the applicable jurisdiction that SCU operates)
Work Health and Safety Regulation (in the applicable jurisdiction that SCU operates)

Section 8 - Related Documents

Code of Conduct
SCU Enterprise Agreement 2024
Outside Work Policy
WHSMP13: Responsibility and Accountability Statement

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	9th December 2024
Review Date	9th December 2027
Approval Authority	Vice President (People and Culture)
Approval Date	9th December 2024
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Kim Franks Vice President (People and Culture)
Head of Work Unit	Brendan Pearce Director, Workplace Relations
Enquiries Contact	Shaun Brown Manager, Workplace Health and Safety <hr/> Vice President (People and Culture) portfolio