



Psychosocial Safety Policy

April 2026

Our Values

The Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of South Australia values all personnel who contribute to the work of UCASA, and recognises that all interactions should be approached through a lens of justice and fairness, care and safety, intentional growth and encouragement and accountability. In this way, the Uniting Church strives for excellence in its stewardship of its people and seeks to value each individual and the unique skills, gifts and talents they possess.

Overview

The purpose of this policy is to outline UCASA's obligation to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that the workplace is free from psychosocial hazards. This obligation will be met through the establishment of processes to identify, assess, control and review psychosocial hazards in the workplace.

This policy will ensure as far as reasonably practicable that psychosocial hazards are managed in compliance with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* (SA) (**WHS Act**), the *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012* (SA) (**WHS Regulations**) and all applicable Codes of Practice.

This policy is not incorporated into any contract of employment or contract for services.

Scope

The provisions for psychosocial safety set out in the WHS Act applies to all workers of a PCBU. This policy applies specifically to all workers of and for the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of South Australia.

Please note: Presbyteries, Congregations and other Church body employers with workers are encouraged to contact the UCASA Manager Human Resources on a case-by-case basis to confirm access to this policy content for their employee/s, regarding the provisions prior to adopting this policy.

This policy, depending on the situation, may be referred to and adopted to help manage and support specific circumstances relating to other Church personnel, including ministry agents, who have alternative arrangements for this type of support e.g. the Uniting Church's Pastoral Relations processes.

This policy replaces all previous versions.

Definitions

Term	Meaning
Church body	As per the definition of Body in the Uniting Church's Constitution, includes council, committee, department, college, board, agency or other institution <u>within</u> the bounds of UCASA: • Synod (Pirie St Office), Synod (Brooklyn Park) College Campus - Yarthu Apinthe, Uniting Venues SA, Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC), • Presbyteries, Congregations and Faith Communities.
Contractor	Individuals paid to provide services to UCASA, or to the Church body, who are not engaged or employed as Ministry Agents or Employees and are not a Volunteer.
Employee	• These are people who are directly employed by the UCASA, or employed by a Church body on behalf of the Uniting Church in Australia, and are remunerated for the work they undertake for their employer.
Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	An EAP outsourced provider is an independent, third-party organisation contracted by an employer to provide confidential, professional counselling and specialised support services to employees, with a capped number of funded sessions.
Executive Officer	An individual who is appointed to lead a UCASA ministry centre by the Synod or its Standing Committee, usually a person who has been delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the UCASA, and is accountable for the delivery of outcomes for a department, function or program within their ministry centre, and reports to the General Secretary.
Manager	Any individual appointed by an employer or governing council of a Church body, temporarily or permanently, to a supervisory role i.e. has work performance and workplace behaviour oversight of other personnel.
Member	For the purposes of this policy, includes any Member, Confirmed Member, Member in Association, or Adherent as defined in the Uniting Church 'Constitution' and 'Regulations'.
Ministry Agent	These are people engaged in specified ministries within the bounds of UCASA - includes (as referenced in the Uniting Church's 'Regulations' and the 'Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice') Candidates, Community Ministers and Chaplains, Deacons, Deaconesses, Interns, Lay Pastors, Ministers of the Word, Ministry of Pastors, Accredited Youth Workers, and Ministers from other denominations serving in approved placements in the UCASA.
Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU)	Someone operating a business or undertaking for-profit or not-for-profit, whether alone or with others. The WHS Act places the primary duty of care on the PCBU. UCASA acknowledges that, as an unincorporated association, it is a PCBU in accordance with Section 5 (2) of the WHS Act; therefore each of the individual councils of the Church body being unincorporated associations are also PCBUs in their own right for their respective business or undertaking. A PCBU does not include: • a person engaged solely as a worker or an officer. • a volunteer association, where no workers are employed.
Personnel	Any person commissioned, employed and or engaged in, or contributes

Term	Meaning
	towards the planning/management/delivery of, and or are involved or participates in any functions, programs or activities associated with a Church body (includes Ministry Agent, Employee, Volunteer, Contractor, Member, Visitor, and Guest).
Psychological health	Refers to an individual's internal mental health and emotional state.
Psychological injuries	Harm or injuries from psychosocial hazards including conditions such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and sleep disorders.
Psychosocial hazards	Are hazards that can cause psychological and physical harm and arise from or relate to the design or management of work, the working environment, plant and equipment, workplace interactions or behaviours. Psychosocial hazards may include: • Job demands • Fatigue • Poor support • Low job control • Bullying • Conflict • Job insecurity • Poor organisational justice • Poor physical environment • Poor working relationships • Poor change management • Harassment including sexual harassment • Lack of role clarity • Remote or isolated work • Intrusive surveillance • Violence and aggression • Inadequate reward and recognition • Traumatic events or material
Psychosocial safety	For the purposes of this policy, refers to work and the workplace environment, social and cultural factors that may impact on an individual's psychological health and wellbeing.
UCASA (<i>the Synod</i>)	Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of South Australia
Uniting Church (<i>the Church</i>)	The Uniting Church in Australia
Volunteer	Either a formal or informal volunteer.
Formal Volunteer	A formal volunteer, an individual recognised by the governing council of a Church body, who has actual capacity to influence and control, and who willingly provides work or performs a service to benefit the mission and objectives of the Church or Church body and receives no payment as a result of their work.
Informal Volunteer	An informal volunteer may not necessarily fit the definition of 'worker' (but rather 'other person') under the WHS Act 2012 (SA) as they may not be performing the work of the Church body but rather for his or her own religious purposes or values and for the good of the Church body. Meaning an informal volunteer donates their time to support the activities of their Church body through voluntary acts of helping and kindness in local communities.
Worker	As per the definition in WHS Act 2012 (SA), a worker is a person who carries out work for the Church body, including work as an employee, a contractor, a subcontractor, a self-employed person, an outworker, an apprentice or trainee, a work experience student, an employee of a labour hire company placed with a 'host employer', or as a (formal) volunteer. The term 'work' is not defined in WHS Act 2012 (SA) and has its ordinary meaning.
Workplace	A workplace is a place where work is carried out for the Church body and includes any place where a worker goes, or is likely to be, while at work.

Term	Meaning
	Generally this means in the context of the Church body, but may not be restricted to: • any place of worship within the bounds of UCASA • any UCASA property used by the Church body • any other property owned by The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (S.A.) • any other location or workplace (as defined by the WHS Act 2012 – SA) where approved Church Body work, activities or functions are being conducted.

Policy Principles

UCASA recognises that individuals respond to psychosocial hazards in different ways and that individual differences such as age, existing abilities or disabilities, injuries or illnesses, as well as life experiences may make some workers more susceptible to harm from exposure to the same hazard.

For example, workers more susceptible to harm from exposure to the same hazard include:

- being a new or young worker;
- workers with literacy or language barriers;
- having an existing disability, injury or illness;
- having previously been exposed to a traumatic event; or
- workers who are currently experiencing difficult personal circumstances.

It is also recognised that there may be more than one aspect of the working environment or workplace that is contributing to psychosocial hazards and the risk of psychological injuries.

Workers may be exposed to a combination of psychosocial hazards at one time.

Managing Risks to Psychological Health and Safety

UCASA endeavours to eliminate or minimise psychological health and safety risks so far as is reasonably practicable and adopts a risk management approach for managing psychosocial hazards, utilising principles of risk management in accordance with its WHS Policy and the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* (SA). Risk management is a four-step process for managing health and safety risks in the workplace.

In doing so, UCASA is committed to:

1. Identifying hazards

Determine what could cause harm, considering the psychosocial hazards described above, and review relevant workplace data to gain insight into potential hazards in the workplace.

2. Assessing risks

Where necessary (as some known risks may have known control measures), understand the nature of the harm that could be caused by the psychosocial hazards, how serious the harm could be and the likelihood of it happening.

3. Controlling risks

Applying the 'hierarchy of control' model (refer to WHS Policy), implement the most effective control

measures that are reasonably practicable in the circumstances and ensure they remain effective over time, and do not inadvertently introduce new hazards.

4. **Reviewing hazards and control measures**

To ensure they are effective and working as planned after implementation, and after introducing new processes or procedures, or a change in personnel e.g. supervision or new worker starting etc.

Responsibilities

A PCBU, so far as is reasonably practicable, is responsible for:

- Ensuring that psychosocial hazards are identified, recognised, assessed and controlled in accordance with the hierarchy of controls.
- Consulting with workers to ensure that work expectations are clearly identifiable and manageable, for example through job descriptions, relevant policies and work procedures.
- Providing workers with an appropriate induction that includes information related to the UCASA's commitment to the mental health of workers and the workers responsibilities related to helping to ensure a healthy and safe workplace.
- Ensuring all workers have suitable and adequate training, instructions, tools and equipment to do their work safely.
- Providing workers with suitable and adequate training in the identification, prevention and management of psychosocial hazards.
- Ensuring workers understand the workplaces procedures, operations and processes in place at UCASA.
- Ensuring there is adequate and appropriate supervision of workers and that there is a mechanism for consultation between management and workers in relation to psychosocial hazards in the workplace.
- Ensuring all workers understand the applicable organisational operations that may impact upon their mental wellbeing and the processes and procedures in place to eliminate, minimise and report any psychological health risks.
- Promoting safe systems of work in the workplace.
- Ensuring the resources and processes designed to eliminate or manage mental health risks and the risks of work-related psychological injuries are effectively and efficiently allocated, implemented, managed and utilised.
- Ensuring there are appropriate processes for receiving, monitoring, reviewing and responding to information on psychosocial hazards.

The **Executive Officer, Resources** is responsible for:

- Approval of, and amending, this policy in consultation with the Manager, Human Resources and Executive Officers.
- Ensuring that this policy is constantly reviewed to maintain their relevance and integrity in line with appropriate legislation.
- Ensuring that the contents of this policy are understood and applied by all workers.

Manager, Human Resources is responsible for:

- Providing assistance with requests for EAP and mental health support services in a timely manner.

- Periodically assessing compliance with this policy to ensure consistency of application across all ministry centres.

Managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that they:

- Identify, assess, and respond to, all reasonably foreseeable psychosocial hazards in the workplace, including through the design of workplace systems and procedures.
- Implement and review control measures to eliminate or minimize psychosocial hazards.
- Consult with workers on current and/or potential psychosocial hazards in the workplace.
- Respond to any behavior that is contrary to this policy.

Workers understanding their responsibilities in relation to helping to minimise the risks to their own mental health and the mental wellbeing of others at work is imperative. To this end:

Workers are responsible for ensuring that they:

- Manage their own psychological health and safety, including by seeking support through UCASA's EAP.
- Have read and understood this policy, as well as all other workplace policies, as amended from time to time, in their entirety.
- Understand and contribute to UCASA's commitment to the overall mental health of workers and the policies and procedures developed to help identify, assess and control risks to psychological health in the workplace.
- Understand their role at work, ensure that it has been clearly identified and it is clearly within the scope of their skills, knowledge and experience.
- Have received sufficient training, instructions, tools and equipment to do their work safely.
- Actively participate in the consultation mechanisms or forums designed to help ensure their health and safety at work, including those targeted at the overall mental health of workers.
- Understand the applicable organisational operations that may impact upon their mental wellbeing, and the processes and procedures in place to eliminate, minimise and report any psychological health risks.
- Comply with all systems of work and procedures that are designed to help ensure their health and safety and the health and safety of others at work, including those specifically designed to eliminate or minimise psychosocial hazards.
- Utilise the applicable reporting procedure to report any work-related psychosocial hazard to their own mental health or the mental wellbeing of others at work as soon as it becomes evident.
- Not act in a manner that is contrary to this policy.

Failure to comply with the policy

Workers should be aware that a failure to comply with this policy, including any arrangements which are put in place under it, will be investigated and may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Issue Resolution

Refer to the UCASA Grievance Policy procedures for further information.

- [UCASA Grievance Policy](#)

Dissemination of Policy

A copy of this policy will be made available to all workers. The intent of this policy will be explained to each new worker at their induction.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with any applicable legislation changes and UCASA review procedures.

Related Legislation and Documents

- *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* (Cth)
- *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth)
- Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work – Code of Practice (SA)
- *Privacy Act 1998* (Cth)
- *Return to Work Act 2014* (SA)
- UCASA Employee Assistance Program Policy
- UCASA Safe Church Policy and documents
- UCASA WHS Policy
- UCASA Workplace Harassment and Bullying Policy
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* (SA)

Links

- [What are psychosocial hazards? | SafeWork SA](#)

Approval Authority

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Executive Officer, Resources
Advisory Committee to Approval Authority	Human Resources and Remuneration Committee
Administrator	Manager, Human Resources
Next Review Date	2029 (3-years)

Feedback

Employees may provide feedback about this policy and procedure by emailing resources@sa.uca.org.au or humanresources@sa.uca.org.au

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Replaces: N/A

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