Health and Safety - Manual Handling Procedure

Section 1 - Summary

(1) This Procedure:

a. ensures that Victoria University has a system established to eliminate or risk of injury, as far as reasonably possible, to all employees, students, contractors and volunteers from hazardous manual handling;
b. describes what manual handling is and how it may be hazardous to people; and
c. prescribes a system of identification of hazards involved in manual handling tasks and instruction on controlling hazardous manual handling for all tasks related to work at the University or in relation to any activity under the University's control.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Procedure applies across the University and to all University employees.

Section 3 - Policy/Regulation

(3) Health and Safety Policy

Section 4 - Procedures

Part A - Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibility
Everyone working at VU	1. Take care to avoid injury by knowing their own ability and limitations. 2. Follow instructions on minimising hazardous manual handling tasks. 3. Attend training on manual handling and risk minimisation if required to carry out their roles safely. 4. Identify manual handling tasks in relation to their own work and environment. 5. Assist others in minimising hazardous manual handling in all aspects of work.
Executives and Leaders	1. Encourage discussion and the identification and control of hazardous manual handling tasks. 2. Monitor information on manual handling injuries, ensure controls are reviewed and that reasonable resources are allocated for implementation.
Managers and Supervisors	1. Identify hazardous manual handling tasks within job descriptions and particular tasks. 2. Use hazard identification tools before any purchase and/or before introducing any new task or equipment to the workplace or activities. 3. Ensure induction, instruction, training and supervision is provided to all employees, students and others to eliminate or minimise hazardous manual handling. 4. Provide mechanical and other aids to control hazardous manual handling in the workplace and in relation to work-related activities. Continually review the risk control measures.

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Roles	Responsibility
Teachers, Academic Staff and Researchers	1. Provide induction, instruction, training and supervision to minimise hazardous manual handling tasks for themselves and their students. 2. Use hazard identification tools before any purchase and/or before introducing any new task or equipment to University activities.
OHS Team	1. Provide advice on minimising hazardous manual handling as requested. 2. Ensure distribution of any information on innovative manual handling controls, issue alerts and improve procedures where necessary. 3. Source and coordinate appropriate training for the minimisation of hazards in manual handling tasks. 4. Monitor results when new controls have been introduced as required.

Part B - General

(4) Manual handling is physical exertion by a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any object. Most manual handling activities are not hazardous if undertaken for limited periods of time and are within the individual's ability. Identifying those tasks which have the potential to cause injury is necessary to establish safe work practices as required in the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic) and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic).

(5) The risk of injury associated with manual handling increases with tasks that involve:

a. repetitive or sustained application of high force;
b. repetitive or sustained awkward posture;
c. repetitive or sustained movement;
d. application of high force either as a single or repetitive activity. A manual handling task that involves high force is one that most people or the people likely to do the task find difficult because of the effort it requires;
e. exposure to sustained vibration;
f. handling live people or animals; and
g. handling of unstable or unbalanced loads that are difficult to grasp or hold.

(6) The identification and control of manual handling tasks must be a regular part of business for all employees. The identification, planning and implementation of controls should be made in consultation with employees directly performing the tasks for all activities. The process of hazard identification and risk control for manual handling will be recorded using guidance documents provided on the OHS intranet site, which include:

a. OHS risk assessment for activities in laboratories, practicals, excursions and field trips to be used before introducing new activities, or when reviewing work practices and class plans regardless of whether there is a change in the activity;
b. OHS risk assessment for events to be used when planning events;
c. OHS procurement checklists to be used before purchasing new equipment, goods or services;
d. workplace inspection checklists to be used for regular workplace inspections; and
e. computer workstation adjustment worksheet to be used for office-based work.

(7) Control measures for minimising the risk of injury due to hazardous manual handling include:

a. altering the layout, equipment and the work area;
b. monitoring and making changes to the environment, including heating, cooling and vibration in locations where manual handling may be undertaken;
c. monitoring and changing the system of work (processes and techniques);

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d. changing the objects used in the task involving manual handling, e.g. handles on items, decreasing size, weight or resistance; and
e. use of mechanical aids such as hoists, trolleys, pulleys and lifts.

(8) All students, staff, contractors, and volunteers should be briefed on manual handling hazards inherent in their role during their inductions and the correct procedures, equipment, or other controls that may be necessary.

Section 5 - HESF/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(9) HESF: Standard 2.3 Wellbeing and Safety.

(10) Compliance Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and FPP Requirements 2025: Standard 20 Compliance with Laws.

(11) National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (Cth): Standard 6 Overseas Student Support Services.

Section 6 - Definitions

(12) Manual Handling: refers to the physical exertion required by a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any object.

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