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1. OBJECTIVE

This process details the requirements and practices for the management of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to assist with the correct selection, supply, use, replacement, maintenance, training, instruction and storage.

2. BACKGROUND

PPE is clothing or equipment designed to protect the wearer (staff, students, researchers, third parties or visitors) against hazards in the work and learning environment.

Higher order risk control measures (elimination, substitution, engineering and administrative controls) must always be considered before relying exclusively on PPE. Schools / departments may specify the use of particular PPE matched to unique hazards or situations. The risk assessment shall ensure that the hierarchy of control is adopted and where PPE is required, other risk controls are used concurrently.

Requirements for the use and maintenance of specialised PPE are to be set out in documented work procedures. People must be instructed in and practise the correct use and fit of PPE.

PPE is the least effective control measure because the hazards and risks are still present.

3. SCOPE

This process applies to all RMIT, globally.

NOTE – Referenced legislation applies to Australian jurisdictions only. RMIT campuses in other jurisdictions must refer to local applicable legislation, where available.

4. WHAT MUST GO RIGHT?

The expected outcomes – known as ‘what must go right’ – will be that:

- PPE needs are identified as an outcome of appropriate risk assessments
- All staff, students, researchers, third parties and visitors are in possession of and use the correct PPE prior to engaging in the associated activity
- All PPE in use is in good condition, is maintained correctly and replaced where necessary
- All PPE is stored as per the manufacturer’s instructions
- Training is delivered in the use, fitting, maintenance and storage of PPE, where required.

5. PROCEDURE / IMPLEMENTATION

5.1. RMIT Responsibility

Each College / Portfolio must ensure that all staff, students, researchers and third parties (and visitors when applicable) within their area of control have the appropriate PPE and ensure the PPE is:

- Suitable to the nature of the task / work and any associated hazard(s)
- A suitable size and fit, and reasonably comfortable for the person who is to use or wear it
- Maintained, replaced or repaired so that it continues to minimise risk to the person who uses it – e.g. clean and hygienic and in good working order
- Used or worn by the person when required

Each College / Portfolio must also ensure that the person provided with PPE has received information, instruction and training in the:

- Proper selection, use and wearing of PPE
- Storage, maintenance and disposal of PPE

5.1.1. Selection of Suitable PPE

All PPE used at RMIT must comply with the applicable Australian or International Standard, which should be clearly marked on the equipment. The suitability of PPE is to be evaluated based on risk, the task being undertaken, the work or learning environment conditions and personal fit. When selecting PPE, sources of information to be referred to include:

- Risk assessments
- Safety Data Sheet (SDS)
- Compliance Codes or Codes of Practice
- Australian/International Standards
- Safe Work Instructions (SWI) / Safe Operating Procedures (SOP)
- Subject matter experts, such as radiation safety officers, technical coordinators or officers, biosafety officers etc.

5.1.2. Purchasing of PPE

Each College / Portfolio, in consultation with staff, subject matter experts and the Senior Advisor, Health and Safety, are responsible for identifying and purchasing PPE for their respective work and learning environments.

Prior to the purchase of any PPE, the following steps must be taken:

- Identify the type of PPE required based on the completed risk assessment(s)
- Identify the quantity of PPE needed based on the number of staff / students / researchers / third parties and stock quantities to be held
- Ensure PPE meets Australian or International Standards, as applicable
- PPE must be fit for purpose, in good condition and hygienic
- Where necessary, perform an initial trial to ensure the PPE meets its intended purpose

It is recommended that, where possible, Schools / departments purchase their PPE from RMIT approved suppliers.

PPE supplied by RMIT remains the property of RMIT.

PPE purchased externally from RMIT, by staff, students, researchers or third parties, must meet the requirements of this, and any associated processes and guidelines.

5.1.3. Consultation

When selecting PPE for a task or activity, the College or Portfolio must consult with the staff, applicable health and safety representative (HSR), students, researchers, third parties, subject matter experts and, when necessary, the Technical OHS staff or the Senior Advisor, Health and Safety.

5.1.4. Supply and Use of PPE

PPE and administrative controls are the lowest on the Hierarchy of Control measures (refer to **HR - HSW-PR09-HSW Risk Management**). PPE does not control the hazard at the source. PPE rely on human behaviour and supervision, and used on their own, are the least effective in minimising risks. PPE is not to be relied upon as the main control measure unless it is used as an interim measure under the following circumstances:

- Before more effective controls can be established
- If other controls are not reasonably practicable to implement, or not completely effective
- As part of clean-up in emergency situations

Before any PPE is used, it must be inspected to ensure:

- A good fit on the user
- Is appropriate and effective to protect the wearer from the hazards it is intended to control.
- Does not introduce any new hazards for the task to be performed which cannot be controlled

PPE is to be used and worn where there is a risk of injury, including (for example) protection for the head, eyes, hearing, respiratory system, skin, hands and feet. For more information, refer to the **HR - HSW-PR38-WI02 Personal Protective Equipment Guidance** document.

For:

Who	Responsibility
Staff / Researchers	each College / Portfolio is to provide staff with the necessary PPE where it has been determined it is required.
Students	depending on their requirements, each College / Portfolio must determine who is responsible for providing PPE. For example, a college may provide eye protection, but the student may be required to purchase a lab coat and appropriate footwear as part of their learning or work
Third Parties	the third party or their employer is responsible for providing the PPE required for the work they are performing.

Operational Leaders must ensure that visitors are provided with and are wearing the required PPE.

PPE shall be for the exclusive use by one person, where appropriate. Equipment that is suitable for use by more than one person shall be cleaned before being re-used.

In some instances, PPE will be purchased externally to RMIT (whether by students, researchers, third parties or staff). Such PPE must meet the level of protection detailed in the risk assessment(s), as a minimum, applicable to work / learning environment, the process or the task. Furthermore, the PPE must meet the requirements of the relevant and applicable Australian or International Standard.

5.1.5. Information, Instruction and Training

Persons required to use PPE are to receive appropriate induction, information, instruction and training in relation to the use of the equipment, including:

- Why they are required to use PPE
- Correct use of PPE, including any limitations
- Fitting of PPE to ensure that it controls the risk effectively
- Appropriate maintenance and storage of PPE.

All records of training must be maintained in accordance with **HR - HSW-PR06 Training, Competency and Awareness**.

5.1.6. Maintenance and Storage of PPE

PPE is to be maintained to ensure it is clean, hygienic and continues to minimise the risk to the person who uses it. Inspection is to be undertaken by competent persons before each use to determine if the equipment is damaged and that it will work as intended. Where required, testing of PPE is to be undertaken as part of routine maintenance activities.

Where PPE is damaged, such that it may not provide the necessary protection, it is to be disposed of and replaced. People cleaning PPE are to follow the manufacturer's instructions for the correct cleaning of PPE.

PPE may have parts which may deteriorate, fail or not function after repeated use. In some instances, these parts may be replaced and return the PPE to full and effective function. Colleges and portfolios should identify which PPE has parts which may be replaced and advise users during the instruction and training regime for the PPE.

When not in use PPE must be stored in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions or regulatory requirements.

5.1.7. Signage

Work and learning environments where PPE is required must be clearly marked with signs or other means. For more information, refer to **HR - HSW-PR38-WI01 Safety Signage Guidance**.

5.2. Monitoring and Evaluation

Where staff, students, researchers or third parties are observed not to be wearing the required PPE for a task or activity, all persons have the obligation and authority to stop activities. The Operational Leader has the responsibility of enforcing this procedure, or as outlined in the activity risk assessment. RMIT's disciplinary processes will be applied to persons not complying with this procedure and may include being removed from the work and/or learning environment.

Operational Leaders are responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of risk controls in consultation with staff, HSRs, and researchers.

Existing measures in place must be reviewed and, if necessary, revised:

- Prior to any alteration to safe work procedures
- When any change is made
- If new or additional information becomes available
- In the event of a hazard, incident or injury
- In relation to any incident notifiable to the Regulator
- Where for any reason the measures do not adequately control risk
- Following a reasonable request from a staff, researchers, third parties, student or HSR

Other methods and forums for periodic review and consultation include but are not limited to:

- Direct discussions with relevant staff members / researchers / students / groups
- Staff meetings
- Health and Safety (HSC) committee meetings
- When reviewing risk assessments and / or documented safe systems of work/learning
- Conducting HSW audits
- When a change is made

6. Responsibilities

6.1. Senior Leaders

- Ensure this process is implemented in their area of control
- Ensure there are resources available to provide and maintain PPE.

6.2. Operational Leaders

- Ensure all tasks in the areas under their control are risk assessed to determine the requirement for PPE
- Ensure suitable PPE is provided, only where it is not reasonably practicable for other control measures to minimise the risk, or, in conjunction with other control measures
- Ensure PPE is selected to minimise risk to health and safety in accordance with applicable technical standards

- Ensure PPE is maintained, tested, repaired or replaced so that it is in good working order, safe, clean and hygienic
- Ensure persons who use PPE are provided with and follow any information, instruction and training in relation to the use of the PPE
- If a person other than a worker provides his or her own PPE, ensure the equipment effectively minimises risk and the person uses the equipment
- Ensure areas at the workplace requiring the use of PPE are clearly identified by signs or labelling
- Enforce this process in their area of control

6.3. Staff, researchers, students and third parties

- Comply with the requirements of induction
- Use or wear the PPE provided, in accordance with any information, training or reasonable instruction given by RMIT
- Do not intentionally misuse or damage PPE provided
- Attend training as required on the correct usage of PPE
- Store and maintain PPE in a clean and hygienic condition and inform RMIT of any damage to, defect in or need to clean or decontaminate PPE

6.4. Visitors

- Comply with the requirements of induction
- Use or wear the PPE provided, in accordance with any information, training or reasonable instruction given by RMIT
- Undertake training where required
- Comply with all safety rules and instruction

6.5. HSW Team

- Regularly review this process in consultation with staff, including HSRs
- Assist College or Portfolio with determining PPE needs, as required
- Monitor compliance with this process and report on outcomes
- Develop and report on KPIs relevant to this process

7. Definitions

Defines any key terms and acronyms relating to the process where they apply.

Term / acronym	Definition
Senior Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Executive Deans, Deans and Associate Deans• Directors, Deputy and Associate Directors• General Managers and Managers• Chief Investigators
HSC	Health and Safety Committee
Operational Leaders	Any staff member with direct reports or supervision over a cohort, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deans and Associate Deans• Directors, Deputy and Associate Directors• General Managers and Managers

Term / acronym	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coordinators and Supervisors• Teachers
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	PPE is defined as safety clothing including footwear or equipment that is necessary for personal protection of the wearer whilst exposed to hazards in the workplace.
SDS	Safety Data Sheet – formerly MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet)

8. Supporting Documents

Lists the supporting and related Processes and Guidance Material, Legislative references, Australian and International Standards etc. that may be useful references for process users

- POLICY - Health Safety & Wellbeing Policy
- HR - HSW-PR09 - HSW Risk Management
- HR - HSW-PR38-WI01 - Personal Protective Equipment Guidance
- HR - HSW-PR38-WI02 - Safety Signage Guidance
- HR - HSW-PR06 - HSW Training, Competence & Awareness