Australian University Staff 2020 - 2023
_work, Digital Stress and Wellbeing Survey

Overall Report

Data collected by the Psychosocial Safety Climate Global Observatory, University of South Australia

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Report built by Daniel Neser

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Introduction

This data-driven visual report is compiled to present four years (2020 - 2023) of surveys from Australian universities, revealing a picture of workplace climate for worker psychological health and wellbeing.

The report introduces and presents the key metrics by which individual and workplace conditions can be assessed. In many ways and metrics, the university sector is letting its staff down.

The study has analysed many aspects of working life for university staff, and this report features a detailed breakdown of responses per question. Individual university scores couldn't be included in the report.

This is a static version of an interactive dashboard.
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<td>Work-Family Conflict</td>
<td>Work-Self Conflict</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The findings for the key variables are summarised below. For a more detailed summary and citation of each of these scales, refer to the scale summary pages. Benchmarks are listed in the appendix. Work pressure was not measured in 2023.

**Psychosocial Safety Climate** is the institutional climate for worker psychological health. A poor PSC score indicates individuals are at high risk of mental injury stemming from work conditions. Overall, two thirds of respondents were at high risk or above for poor psychosocial safety climate.

**Psychological Distress** or the K10 scale asks about the frequency an individual suffers from the symptoms of psychological distress, including tiredness, nervousness and depressive symptoms. According to cut-offs, over two in five university staff reported high or very high distress.

**Emotional Exhaustion** is a subscale of the Burnout Assessment Tool and measures the emotional drain of work and conditions on the job. According to cut-offs, two thirds of university staff reported high or very high exhaustion.

**Work Pressure** measures the strain an individual faces when on the job. It captures the speed, intensity and demands of tasks as part of the experience of working. About three quarters of university staff reported that work pressure was high.
Participants in 2023 were asked to assess the statement: "In your university, there have been significant changes such as restructuring, downsizing and layoffs that have significantly affected your job." Just under four in five agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

Participants in 2023 were asked to assess the statement: "In your university, new policies and procedures designed to cut costs are constantly being introduced where you work." Over four in five agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

**Engagement** measures an individual’s vigour, dedication and absorption in relation to their work. Engagement has fallen steadily since 2020.

**Work-Family Conflict** measures the impact that work demands have on family and home life, including duties at home. Around three in five university staff report work conflicting with family and home life. For women and academic respondents, Work-Family Conflict is notably higher.
Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC) refers to the organisational climate for worker psychosocial protection. Against 2023 Australian benchmarks, the PSC scores for the sector are poor and deteriorating. The data for all participants, as well as those who participated in all four waves, are given below. For a more detailed summary and citation of each of these scales, refer to the scale summary pages. PSC risk level benchmarking is cited in the appendix.

**Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC) by Academic Role (Academics Only)**

- **Research only**
- **Teaching and research**
- **Teaching only**

**PSC and Outcome Relationship (Darker is Higher n)**

- **Emotional Exhaustion Mean**

**Distribution of PSC Scores**

**PSC Risk Proportions for All Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSC Risk Level</th>
<th>Low Risk PSC</th>
<th>Medium Risk PSC</th>
<th>High Risk PSC</th>
<th>Very High Risk PSC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>27.50%</td>
<td>10.66%</td>
<td>35.28%</td>
<td>26.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>24.00%</td>
<td>8.10%</td>
<td>35.70%</td>
<td>32.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>20.75%</td>
<td>9.13%</td>
<td>37.62%</td>
<td>32.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>18.40%</td>
<td>8.72%</td>
<td>33.72%</td>
<td>39.15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PSC Risk Proportions for 4-Wave Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSC Risk Level</th>
<th>Low Risk PSC</th>
<th>Medium Risk PSC</th>
<th>High Risk PSC</th>
<th>Very High Risk PSC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>26.51%</td>
<td>9.44%</td>
<td>39.16%</td>
<td>24.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>25.95%</td>
<td>8.38%</td>
<td>36.73%</td>
<td>28.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>21.91%</td>
<td>9.36%</td>
<td>36.06%</td>
<td>32.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>17.28%</td>
<td>9.05%</td>
<td>34.98%</td>
<td>38.68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Australian National Benchmarks from 2023 Superfriend data (n = 10012)
PSC benchmarking is further explored here, using the following datasets:

**AWB:** The Australian Workplace Barometer is a long-running project and has been measuring PSC since 2009. These benchmarks are taken from 2021's sample of 1,599 Australian workers.

**SuperFriend:** SuperFriend’s survey of 10,012 Australian workers measured PSC in 2023, representing the latest large PSC sample for Australia.

**Victorian Public Sector:** The VPS survey of 45,956 staff provides a very large sample of public sector workers.

### University PSC Risk Proportions for All Participants

#### PSC Risk Level
- Low Risk PSC
- Medium Risk PSC
- High Risk PSC
- Very High Risk PSC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Low Risk</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Very High</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>27.50%</td>
<td>10.66%</td>
<td>35.28%</td>
<td>26.56%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>24.00%</td>
<td>8.10%</td>
<td>35.70%</td>
<td>32.21%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>20.75%</td>
<td>9.13%</td>
<td>37.62%</td>
<td>32.51%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>18.40%</td>
<td>8.72%</td>
<td>33.72%</td>
<td>39.15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A key takeaway from these charts is the increase in very high level exhaustion and decrease in the highest engagement levels over time.

The figures titled “4-Wave Participants” are only those who completed the survey every year. It shows that, in their experience of working in the sector in the past 4 years, their conditions and outcomes have worsened, reflected in rising emotional exhaustion and falling engagement.

The questions asked in the emotional exhaustion scale relate directly to exhaustion related to work and working conditions. An example statement is “At the end of my working day, I feel mentally exhausted and drained.”

While many factors may influence psychological distress, it is commonly associated with work conditions. The questions ask about an individual’s experience of various symptoms of distress, including feelings of hopelessness, depression and nervousness.

Engagement measures the extent to which workers are connected and energetic in their work activities. An example item is “I am enthusiastic about my job.” Scores relate to their average response on a 1 - 7 scale, where higher is more engaged.

Benchmarking for emotional exhaustion and psychological distress is cited in the appendix. For a more detailed summary and citation of each of these scales, refer to the scale summary pages.
Universities have become increasingly reliant on technology for work. Digital demands relate to the pressures and difficulties in using and interfacing with digital technologies. Digital communication overload assesses the level of digital messaging (e.g., emails). Digital resources reflect the institutional support regarding communication technology, as well as the positive impact it has on work. In general, older participants experience greater digital communication overload and digital demands, and lower digital resources. For a more detailed summary and citation of each of these scales, refer to the scale summary pages.
The percentage of participants who agreed or strongly agreed to individual work pressure questions are given below. The results show that regardless of year, university staff find themselves feeling significant work pressure.

For a more detailed summary and citation of each of these scales, refer to the scale summary pages.

### Work Pressure by Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>% Adverse Response</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My job requires working very fast.</td>
<td>81.01%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My job requires working very hard.</td>
<td>90.29%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I am asked to do an excessive amount of work.</td>
<td>63.23%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I do not have enough time to get the job done.</td>
<td>69.46%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Some demands I face at work are in conflict with other demands at work.</td>
<td>80.90%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I have to work through my breaks and lunch/dinner in order to catch up at work.</td>
<td>64.10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The graphs below show measures by university affiliation. Benchmarked areas for PSC and emotional exhaustion are colour-coded. Group affiliation and PSC & emotional exhaustion benchmarking is cited in the appendix.
Participants were asked to evaluate their job security. For each year, the PSC, emotional exhaustion and work engagement scores, according to job security, are reported below. In general, higher job security is associated with better PSC scores, lower emotional exhaustion and higher engagement. PSC and emotional exhaustion benchmarking is cited in the appendix.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSC Risk Levels</th>
<th>Exhaustion Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My job security is poor:</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Participants were asked their employment type. These graphs summarise average measure score for each time. In general, permanent staff reported worse outcomes. It is noted that the survey included only a small proportion of non-continuing staff. PSC and emotional exhaustion benchmarking is cited in the appendix.
The survey included questions related to bullying and harassment via electronic means, as part of grappling with aspects of digital communication. Participants were asked about the frequency and source of bullying and harassment in 2020.

Bullying statistics were broken down into male and female experiences to compare differences in the source of bullying.

Participants were asked “How often have you experienced workplace harassment (e.g. due to gender, ethnicity, age, or sexual orientation) via digital communication (e.g. email, social media, electronic feedback) overall from managers, coworkers and students during the last six months?” with the response options “Very rarely/never”, “Rarely”, “Sometimes”, “Often”, “Very often/always”. The graphs detailing harassment show answers of “Rarely” and above (excluding “Very rarely/never”) and indicate students as the most common source of digital harassment.

Participants were also asked “Have you been subjected to bullying in your workplace via digital communication during the last six months?” and by whom. The results indicate that around 10% of respondents were bullied by a manager, with slightly more males experiencing digital bullying by managers. Females respondents were, however, more likely to be bullied by students and coworkers.

The number of responses was 2191.
The individual questions are ranked below according to the most to least negatively answered (i.e. a higher adverse response indicates a worse outcome for staff). The questionnaire scale (or domain) is highlighted in the proportion bar. The top 25 questions are listed.

1. In your university, there have been changes such as restructuring, downsizing, and layoffs that have significantly affected your job.
2. My job requires working very hard.
3. In your university, new policies and procedures designed to cut costs are constantly being introduced where you work.
4. Performance-related pay or recognition?
5. Some demands I face at work are in conflict with other demands at work.
6. I have to work through my breaks and lunch/dinner in order to catch up at work.
7. The quantity of email I receive can be overwhelming.
8. The quality of email I receive can be overwhelming.
9. I ask for more odd jobs.
10. I have to act the way people think a person in my position should act.
11. I feel pressure to keep up to date with digital communication technology.
12. There are too many digital communication platforms.
13. There is not enough work time available to learn new digital communication platforms/practices.
14. There is not enough work time available to learn new digital communication platforms/practices.
15. I feel pressure to keep up to date with digital communication technology.
16. I feel pressure to keep up to date with digital communication technology.
17. I do not have enough time to get the job done.
18. I feel pressure to keep up to date with digital communication technology.
19. I feel pressure to keep up to date with digital communication technology.
20. I feel pressure to keep up to date with digital communication technology.
21. I feel pressure to keep up to date with digital communication technology.
22. I feel pressure to keep up to date with digital communication technology.
23. I feel pressure to keep up to date with digital communication technology.
24. I feel pressure to keep up to date with digital communication technology.
25. I feel pressure to keep up to date with digital communication technology.
### Summaries of correlations with emotional exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion is a key measure of staff wellbeing. Relationships are presented and ordered by their absolute relationship and labelled by their directional relationship.

#### Top 6 Correlations with Emotional Exhaustion (Shown as Absolute Numbers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Correlation Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K10 (Psychological Distress)</td>
<td>0.677**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Harmony</td>
<td>-0.594**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-Self Conflict</td>
<td>0.57**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-Family Conflict</td>
<td>0.551**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Demands</td>
<td>0.556**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Pressure</td>
<td>0.482**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table Key:

- ▲ = Positive Relationship
- ▼ = Negative Relationship
- ■ = Strong correlation (**, p < 0.01)
- ▼ = Correlation (*, p < 0.05)
- ■ = No relation (N.S., p > 0.05)

#### PSC Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSC12 (Organisational Level)</td>
<td>0.419</td>
<td>0.392</td>
<td>0.429</td>
<td>0.421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSC4 School</td>
<td>0.380</td>
<td>0.319</td>
<td>0.370</td>
<td>0.323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSC4 Team</td>
<td>0.323</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Top 9 Stressor Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work Harmony</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.556</td>
<td>0.548</td>
<td>0.536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Demands</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Pressure</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>0.482</td>
<td>0.514</td>
<td>0.484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Communication Overload</td>
<td>0.397</td>
<td>0.458</td>
<td>0.391</td>
<td>▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Overload</td>
<td>0.409</td>
<td>0.426</td>
<td>0.404</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Voice</td>
<td></td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>0.413</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Psychological Safety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>0.375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restructure Items from AWB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Demands</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>0.373</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Top 9 Outcome Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K10 (Psychological Distress)</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-Self Conflict</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>0.570</td>
<td>0.586</td>
<td>0.577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-Family Conflict</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>0.551</td>
<td>0.576</td>
<td>0.566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep Satisfaction Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.521</td>
<td>0.476</td>
<td>0.472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>0.420</td>
<td>0.452</td>
<td>0.483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detachment</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>0.383</td>
<td>0.370</td>
<td>0.365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Health Problems</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Undermining</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.328</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep Deprivation Total</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Engagement Correlations

Summaries of correlations with engagement are presented below. Engagement is a key outcome measure. Relationships are presented and ordered by their absolute relationship and labelled by their directional relationship.

Top 6 Correlations with Engagement (Shown as Absolute Numbers)

- Work Harmony: 0.593**
- Immersion: 0.574**
- Emotional Exhaustion: -0.423**
- K10 (Psychological Distress): -0.529**
- Creativity: 0.381**
- Cognitive Resources (Decision Authority): 0.346**

Table Key:

▲ = Positive Relationship
▼ = Negative Relationship
■ = Strong correlation (**, p < 0.01)
■ = Correlation (*, p < 0.05)
■ = No relation (N.S., p > 0.05)

Top 9 Stressor Measures

- Work Harmony
- Cognitive Resources (Decision Authority)
- Team Psychological Safety
- Employee Voice
- Restructure Items from AWB
- Digital Resources using T1 - T3 variables only ...
- Emotional Resources
- HR Policy
- Procedural Justice

Top 9 Outcome Measures

- Immersion
- Emotional Exhaustion
- K10 (Psychological Distress)
- Creativity
- Innovation
- Sleep Satisfaction Total
- Work-Self Conflict
- Work-Family Conflict
- Seeking Challenges

Table: Engagement Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSC Measures</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSC12 (Organisational Level)</td>
<td>▲ 0.368</td>
<td>▲ 0.353</td>
<td>▲ 0.375</td>
<td>▲ 0.399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSC4 School</td>
<td>▲ 0.342</td>
<td>▲ 0.322</td>
<td>▲ 0.350</td>
<td>▲ 0.343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSC4 Team</td>
<td>▲ 0.298</td>
<td>▲ 0.327</td>
<td>▲ 0.354</td>
<td>▲ 0.354</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Next Section: Measure Breakdowns

The following pages are detailed breakdowns of each of the measures included in the survey.

Scale averages are an average of each of the item scores. The scale total is the sum of each item.

Note:
In the circumstance where a scale (such as Cognitive Resources) has:

> 2 questions where a higher score indicates more Cognitive Resources;
> 1 question where a higher score indicates less Cognitive Resources;

The single question's results were reversed when taking the scale average and total, so that a higher score indicates more Cognitive Resources as a whole. Those relevant domains are Cognitive Resources, Digital Communication Overload, Restructuring and Team Psychological Safety.
Academic Pressure measures the extent to which certain parts of academic job design impacts on psychological health.
Cognitive Resources or Decision Authority refers to the ability for workers to exercise decision-making freedom or autonomy over work.


Note: item 2 is reverse coded. Further clarification is within the appendix.
5. My colleagues regularly send work-related digital communication in the evenings.
6. I often receive work-related digital communications from my colleagues during the weekend.
7. When I send work-related digital communications to colleagues during the weekend, most colleagues react the same day.
8. If I do not answer work-related digital communications during off job hours, I get comments from my colleagues.
9. If I do not respond to work-related digital communications from my colleagues, my position in the group is threatened.
10. My colleagues expect me to respond to work-related digital communications during my free time after work.

Colleague Digital Expectations are the pressures to engage in work-related digital communication from colleagues.

1. This week I have had a good source of highly creative ideas.

2. This week I have demonstrated originality in my work.

3. This week I have suggested radically new ways for doing things.

Creativity measures the extent to which individuals engage in work with novel, original or innovative methods and approaches.

Digital Boundaries refers to self-imposed limits on communication technology.

1. I limit the amount of time or when I use work-related information communication technology (e.g., only until 1900 hours).
2. I do not use work-related information communication technology on holidays.
3. I do not use work-related information communication technology during weekends.
4. I only respond to work-related communication technology messaging outside of work hours for emergencies.
5. I only use work-related information communication technology for sending digital communication messaging (e.g., email) and do not read incoming digital communication messages during non-work hours.

Average by Year and Work Role

Digital Boundaries refers to self-imposed limits on communication technology.
Digital Demands relate to the pressures and difficulties in using and interfacing with digital technologies.


Average Score Per Item

11. I feel pressure to keep up to date with digital communication technology.
7.5% Strongly disagree
14.0% Disagree
51.7% Neither agree nor disagree
25.4% Agree
3.92

12. There are too many digital communication platforms.
8.6% Strongly disagree
19.3% Disagree
40.7% Neither agree nor disagree
30.3% Agree
3.91

13. There is insufficient training provided for digital communication technology platforms.
17.3% Strongly disagree
24.4% Disagree
34.6% Neither agree nor disagree
21.0% Agree
3.54

14. There is not enough work time available to learn new digital communication platforms/practices.
10.0% Strongly disagree
16.5% Disagree
42.0% Neither agree nor disagree
30.0% Agree
3.89

15. There is inadequate information technology support provided when digital communication technology malfunctions.
24.5% Strongly disagree
25.6% Disagree
29.7% Neither agree nor disagree
16.1% Agree
3.29

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23. I find it difficult to manage digital work demands when working from home.

24. Working from home makes it hard to switch off outside of business working hours.

25. There is insufficient training in digital communication practices/platforms to work effectively from home.

26. There is not enough time to learn digital communication practices/platforms to work effectively from home.

27. I do not receive enough technology infrastructure to support my work practices at home.

Digital Demands (working from home) relate to the pressures and difficulties in using and interfacing with digital technologies when working from home.
1. The quantity of digital communication messaging I receive is difficult to manage. **3.57**
2. The amount of digital communication messages and platforms I have at work makes it difficult to find information. **3.57**
3. I have the time to easily deal with the information I receive across digital communication platforms. **2.47**
4. The quantity of digital communication messaging I receive means I sometimes miss information or important messages. **3.51**
5. I have the time to reply quickly to the messages I need to across digital communication platforms. **2.86**
6. Dealing with digital communication messaging/platforms disrupts my ongoing work. **3.61**
7. There is too much digital communication at work which can be overwhelming. **3.69**

Digital Communication Overload (or just Digital Overload) refers to the extent to which digital messaging and its various platforms are overwhelming.


Note: items 3 and 5 is reverse coded. Further clarification is within the appendix.
Within my workplace I have increased flexibility about when and where to work using digital communication platforms. (16)

Digital communication platforms allow me to schedule tasks to perform at times that are convenient to me. (17)

I use digital communication platforms to coordinate my work (e.g. keeping track of tasks). (18)

My workplace has good technology infrastructure to support my communication/work activities. (19)

My organisation provides good digital communication technology support when I need to work from home. (20)

My organisation has a good digital technology culture (e-culture). (21)

Digital Resources reflect the institutional support regarding communication technology, as well as the positive impacts it has on work.

Email Overload

Email Overload measures whether an individual has the capability to deal with the quantity of emails they receive, and whether too many emails hinder work.

Email Volume measures how many emails are sent and received by individuals daily.

Email Work Importance is a measure of the centrality of email to an individual's work and tasks.

Emotional Demands relates to the emotional toll of work, including the need to mask or suppress emotional reactions.

1. At work, I feel mentally exhausted.
2. Everything I do at work requires a great deal of effort.
3. After a day at work, I find it hard to recover my energy.
4. At work, I feel physically exhausted.
5. When I get up in the morning, I lack the energy to start a new day at work.
6. I want to be active at work, but somehow I am unable to manage.
7. When I exert myself at work, I quickly get tired.
8. At the end of my working day, I feel mentally exhausted and drained.

Emotional Exhaustion is the extent to which an individual is depleted from the experience of work.

Emotional Resources refers to a positive environment for emotional expression as well as emotional supports from people in the work environment.

4. In my job, I get emotional support from others (e.g., clients, colleagues or supervisors) when a threatening situation at work occurs.

5. In my job, I have the opportunity to express my emotions after a threatening situation occurs, without experiencing negative consequences (e.g., from supervisors, colleagues or clients).

6. In my job, other people (e.g., clients, colleagues or supervisors) will be a listening ear for me when I have faced an emotionally threatening situation.

Sample: 5255
Scale Average: 3.43
Scale Total: 10.28

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Employee Voice

Employee Voice is the extent to which an employee feels safe and respected enough to raise issues relating to workplace psychological health and wellbeing.

Average Score Per Item

1. I feel safe to use my voice to raise issues that affect my psychological health and well-being.

2. I am aware of how to report issues that affect my psychological health and well-being.

3. I have no hesitation in speaking to my supervisor about work factors that affect my psychological health and well-being.
Empowering Leadership is the extent to which leadership develops autonomy and agency under a particular leader.

1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy.  
- 6.7% Never  
- 9.0% 1-3 times per year or less  
- 11.0% Once a month  
- 22.1% A few times a month  
- 13.8% Once a week  
- 30.9% A few times a week  
- 6.5% Every day  
Average: 4.46

2. I am enthusiastic about my job.  
- 6.3% Never  
- 8.1% 1-3 times per year or less  
- 17.4% Once a month  
- 11.7% A few times a month  
- 35.7% Once a week  
- 18.5% A few times a week  
- 5.11% Every day  
Average: 5.11

3. I am immersed in my work.  
- 8.5% Never  
- 6.5% 1-3 times per year or less  
- 30.6% Once a month  
- 47.0% A few times a month  
- 11.7% Once a week  
- 6.5% A few times a week  
- 47.0% Every day  
Average: 5.96

Engagement measures an individual’s vigour, dedication and absorption in relation to their work.

1. Certainty of keeping my job?  
   - Not at all: 20.3%  
   - To a small extent: 16.8%  
   - To a moderate extent: 30.3%  
   - To a great extent: 25.0%  
   - To a very great extent: 7.6%  
   - Average: 2.83

2. An employment contract offering job security?  
   - Not at all: 16.6%  
   - To a small extent: 14.7%  
   - To a moderate extent: 24.7%  
   - To a great extent: 27.8%  
   - To a very great extent: 16.1%  
   - Average: 3.12

3. Fair appraisal of my performance?  
   - Not at all: 12.7%  
   - To a small extent: 17.6%  
   - To a moderate extent: 34.8%  
   - To a great extent: 28.9%  
   - To a very great extent: 6.0%  
   - Average: 2.98

4. Performance-related pay or recognition?  
   - Not at all: 4.4%  
   - To a small extent: 52.2%  
   - To a moderate extent: 18.3%  
   - To a great extent: 18.5%  
   - To a very great extent: 9.1%  
   - Average: 1.90

5. A fair pay compensation system?  
   - Not at all: 17.8%  
   - To a small extent: 19.5%  
   - To a moderate extent: 34.0%  
   - To a great extent: 23.3%  
   - To a very great extent: 5.4%  
   - Average: 2.79

6. Flexible working hours?  
   - Not at all: 4.4%  
   - To a small extent: 19.7%  
   - To a moderate extent: 32.1%  
   - To a great extent: 30.3%  
   - To a very great extent: 13.5%  
   - Average: 3.29

HR Policy refers to positive work arrangements provided by contract or management.

Immersion is the extent to which an individual displays a deep involvement or commitment to work and organisational culture.

1. I am immersed in my workplace culture.
   - 5.0% Never
   - 9.0% Almost never
   - 19.4% Rarely
   - 35.2% Sometimes
   - 18.0% Often
   - 10.1% Very Often
   - 5.0% Always
   - Average: 3.96

2. I feel happy when I am working intensely.
   - 5.9% Never
   - 33.9% Almost never
   - 31.9% Rarely
   - 19.3% Sometimes
   - 5.3% Often
   - 4.72% Very Often
   - 4.72% Always
   - Average: 4.72

3. I get carried away when I'm working.
   - 9.9% Never
   - 41.7% Almost never
   - 24.8% Rarely
   - 16.6% Sometimes
   - 7.8% Often
   - 4.50% Very Often
   - 4.50% Always
   - Average: 4.50

4. Time flies when I am in my workplace.
   - 9.1% Never
   - 33.6% Almost never
   - 27.9% Rarely
   - 16.1% Sometimes
   - 7.8% Often
   - 4.62% Very Often
   - 4.62% Always
   - Average: 4.62

5. It is difficult to detach myself from my workplace.
   - 4.9% Never
   - 13.7% Almost never
   - 27.8% Rarely
   - 18.4% Sometimes
   - 20.1% Often
   - 11.9% Very Often
   - 4.62% Always
   - Average: 4.62

6. When I am working, I forget everything else around me.
   - 5.4% Never
   - 20.7% Almost never
   - 38.3% Rarely
   - 22.4% Sometimes
   - 10.1% Often
   - 4.07% Very Often
   - 4.07% Always
   - Average: 4.07

Average by Year and Work Role

- Academic Staff
- Professional Staff

Sample: 999
Scale Average: 4.41
Scale Total: 26.48
Scale: 1 - 7
1. This week I have used previously existing ideas or work in an appropriate new way. 

2. This week I was very good at adapting already existing ideas. 

3. This week I easily modified previously existing work processes to suit current needs. 

Innovation is the ability to adapt new ideas in the process of work.


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Job Satisfaction

How do you feel about your job as a whole?

- 4.9% I'm extremely dissatisfied.
- 9.3% I'm very dissatisfied.
- 15.8% I'm moderately dissatisfied.
- 7.3% I'm not sure.
- 34.5% I'm moderately satisfied.
- 23.9% I'm very satisfied.
- 4.3% I'm extremely satisfied.

Sample 6205
Scale Average 4.46
Scale Total 1 - 7

Obsessive Passion is a measure of an individual’s internal pressures to engage in work. It is a reflection of an unhealthy adaptation to work caused by “negative affect and rigid persistence”.

Optimising Job Demands is the extent to which an individual looks for ways to better handle job demands.

1. I ask others for feedback on my job performance.

2. I ask colleagues for advice.

3. I ask my supervisor for advice.

4. I try to learn new things at work.

5. I contact other people from work (e.g., colleagues, supervisors) to get the necessary information to complete my tasks.

6. When I have difficulties or problems at my work, I discuss them with people from my work environment.

Optimising Job Resources is the extent to which an individual uses their work resources more efficiently, working more collaboratively.

Physical Health items assess the frequency of an individual to suffer from various physical pains and problems. A higher score indicates worse outcomes.

Playful Work Design is defined as “the proactive cognitive-behavioural orientation that employees engage in to incorporate play into their work activities to promote fun and challenge.”

1. In my company/organisation, procedures are designed to hear the concerns of all those affected by the decision.

2. In my company/organisation, procedures are designed to collect accurate information necessary for making decisions.

3. In my company/organisation, procedures are designed to provide opportunities to appeal or challenge the decision.

4. In my company/organisation, procedures are designed to generate standards so the decisions can be made with consistency.

Procedural Justice is the sense that decision-making and processes within an institution are fair and just. It is also concerned with the extent to which people feel heard in the decision-making process.

Job Content Questionnaire Centre. (2012). The job content questionnaire (JCQ2). Department of Work Environment: University of Massachusetts.
1. In my workplace senior management acts quickly to correct problems/issues that affect employees' psychological health.

2. Senior management acts decisively when a concern of an employees' psychological status is raised.

3. Senior management show support for stress prevention through involvement and commitment.

4. Psychological well-being of staff is a priority for this organisation.

5. Senior management clearly considers the psychological health of employees to be of great importance.

6. Senior management considers employee psychological health to be as important as productivity.

7. There is good communication here about psychological safety issues which affect me.

8. Information about workplace psychological well-being is always brought to my attention by my manager/supervisor.

9. My contributions to resolving occupational health and safety concerns in the organisation are listened to.

10. Participation and consultation in psychological health and safety occurs with employees, unions and health and safety representatives in my workplace.

11. Employees are encouraged to become involved in psychological safety and health matters.

12. In my organisation, the prevention of stress involves all levels of the organisation.

Psychosocial Safety Climate is a tool and a measure for assessing the corporate climate for worker health. It is a highly used and cited metric for understanding workplace conditions and predicting future wellbeing of workers.

1. Management in my School/Department shows support for stress prevention through involvement and commitment.

2. Management in my School/Department considers employee psychological health to be as important as productivity.

3. There is good communication here in my School/Department about psychological safety issues which affect me.

4. In my School/Department, the prevention of stress involves all levels of the organisation.

Psychosocial Safety Climate 4 at the School Level is a condensed version of the PSC tool. It specifically asks questions of the department a worker finds themselves in, and features one question each for PSC’s sub-categories: management commitment, management priority, organisational communication and organisational participation.

Psychosocial Safety Climate 4 at the Team Level is a condensed version of the PSC tool. It specifically asks questions of direct working group a worker finds themselves in, and features one question each for management commitment, management priority, organisational communication and organisational participation.

These questions relate to an individual’s experience of restructuring within the university and what impulses govern those changes. It is derived from the questionnaire used in the Australian Workplace Barometer, a leading survey of Australian workplace conditions and health outcomes.

**Psychological Distress or the K10 scale asks about the frequency an individual suffers from the symptoms of psychological distress, including tiredness, nervousness and depressive symptoms.**


---

**Average by Year and Work Role**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Academic Staff</th>
<th>Professional Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Average Score Per Item**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>None of the time</th>
<th>A little of the time</th>
<th>Some of the time</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>All of the time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. You feel depressed?</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. You feel so depressed that nothing could cheer you up?</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. You feel hopeless?</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. You feel restless or fidgety?</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. You feel so restless that you could not sit still?</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. You feel tired out for no good reason?</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. You feel that everything was an effort?</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. You feel worthless?</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. You feel nervous?</td>
<td>61.8%</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Sample**

- **Scale Average**: 2.15
- **Scale Total**: 21.51
- **Scale**: 1 - 5

---

**Response**

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time
Seeking Challenges is the tendency for an individual to feel like they should take on more tasks, responsibilities and work. It is a measure of an individual’s enthusiasm as well as work-conditioned capacity.

Self-undermining refers to a set of behaviours that individuals may exhibit that create self-imposed barriers impeding performance.

1. Students expect me to respond to work-related digital communications outside of university hours.

2. I feel that I have to respond to work-related digital communications from students immediately outside of university hours.

Student Digital Expectation looks at the extent teaching staff feel pressure from students through digital means. It is a novel measure of the demands implicitly and explicitly placed on staff which affect their work.

1. I receive student evaluations of my teaching that are unfair.

2. I receive student evaluations of my teaching which target my personal characteristics.

3. I receive student evaluations of my teaching which are upsetting.

4. I ruminate upon my student evaluations of teaching.

5. I dread receiving my student evaluations of teaching.

Student Evaluation - Negative looks at the extent teaching staff are subjected to stressors and strains from their students, including through teaching evaluations.

Note: these are negatively worded questions. This domain’s questions continue on the next page.
6. The student evaluations of my teaching are helpful in improving my teaching practice.

7. The student evaluations of my teaching are constructive.

8. The student evaluations of my teaching provide useful ideas.

Note these are positively worded questions. This domain’s questions continue on the previous page.
1. My supervisor expects me to respond to work-related digital communications during my free time after work.

2. I feel that I have to respond to work-related digital communications from my supervisor immediately during leisure time.

3. When I don’t answer work-related digital communications during my free time, my supervisor clearly shows that he/she does not appreciate it.

4. In our organisation, it is the norm to always respond to work-related digital communications immediately.

Supervisor Digital Expectations refer to the prevalence of a culture demanding constant engagement with digital communication forms, including email.

1. If you make a mistake on this team, it is often held against you.

2. Members of this team are able to bring up problems and tough issues.

3. People on this team sometimes reject others for being different.

4. It is safe to take a risk on this team.

5. It is difficult to ask other members of this team for help.

6. No one on this team would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts.

7. Working with members of this team, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilized.

Team Psychological Safety looks at freedom for individuals to voice opinions at the workgroup level without fear of negative repercussions.


Note: items 1, 3 and 5 are reverse coded. Further clarification is within the appendix.
1. My work is in harmony with the other activities in my life.

2. The new things that I discover with my work allow me to appreciate it even more.

3. My work reflects the qualities I like about myself.

4. My work allows me to live a variety of experiences.

5. My work is well integrated in my life.

6. My work is in harmony with other things that are part of me.

Work Harmony is a healthy and functional relationship with work where an individual enjoys their job. It promotes healthy adaptation to an individual’s work.

Work Pressure

1. My job requires working very fast.
   - Strongly disagree: 18.2%
   - Disagree: 56.2%
   - Agree: 24.8%
   - Average: 3.05

2. My job requires working very hard.
   - Strongly disagree: 9.4%
   - Disagree: 49.0%
   - Agree: 41.3%
   - Average: 3.31

3. I am asked to do an excessive amount of work.
   - Strongly disagree: 33.9%
   - Disagree: 34.6%
   - Agree: 28.6%
   - Average: 2.89

4. I do not have enough time to get the job done.
   - Strongly disagree: 28.4%
   - Disagree: 40.3%
   - Agree: 29.1%
   - Average: 2.96

5. Some demands I face at work are in conflict with other demands at work.
   - Strongly disagree: 17.5%
   - Disagree: 50.1%
   - Agree: 30.8%
   - Average: 3.10

6. I have to work through my breaks and lunch/dinner in order to catch up at work.
   - Strongly disagree: 31.3%
   - Disagree: 38.0%
   - Agree: 26.1%
   - Average: 2.86

Work Pressure measures the strain an individual faces when on the job. It captures the speed, intensity and demands of tasks as part of the experience of working.

1. The demands of my work interfere with my home life.

2. The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill home responsibilities.

3. My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill home duties.

Work-Family Conflict measures the impact that work demands have on family and home life, including duties at home.

Work-Self Conflict is the extent to which work interferes and distracts from personal interests outside of work.

Wave 1 of the survey was conducted in 2020, wave 2 was 2021, wave 3 was 2022 and wave 4 was 2023. Participants in waves 1 and 2 of the survey were contacted through a range of methods, including through university communications and the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU). Waves 3 and 4 were all previous participants. We note that due to some significant changes in staff numbers through this period, participant attrition is noticeable, especially considering we only contacted previous respondents for waves 3 and 4. This was after the worst of the staff losses in the sector in from 2020 to 2022.

Gender: While the survey encouraged self-identification, due to the low proportion in the data gender information other than female and male were removed from the dataset. However, their data is still included as part of means and aggregations.

University Affiliation
Australian Technology Network: Curtin University, Deakin University, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, University of South Australia, University of Technology Sydney
Group of 8: Australian National University, Monash University, University of Adelaide, University of Melbourne, University of New South Wales, University of Queensland, University of Sydney, University of Western Australia
Innovative Research Universities: Charles Darwin University, Flinders University, Griffith University, James Cook University, La Trobe University, Macquarie University, University of Canberra, Western Sydney University
Regional Universities Network: Central Queensland University, Charles Sturt University, Federation University, Southern Cross University, University of New England, University of Southern Queensland, University of the Sunshine Coast
Other or Unaffiliated Universities: Australian Catholic University, Bond University, Edith Cowan University, Murdoch University, Queensland University of Technology, Swinburne University of Technology, University of Newcastle, University of Notre Dame, University of Tasmania, University of Wollongong, Victoria University

Benchmarks:
PSC: Taken from studies benchmarking PSC against likelihood of developing depressive symptoms.
Range: 12 - 60
Very High Risk: 12 - 26; High Risk: 26 - 37; Medium Risk: 37 - 41; Low Risk: 41 - 60
Often divided by the number of questions with a subsequent range of 1 - 5.

Emotional Exhaustion: Taken from the emotional exhaustion benchmarking as part of the Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT), using a 1500 person sample from Flanders.
Range: 1 - 5
Low Exhaustion: 1 - 1.75; Medium Exhaustion: 1.76 - 2.70; High Exhaustion: 2.71 - 3.74; Very High Exhaustion: 3.75 - 5

Psychological Distress:
Psychological distress is measured with the Kessler 10 (K10) tool.
The following cut-offs were obtained from the Victorian Population Health Survey. Melbourne: Department of Human Services, Victoria; 2001.
Low Distress: 1 - 1.5
Medium Distress: 1.6 - 2.1
Medium Distress: 2.2 - 2.9
Low Distress: 3 - 5

Scales with Varied Question Sentiment and ‘Reverse-Coding’
Scale averages and totals are usually calculated by assigning a number to a response. PSC, for example, uses a 1 for ‘strongly disagree’, and a 5 for ‘strongly agree’. Someone who answers all 12 questions as “agree” will receive an average score of 4 (as “agree” uses a score of 4). Their corresponding scale total will be 4 x 12 which is 48. The exception to the norm is when a scale has some questions which mean the opposite. Some scale/domain summaries have a note attached in the description which explains that while most questions have a similar sentiment, others within a scale ask in the opposite (or negative way). In those cases, the scoring for those questions is reversed for the purposes of calculating scale averages and totals. The scales affected are Cognitive Resources, Digital Communication Overload, Restructuring and Team Psychological Safety.

Work role data
In the few cases where data was missing for work role (i.e. academic/professional affiliation), data from other waves was used.