ERGONOMICS PROGRAM
Last updated: September 2017

1.0 PURPOSE
The objective of the University of Waterloo’s Ergonomics Program is to minimize the risk of musculoskeletal disorder (MSD) type injuries by identifying solutions for work-related pains and discomfort through evaluation of work processes, the work environment, and the people doing the work.

2.0 SCOPE
This program applies to all employees at the University of Waterloo.

3.0 DEFINITIONS
Ergonomics
The science of fitting the work environment to the people carrying out the work. It considers the interaction between humans and other aspects of the work environment and strives to match the abilities and characteristics of people with the tasks they perform.

Musculoskeletal system
The musculoskeletal system includes muscles, tendons and tendon sheaths, nerves, bursa, joints/spinal discs, and ligaments.

Muscular skeletal disorder (MSD)
A disorder of the musculoskeletal system that may be caused or aggravated by various hazards or risk factors in the workplace. MSD is a generic term for a number of injuries and disorders that include (but not limited to) repetitive strain injury (RSI), cumulative trauma disorder (CTD) and sprain/strain. MSD’s do not include musculoskeletal injuries or disorders that are the direct result of a fall, struck by or against, caught in or on, vehicle collision etc.

4.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
4.1 SUPERVISOR/MANAGER
- Ensure the Safety Office is notified of any ergonomic injuries reported to them within 24 hours of the occurrence.
- Arrange for ergonomic training, if required.
• Identify and manage potential ergonomic hazards in the work by establishing safe ergonomic work practices for workers and through the provision of ergonomic tools and equipment as appropriate.
• Request the assistance of the Safety Office, as necessary.

4.2 WORKERS
• Report any ergonomic hazards, incidents, or MSD injuries to their direct supervisor. Feedback from workers is an essential means of identifying ergonomic hazards.
• Follow all written ergonomic procedures required for the work they are performing.
• Attend any training sessions deemed necessary by supervisors.

4.3 SAFETY OFFICE
• Administer the Ergonomics Program and review it at least annually.
• Provide web-based training and classroom courses.
• Facilitate ergonomic assessments.
• Maintain and provide ergonomic furniture and equipment for trial use by workers.
• Conduct physical demands analysis of jobs and tasks, as needed.
• Review ergonomic data for trends.
• Provide technical and best practice advice pertaining to ergonomics.

4.4 JOINT HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE (JHSC) WORKER MEMBERS
• Identify ergonomic hazards through workplace inspections.

5.0 PROCEDURES
5.1 ERGONOMIC ASSESSMENTS
Request ergonomic assessments through the Safety Office website, or by contacting the Safety Office directly.

6.0 TRAINING
6.1 ONLINE TRAINING
An online office ergonomics training module is available and should be taken before requesting an office ergonomic assessment. This is an evidence-based and standard-compliant training program designed for workers who regularly use computers on the job.

6.2 CLASSROOM
Ergonomic training is available through the Safety Office by request.
7.0 RESOURCES

- General ergonomic guidelines
- Office ergonomics
- Laboratory ergonomics
- Preventing visual discomfort
- Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety (CCOHS) – Office ergonomics
- Manual lifting & material handling
- Stretches and exercises
- Office equipment catalogue
- Ergonomic hazards