THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

Health and wellbeing checklist

For university decision-making

Healthy Sydney University
July 2016

Health and wellbeing checklist

Summary

Healthy Sydney University works towards our university being a health promoting university. A health promoting university embeds health and wellbeing in the everyday business of a university.[1]

In October 2015 the University of Sydney's Senior Executive Group ('SEG') endorsed Healthy Sydney University to develop a checklist to help members of the University of Sydney community consider the impact on health and wellbeing during decision-making.

This checklist was prepared by Healthy Sydney University in consultation with a health policy expert, Dr Patrick Harris, at the Menzies Centre for Health Policy within the Charles Perkins Centre. The checklist encompasses an evidence-informed reflective process that will assist decision-making groups in the University to consider the impact on health and wellbeing of any decisions they are considering.

The checklist is based on two main approaches to influencing policy and decision-making: the Health in All Policies ('HiAP') approach, and the Health Impact Assessment ('HIA').[2] Both approaches are heavily influenced by the view that social inequity and exclusion are the main drivers of poor health and wellbeing outcomes for people.[3]

The HiAP approach aims to include considerations of health at all stages of the policy development process. The HIA is used by some local and state governments in Australia to assess the potential health and wellbeing impact of a specific, existing proposal or initiative, and aims to influence this in order to improve the proposal or initiative.

Healthy Sydney University has simplified these approaches to improve accessibility for a more general audience while retaining the key elements regarding impact, equity, consequences and scope for change.

The checklist on the following page has eight steps that decision-makers can follow to assess whether their proposed initiative, decision or policy has considered potential impact on staff and student health and wellbeing. Healthy Sydney University has also included two examples to show how the checklist can be used.

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[1] University of British Columbia (2015) *Okanagan Charter for Health Promoting Universities and Colleges*, http://internationalhealthycampuses2015.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2016/01/Okanagan-Charter-January13v2.pdf.

[2] Delaney, T., Harris, P., Williams, C., Harris, E., Baum, F. et al. (2014) 'Health Impact Assessment in New South Wales & Health in All Policies in South Australia: differences, similarities and connections' *BMC Public Health*, 14:699, DOI: 10.1186/1471-2458-14-699.

[3] World Health Organisation (2008) *Final report of the Commission on the Social Determinants of Health*, http://www.who.int/social_determinants/thecommission/finalreport/en/.

Examples of using the checklist

Step	Guiding question	Example 1 – Physical environment	Example 2 – Policy environment
1. Aims	*What are the aims of the proposed initiative, decision or policy – what does it seek or plan to do?*	A campus building will soon be refurbished and refitted. The current design includes two lifts and a stairwell for fire escape which are both legal requirements.	The Academic Board plans to standardize a number of academic policies and practices, including changing the university's assessment provisions so that all non-examination assessment items have to be completed by 9am on the due date. This will ensure consistency and standardization for students regardless of faculty or degree.
2. Impact on health and wellbeing	*What is a likely health and wellbeing outcome(s) resulting from the proposed initiative, decision or policy?*	Not having a prominent and accessible staircase will make it harder for staff and students to take the stairs. Lack of physical activity is one of the main drivers of poor health in our community.	Having an assessment due time of 9am may encourage students to work overnight on their assessment, with a negative impact on their sleep.
3. Available evidence	*Is there evidence or information available about the impact of this proposed initiative, decision or policy on that health and wellbeing outcome?*	Stair use is a cost-effective form of physical activity that provides daily physical activity requirements with benefits in other areas.	Poor sleeping habits can negatively affect the academic outcomes of students. Additionally, past student feedback indicates a large proportion of self-reported stress is due to concerns about assessment due dates and times, and balancing the workload of different units of study.
4. Size of impact	*What is the size of the impact of the proposed initiative, decision or policy?*	Medium - this design will affect all building occupants and visitors (about 2,000 people).	Large – it will affect all students, with some implications for academic staff (50,000 students and staff).

5.	**Equity and inclusion considerations**	*Who might be advantaged or disadvantaged by this proposed initiative, decision or policy, and how?*	Lifts are important for staff and students who may be unable to use stairs due to disability or other reasons.	9am assessment deadlines means that staff can review and mark the results during their working day, rather than staying back late to complete the task. This is important for the university's commitment to family-friendly working arrangements and gender equity.
6.	**Unanticipated consequences**	*What are the likely unintended or unanticipated consequences of this proposed initiative, decision or policy?*	Staff and students will be discouraged and unable to access stairs if they wish to do so, which may leave the building lifts very busy for staff, students and visitors who need to use them due to disability or other health reasons. However, stairs represent a falls risk and must be managed appropriately.	Students who have other assessment items due at this time or significant work or caring commitments may feel pressured to stay up overnight to complete the task.
7.	**Scope for change**	*What is the possible scope for change in regards to the proposed initiative, decision or policy?*	Building committee could include these considerations in the design brief to the architects and engineers, as suggested in the revised CIS building design standards.	The Academic Board could consult with the student body and revise this decision based on their feedback.
8.	**Recommendations for change**	*What are the draft recommendations to improve the proposed initiative, decision or policy?*	Design brief to include a prominent and accessible staircase with appropriate signage to promote stair use by staff, students and visitors.	Assessment provisions to reflect student feedback that they would prefer a 3pm assessment deadline (2 hours before university close of business).

* Evidence or information can be from a range of sources, including feedback received during informal or formal processes (such as consultation with staff and students).
** Consider if there are specific equity groups that may be impacted by this proposal, for example, people with a disability, and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Checklist Template

Step	Guiding question	Your initiative / decision / policy
1. **Aims**	*What are the aims of the proposed initiative, decision or policy — what does it seek or plan to do?*	
2. **Impact on health and wellbeing**	*What is a likely health and wellbeing outcome(s) resulting from the proposed initiative, decision or policy?*	
3. **Available evidence**	*Is there evidence or information available about the impact of this proposed initiative, decision or policy on that health and wellbeing outcome?*	
4. **Size of impact**	*What is the size of the impact of the proposed initiative, decision or policy?*	
5. **Equity and inclusion considerations**	*Who might be advantaged or disadvantaged by this proposed initiative, decision or policy, and how?*	
6. **Unanticipated consequences**	*What are the likely unintended or unanticipated consequences of this proposed initiative, decision or policy?*	
7. **Scope for change**	*What is the possible scope for change in regards to the proposed initiative, decision or policy?*	
8. **Recommendations for change**	*What are the draft recommendations to improve the proposed initiative, decision or policy?*	