Lakehead UNIVERSITY | University Secretariat

Workplace Violence Policy

Category: Human Resources;
Jurisdiction: Vice President, Administration and Finance;
Approval Authority: Executive Team;
Established on: December 14, 2003;
Amendments: November 2010; July 10, 2019, November 19, 2024;
Most Recent Review: June 11, 2026

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1. Purpose and Scope

Lakehead University ("Lakehead") is committed to workplace health, safety, and security for all its Workers (as defined below) including any persons employed as a member or teaching assistant of its academic staff ("Academic Workers") (collectively "Lakehead Workers"). Lakehead will not tolerate any acts of workplace violence and will take all reasonable and practical measures to prevent violence and protect workers from acts of violence.

This Policy applies to all workers, any persons engaged in business with Lakehead including but without limitation contractors of Lakehead and their subcontractors, and visitors to Lakehead's campuses ("members of the University Community"), and properties at, upon, in or near which it conducts operations (its "Workplaces").

Lakehead's Human Rights Policy should be consulted regarding issues of personal harassment and discrimination. Lakehead's Sexual and Gender Based Violence Response Policy should be consulted for matters regarding sexual and gender based violence.

2. Definitions

In this Policy, and in conformity with the Occupational Health and Safety Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.1 (the "Act") the following terms have the following meanings:

a) "Worker" means any of the following:

- A person who performs work or supplies services for monetary compensation;
- A secondary school student who performs work or supplies services for no monetary compensation under a work experience program authorized by the school board that operates the school in which the student is enrolled;
- A person who performs work or supplies services for no monetary compensation under a program approved by a college of applied arts and technology, university, private career college or other post-secondary institution;
- A person employed as a member or teaching assistant of the University's academic staff; and
- Such other persons as may be deemed a "worker" under the Act or the regulations thereto.

b) "Workplace violence" is defined as:

- the exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker;
- an attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker, and
- a statement or behavior that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, that could cause physical injury to the worker.

3. Policy Guidelines

All University workers have the right to study, work, and live in an environment free from workplace violence. All members of the University Community are responsible for preventing and reporting acts of workplace violence that threaten or perceive to threaten a safe work environment. To promote a workplace violence free environment, the University has developed the following guidelines:

- The University will not tolerate workplace violence directed at any of its workers.

- All members of the University Community (where possible) shall be made aware of this Policy. The University will make every attempt to communicate its commitment to a violence free environment.
- The University will conduct hazard assessments (as appropriate) to review specific conditions and circumstances and assess whether the nature of the work or the work environment places employees at risk of workplace violence.
- The University will take all reasonable and practical measures to minimize or eliminate risks identified through hazard assessment, workplace inspections, or employee and student concerns/reports.
- Every supervisor who becomes aware, or ought reasonably to be aware, that domestic violence that would likely expose a worker to physical injury occurring in the workplace, shall take every precaution reasonable in the circumstance for the protection of the worker.

The Joint Health and Safety Committees (JHSCs) will be actively involved in conducting hazard assessments, and developing practical steps to minimize or eliminate identified risks.

4. Consequences

Workplace violence is a serious offence. Any individuals found to have perpetrated an act of workplace violence may be subject to appropriate remedial, disciplinary, and/or legal action.

5. Reporting Procedures

- Acts of workplace violence must be reported immediately to a supervisor, Security Services staff, or the Office of Human Resources. Complaints can be made in person, through e-mail or by telephone. When complaints are brought forward it is imperative that all parties involved maintain confidentiality to protect the privacy of all individuals. However, confidentiality may be compromised in cases where it is perceived that imminent danger exists or in cases where disclosure is required. Acts of reprisal will not be tolerated.

- All incidents of workplace violence or threatening behaviour shall be investigated immediately after the report is made. Investigation may involve management, local Police or other appropriate parties.
- The University is committed to providing support services to workers who are victims of workplace violence. Confidential counselling through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) shall be available to employees who are victims of workplace violence and to those who are experiencing personal problems in relation to workplace violence. The Office of Human Rights and Equity offers supports for equity seeking groups.

6. Training

Workplace violence prevention training shall be offered to managers, supervisors and employees, periodically and as reasonably needed. This training shall include workplace violence prevention strategies including conflict resolution, listening and communications skills, identifying problematic behaviour characteristics, anger management and any other topics that may be deemed necessary.

7. Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed at least once every year by the Associate Vice-President of Human Resources.

Review Period: Annually;
Date for Next Review: 2026-2027;
Related Policies and Procedures: Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Response Policy, Human Rights Policy;
Policy Superseded by this Policy: None.

The University Secretariat manages the development of policies through an impartial, fair governance process, and in accordance with the Policy Governance Framework. Please contact the University Secretariat for additional information on University policies and procedures and/or if you require this information in another format.

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