

Chair

How to choose a suitable office chair?

Ergonomic chairs provided at JCU will come with multiple adjustments that enable one type of chair to suit a range of individuals. Individuals that require a specific chair are to use this guideline and contact WHS for assistance if needed.

Sizing guidelines and other factors to consider are listed below:



Chair features

All office chairs should have the following adjustments as a minimum: adjustable chair height, adjustable lumbar support height, adjustable backrest tilt and seat tilt. Some chairs feature a synchronised mechanism allowing 'rocking' movements. Optional adjustments include a customisable level of lumbar support, neck rests and seat slides.

Chair height

Choose a chair that has a height range that is suitable to the workstation. Drafting chairs are better suited to working at bench height. If using a height adjustable desk, choose a chair with a height range that allows you to be seated with feet flat on the ground. If using a fixed height desk, choose a chair with a height range that allows you to be seated with your forearms parallel to the work surface while typing.

Seat size - depth

When sitting upright and back on the chair with feet flat on the ground there should be a 2-3 finger gap between the front edge of the chair and the back of the knee. If there is no gap, the chair is too large. If there is a large gap the chair is too small. To determine seat depth, measure the straight line distance from the back of the seat to the front of the seat.

A seat slide will enable some adjustment to the seat depth.

Seat size - width

The width of the seat should adequately support the user. Check the dimensions of the chair against that required by the user. To determine seat width, measure the straight line distance from one side of the seat pan to the other.

Backrest height

High backrests are the most commonly preferred backrest heights. Medium height backrests may be better suited to laboratory environments or people of a shorter stature.

Backrest shape

Backrest shapes vary from chair to chair. Individuals are best to try out various styles of backrests to determine which is best suited to their body shape.

Weight Rating

Check that the weight rating of a chair is suitable for the user, most standard chairs are weight rated to approximately 130kg. Heavy duty chairs are available and should be purchased for those requiring a stronger support base. This is an important factor for safety as well as the lifespan of a chair.

Material

The choice between mesh and cushioned chairs is one of personal preference for comfort. Cushioned chairs often provide a better lumbar support and cushioned seat pans come in a wide variety of foam density and shape. Mesh chairs are better suited to a tropical climate, mesh chairs with a lumbar support insert provide more effective support to the lumbar spine.

Armrests

Armrests are generally not recommended as often encourage the user to adopt a sub-optimal posture by slouching or leaning to one side whilst resting on the armrests. Postural awareness is encouraged. If a chair comes with armrests, they should be height adjustable to minimise obstruction to optimal positioning. Armrests should be lowered or removed if a user is unable to tuck their chair in because armrests hit the desk edge. Armrests may be necessary in circumstances e.g. where an individual requires assistance / support to rise from, or lower into, their chair.

Casters

Choose casters or 'feet' that are suitable to the floor surface e.g. standard casters are suitable for carpet, however glides, soft casters, or casters with brakes may be more suitable for hard flooring and those with mobility or balance impairments.

Ergonomic Equipment Purchasing Guideline - Chair

WHS-PRO-GUI-002m

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I am not comfortable in my chair, what do I do?

Optimising seated workstation ergonomics and implementing regular movement breaks can alleviate discomfort from prolonged sitting. Those who are not comfortable in their chair should undertake the following steps:

Step #	Responsible person	Task
1	Employee	Complete WHS-PRO-CHK-002b Ergonomic Workstation Self-Assessment and adjust the current chair.
2	Employee	Implement strategies from the WHS-PRO-GUI-002j Activity Based Work Guideline.
3	Employee	If discomfort persists then an alternative chair is likely required. Seek assistance from your manager to locate and try spare chairs in the vicinity.
4	Employee	If an alternative chair cannot be located and a new chair is to be purchased, the individual is to seek approval from their manager to order a new chair.
5	Employee	If assistance with this process is required, the employee is to submit a request to Work Health and Safety (WHS) using Service Now.
6	Work Health & Safety	WHS may assist with an ergonomic assessment and provide advice on suitable chair options.
7	Employee	Attend a chair showroom of JCU's preferred suppliers to test out different chair options in store
8	Work unit	Arrange for a quote and purchase of the chair from a JCU preferred supplier following JCU's procurement procedures.
9	Employee	Submit a MEX if needing assistance to dispose of old/broken office chair.
10	Employee	Review the Seated Workstation Set up guide to optimise workstation ergonomics once the new chair has been received.

Note: If an employee has sustained a workplace injury they should submit a RiskWare incident notification in addition to the above steps.

My chair is broken, what do I do?

Chairs purchased from our preferred suppliers come with a warranty. It is recommended that each work unit that orders equipment keep a record of purchases and warranty periods and contact the supplier regarding broken or malfunctioning equipment within the warranty period.

If the chair was provided as part of a new building or refurbishment, submit a ServiceNow request to the Estate Directorate as they will hold warranty information.

Casters can be easily replaced if broken and chair height mechanism (gas lift) can be repaired. Your manager or administrative team may have spare casters available that are easily replaced by the user (or submit a MEX request for assistance), alternatively, contact the supplier to assist.

If the chair is unable to be repaired and no longer within the warranty period it should not be in use and be disposed of appropriately. The seat cushioning and mesh will wear out over time, it is recommended a chair is replaced when it is no longer providing adequate support.

Equipment Suppliers

Preferred suppliers for purchasing ergonomic chairs can be found using the ServiceNow Knowledge Base.

Equipment showroom locations

Empire Furniture
(Townsville)

www.empirefurniture.com.au

NPS Commercial Furniture
(Townsville & Mt Isa)

www.npscommercialfurniture.com.au

Newart Commercial Furniture
(Cairns)

www.newartcf.com.au