

Definition of Stress: Information for your ISMA^{UK} Membership

To be used in conjunction with your application

This is the definition of stress used by ISMA^{UK}

ISMA^{UK} only uses the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Definition of Stress (1999).

All members, including those applying for membership, are required to use this definition:

***"The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures
or other types of demand placed on them at work."***

Any course or training undertaken should therefore include this definition as part of their teaching, in order for you to achieve Professional Membership of ISMA^{UK}.

Visit www.hse.gov.uk/stress/ to review the Management Standards ISMA^{UK} uses for workplace stress.

These terms are NOT used by ISMA^{UK}

- ✘ Positive Stress
- ✘ Eustress/Distress
- ✘ Good Stress/Bad Stress

The term 'Eustress' was first coined by Hans Selye to refer to 'positive stress'.

The HSE makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress, which can be detrimental to health. Therefore, stress should not be considered as positive, and what was referred to by Hans Selye as 'positive stress' should now be referred to as 'pressure'.

So pressure, which is healthy, can develop into stress when it becomes excessive pressure, or when too many demands are put on an individual, which is beyond their own specific coping ability.

In summary

- ✓ The term 'PRESSURE' should be used and not 'positive stress'
- ✓ It is excessive pressure beyond the individual's coping ability that leads to changes in the body and stress
- ✓ Stress is neither good nor positive; no stress is good for you ... not even a little bit! There is no 'good stress' or 'bad stress'