



UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

# Health and Safety Policy

**UHSP/0/10**

This Health and Safety Policy document comprises a Policy Statement and details the organisation and arrangements for implementing and monitoring the Policy. This document is a revision of UHSP/0/01.

A separate University Environmental Policy sets out the University's aims and objectives for safeguarding the environment, and details the organisation and arrangements for implementing and monitoring them (UEP/0/10). The University has a Food Safety Policy Statement that covers all aspects of the provision of food, including from external caterers.

Trades Union and student representatives have been consulted in drawing up this policy and are in agreement with the details and arrangements laid out. This Policy has been Impact Assessed to ensure compliance with University Diversity policy.

## **Updated March 2011 to reflect that:**

- The Vice-Chancellor has appointed an Executive Group to advise him and the University Executive Board and to act on his behalf in matters relating to health and safety.
- The former University Environment Health and Safety Committee and former Joint Safety Advisory Committee have been replaced by one committee, (named the Joint Safety Advisory Committee).
- The Joint Safety Advisory Committee no longer deals with environmental matters.

# Foreword to University Health and Safety Policy

The aim of this policy is to foster a positive health and safety culture and in so doing contribute to the wellbeing of the University community. The benefits of a fit and healthy community of staff and students are self-evident.

The University as an employer, educator and research institution is committed to ensuring that the many and varied activities that we engage in are carried out responsibly with an understanding of the risks involved and with sensible and proportionate precautions put in place to match those risks. The aim is for continuing improvement in the way that health and safety risks are managed so that they become part of the way of doing business at the University and that we build the competence of colleagues in this area.

Crucial to the delivery of this aim is effective leadership and the policy identifies key leadership roles and accountabilities in the institution. Colleges and Corporate Services are required to mirror this approach in their own systems for implementing this policy.

Collaboration with colleagues and in particular Trades Unions is also an important element of our approach to Health and Safety and the policy establishes formal links with them and aims to promote active involvement from their membership. Trades Unions and student representatives have been actively consulted in drawing up this policy.

The University is a major employer in the region and recognises the need for partnership with bodies such as the Health and Safety Executive and their partners and to engage with higher education sector initiatives.

Underpinning this approach is the need to comply with statutory duties and the policy is intended to address the University's strategic risk relating to compliance with health and safety management legislation including (i) The Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act and (ii) The Health & Safety at Work etc. Act.

Under the authority of this Policy are a series of specific policies aimed at identified health and safety issues. The University has carried out overarching generic risk assessments to identify and classify hazardous materials and activities and the result of these risk assessments is the specific policies and associated Guidance. These policies set the standards for risk control and are further supported by guidance to assist those responsible to meet these standards.

March 2010  
**UHSP/0/10**

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# POLICY

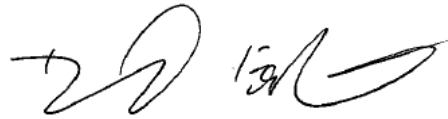
- 1 The University of Birmingham, as an employer, is committed to providing and maintaining a healthy and safe working environment that promotes wellbeing for all its employees, students and any other people who may be affected by its activities. The ultimate responsibility for ensuring implementation of this Policy lies with the University; that is the University Council, the Vice-Chancellor as its Chief Executive and the University Executive Board.

The Heads of Colleges and Registrar and Secretary are responsible for ensuring compliance with University Health and Safety Policy within their areas of control and are required to report annually on their health and safety action plans. They have a key role in encouraging a positive attitude to health and safety through appropriate management arrangements. Those with supervisory or managerial responsibility are accountable to their Head of College or the Head of Corporate Service for managing risks to health and safety under their control.

All staff and students have a responsibility to promote a healthy and safe working environment to safeguard their own health and safety and that of their colleagues, and are required to abide by rules and requirements made under the authority of this policy. Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action.

- 2 This Policy applies to all premises and activities within the control of the University. Other arrangements may apply to shared premises and activities (see under Shared Premises below). The University has made detailed arrangements for implementing this Policy outlined in a further section of the Policy entitled, **Organisation and Arrangements**.
- 3 This Policy has the following objectives:
  - to comply with requirements of relevant legislation and current good practice;
  - to identify significant hazards (the potential for harm), assess risks (the likelihood of that harm being realised) from activities involving those hazards and manage those risks;
  - to promote a positive attitude to health, safety and wellbeing at the University amongst all staff and students
  - to ensure that employees, students and others are adequately informed of the relevant identified risks;
  - to ensure that employees, students and others receive appropriate instruction, training and supervision;
  - to ensure that staff and students are competent to deal with the risks they encounter;
  - to ensure that the demands of activities do not exceed the capabilities of staff or students to carry out the work safely;
  - to consult widely with staff and students and with employees' representatives on health and safety matters;
  - ensure that this documentation and supporting information is made accessible, primarily through the University's web pages and at induction for staff;
  - to make arrangements for co-ordination and co-operation with other employers where:
    - University employees or students share premises, facilities or activities with persons working in other organisations;
    - persons from other organisations, including contractors, are working in University controlled activities;
  - to monitor actively the management of risks to health and safety;

- to review the effectiveness of health and safety risk management and where appropriate to implement improvements;
- to provide expert occupational health and safety advisory services;
- to ensure that arrangements made under this Policy also take into account managing risks to the environment, in compliance with the University's Environment Policy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'D' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Vice-Chancellor

March 2010

# ORGANISATION AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY

In order to implement the Health and Safety Policy the University has established clear lines of responsibility at University and College and Corporate Service level. Individual Colleges and Corporate Services are required to make arrangements for dealing with the risks encountered within their sphere of activities and promoting a positive attitude to health, safety and wellbeing.

## UNIVERSITY LEVEL ORGANISATION

### Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor has a key leadership role in fostering an environment in which health, safety and related issues are seen as essential and integral parts of the University's activities.

The Vice-Chancellor has overall responsibility to Council for health and safety in the University. In particular the Vice-Chancellor has a responsibility for ensuring that the University has a policy on health and safety and that appropriate structures, systems and procedures are in place to secure effective implementation of that policy and for assuring the Council about these matters.

The Vice-Chancellor is advised in this by the Joint Safety Advisory Committee on the management standards and systems to deliver agreed policies and objectives and ensure that these systems are being effectively applied. The Vice-Chancellor or a Pro-Vice-Chancellor as his nominee, acts as chair of the committee.

The Vice-Chancellor has appointed an Executive Group to advise him and UEB and to act on his behalf in matters relating to health and safety, including taking appropriate action where standards are not being met. The Group comprises the Provost, Chair of JSAC and the Director of the Health and Safety Unit and reports termly to UEB.

### Joint Safety Advisory Committee

The University Executive Board has established a Joint Safety Advisory Committee (JSAC). The primary purposes of the Committee is to promote co-operation between the University and its employees in all matters concerning health, safety and wellbeing at work, to advise the University on health and safety policy and any measures to be taken to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing at work of its employees and students and to promote and advocate good practice in health, safety and wellbeing.

Terms of reference for JSAC are in the Appendix.

JSAC meets the statutory obligations under *The Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (as amended)* and *The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996*. In addition the University has agreed with the trades unions a *Safety Representatives' Charter*.

## **JSAC Membership**

- The Chair
- Five nominees from College Boards
- The Director of Estates
- The Director of Human Resources
- Trades Unions nominate an equal number of representatives

*Additionally:*

- The Director of the Health and Safety Unit (In attendance)
- Chairs of Advisory Groups (In attendance, as required)

By agreement the recognised trades unions extend their representation to all staff in particular grades and do not limit their representations to those with Trades Union membership.

## **Advisory Groups to JSAC**

In order that this Committee can receive expert advice on certain health and safety related specialised topics it has established Advisory Groups. Terms of reference for the advisory groups are in the Appendix.

### **Membership**

The Advisory Group chairpersons are appointed by UEB from the senior academic staff of the University. Members of an Advisory Group are appointed by JSAC and selected purely on the basis of their expertise and ability to make a direct personal contribution to the work of the Advisory Group.

The Director of the Health and Safety Unit and the appropriate specialist Advisers are *ex officio* members of the respective Advisory Groups. Secretarial assistance is provided by Human Resources.

## **Expert Advisory Services**

The University is advised by experienced persons who have appropriate qualifications and knowledge of occupational health and safety issues arising from its activities. The University is committed to ensuring adequate resources for the functioning of these services.

The expert advisory services comprise a Health and Safety Unit and Occupational Health Unit. In addition the University has appointed an Employee Support and Listening Service.

The purpose of these units is to:

- assist JSAC in its responsibilities;
- provide advice on occupational health and safety matters;
- keep up to date on developments in health and safety legislation and practice;
- provide occupational health surveillance, as appropriate;
- conduct statutory medicals;
- provide immunisation programmes for specific work exposures;
- provide advice on how to deal with the particular needs of individuals in the workplace;
- monitor on behalf of JSAC the implementation of health and safety policy;
- recommend appropriate remedial action where standards are not met;

- act as the formal point of contact between the University and relevant enforcing authorities, in particular HSE, the Environment Agency, and any other relevant authority;
- liaise with specialists in or outside the University, as appropriate;
- maintain certain statutory records, as defined in further policy;
- organise health and safety training and instruction;
- receive accident, ill-health and incident reports, investigate as appropriate, compile and analyse accident and incident data and report to the appropriate enforcing authority as required by legislation;
- liaise with staff and students and recognised trades unions and their appointed workplace representatives on issues relating to health and safety;
- publicise and promote good practice in occupational health, safety and wellbeing information, policies and guidance.

## **COLLEGE AND CORPORATE SERVICES ORGANISATION**

### **Responsibilities of Heads of Colleges and Corporate Services**

The Heads of Colleges and Registrar and Secretary are responsible for fostering an environment in which health, safety and related issues are seen as essential and integral parts of the College's and Corporate Services' activities.

The Heads of Colleges and Registrar and Secretary are responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for ensuring that risks to health and safety of staff, students, customers, clients and visitors, are properly identified and controlled in conformity with University policy. This responsibility extends to staff and student activities away from University premises including student placements.

### **Colleges**

In discharging their duties, each Head of College must appoint a College Board member to be responsible for health and safety, a College Health and Safety Committee and a College Health and Safety Co-ordinator. Where appropriate, further health and safety co-ordinators and specialist health and safety personnel, e.g. Radiation Protection Supervisor, Biological Safety Officer, Fire Wardens and First Aiders etc. will also need to be appointed. In delegating some of the day-to-day tasks to such people the Head of College must ensure that they have appropriate experience, special knowledge (of the equipment, process, materials or activity), appropriate training and adequate resources (especially time and money) to carry out their tasks. The duties of such persons should be agreed by the College Board in a written statement of duties and responsibilities.

In some situations, it will be appropriate for health and safety personnel to be shared between Colleges.

The Head is required to submit an annual health and safety plan to JSAC. The plan should identify key objectives which are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and have clear deadlines for completion. In addition Heads are required to report to JSAC annually on the implementation of the plan and monitoring of compliance.



## **Corporate Services**

The Registrar and Secretary is responsible for ensuring that health and safety activities are co-ordinated across Corporate Services. Heads of Corporate Services are accountable to the Registrar and Secretary and must appoint one or more Health and Safety Co-ordinators and, where appropriate, specialist health and safety personnel including fire wardens and First Aiders. In some circumstances such personnel may be shared between divisions of Corporate Services.

In delegating some of the day-to-day tasks to such people the Head of Corporate Service must ensure that they have appropriate experience, special knowledge (of the equipment, process, materials or activity), appropriate training and adequate resources (especially time and money) to carry out their tasks. The duties of such persons should be agreed by the Head of Budget Centre in a written statement of duties and responsibilities.

The Registrar and Secretary is required to submit an annual health and safety plan to JSAC for Corporate Services. The plan should identify key objectives which are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and have clear deadlines for completion. In addition the Registrar and Secretary is required to report to JSAC annually on the implementation of the plan and monitoring of compliance with policy.

## **Heads of Colleges and Heads of Corporate Services**

In particular, Heads of Colleges and Heads of Corporate Services (the latter co-ordinated by the Registrar and Secretary) must ensure that:

- safe working procedures are produced from generic University, College/Corporate Service or local risk assessments for all activities under their control as required by current University Policies and that appropriate action is taken to eliminate or control the risks identified;
- appropriate levels of safety supervision, instruction and training are provided for students, staff, visitors and contractors who are under the control of the College/Corporate Service;
- supervisors and managers are aware of their health and safety responsibilities and are competent to fulfil them;
- equipment provided for use at work is suitable for its purpose, maintained in a safe condition and any risks associated with the equipment are eliminated or adequately controlled;
- workplaces are arranged to allow for the tasks to be carried out safely and without risks to health;
- there is effective consultation and co-operation with appointed Trades Union Safety Representatives within their College/Corporate Service and arrangements exist to allow staff and students to raise health and safety matters. An agreement known as The Safety Reps Charter has been signed by the University and Trades Unions.
- suitable monitoring arrangements are introduced to ensure University Policy and College/Corporate Service rules are being adhered to;
- proper arrangements are made for the disposal of hazardous wastes, in particular; radioactive, biological (including clinical) and chemical wastes;
- accidents, incidents and fires are reported promptly to the University Health and Safety Unit, according to current Policy;
- appropriate arrangements are agreed and in place for University staff/students working in premises not under the sole control of the University; and
- appropriate arrangements are in place for student placements;

- all premises under the control of the College/Corporate Service should be inspected according to a planned schedule and the results of these inspections recorded.

## **Heads of Schools and Other Senior Managers**

Heads of School are accountable to their Head of College and responsible for the implementation of and compliance with College Policy in their School. Heads of Operations are accountable to their Head of College and within their area of management control are responsible for implementation of and compliance with College Policy.

Senior managers in Corporate Services are accountable to their Heads of Corporate Service and are responsible for implementation of and compliance with Policy in their area of control.

All of the above managers have a leadership role in championing a positive attitude to health and safety in their Schools and Departments.

## **Responsibilities of Supervisors**

Persons in supervisory positions, including any such persons not actually employed by the University, have a crucial leadership role in ensuring that good health and safety practice is promoted and encouraged in their areas of control. They have particular duties with regard to health and safety when in charge of students, research workers, employees or visitors, either individually or in groups.

Such persons must ensure that adequate safe working arrangements are based on suitable and sufficient risk assessments. Supervisors should have copies of relevant risk assessments. In cases of uncertainty, expert advice should be sought in the first instance through the College/Corporate Service Health and Safety Co-ordinator or the University Health and Safety Unit.

## **Responsibilities of Individual Staff and Students**

Everyone has a role in promoting a healthy and safe environment in all that the University does. Individual staff and students also have a duty to conduct themselves and their work or study in a safe manner so as not to endanger themselves and others around them. Clearly the degree of such responsibility carried by particular individuals will depend on the nature and extent of their work.

Should any individual member of staff feel concern over the safety aspects of his or her work or a more general concern about health and safety at the University, it should be brought to the attention of the College/Corporate Service Health and Safety Co-ordinator, Trades Union Safety Representatives and Head of College/Corporate Service or their nominee, and if necessary the University Health and Safety Unit. Students should raise concerns through their academic supervisor or tutor.

Individuals have a duty to co-operate with the University in complying with Policy requirements that relate to their activities and actions in case of emergencies. Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action. In addition, there is a duty to report accidents/incidents and any concerns they have on health and safety.

## **Responsibility for Premises and Plant and Common Areas**

Whilst Heads of Colleges and Heads of Corporate Services are responsible for activities within buildings, equipment and any substances or materials used, the Director of Estates is responsible for the maintenance of premises in a safe physical condition and is also responsible for those parts of the University estate not associated with other Colleges and Corporate Services, e.g. university roadways, paths, steps and car parks.

Plant rooms, in most cases, come under the responsibility of the Director of Estates. However, some Colleges and Corporate Services may control and be responsible for specialist plant areas. Heads of Colleges and Heads of Corporate Services must ensure, in liaison with the Director of Estates, that responsibility for such areas is clearly defined and understood.

## **Contractors**

Contractors must only carry out work that they are competent and contracted to do. They must adhere to legislation and to the University's health and safety policies and procedures and ensure that their activities do not place themselves or the University's employees, students or visitors at risk.

There must be communication and co-operation between contractors and the University. Any College or Corporate Service which engages a contractor must ensure that the contractor is provided with relevant information relating to the University's health and safety procedures, particularly the arrangements for action to be taken in the event of fire or other emergency. The College or Corporate Service must also inform the contractor of any special health or safety concerns, requirements, or hazards relevant to the contractor's activity. Similarly the contractor must inform the College or Corporate Service of anything that may be a health and safety concern to the University's employees, students or visitors.

Where relevant, Colleges and Corporate Services will need to set out local safety arrangements for managing any contractors that they engage.

As a major employer the University also has a role in promoting and encouraging good practice in health, safety and wellbeing amongst contractors engaged by the University.

## **Tenants**

Tenants/third parties occupying locations on campus are directly responsible for all health and safety matters which relate to them and their occupation. They must comply with all current health and safety legislation and the University's current Health and Safety Policy, where applicable, on such matters. Failure to do so could be classed as a breach of the tenancy agreement.

## **Shared Premises**

Where the University shares premises with another employer (e.g. NHS Trusts) or is the tenant of another employer, special and specific arrangements must be agreed with the other party to ensure that there is appropriate co-ordination and co-operation in relation to the health and safety of University staff, students and visitors.

Advice should be sought from the Health and Safety Unit in such circumstances.

## APPENDIX

### Terms of Reference for Joint Safety Advisory Committee

- To formulate and keep under review health and safety policies, including general policy and specific policies for identified risks; and/or any measures to be taken to ensure the health and safety and welfare at work of its employees and students;
- to ensure the full implementation of the health and safety policy by means of monitoring and audit;
- to promote good practice in health, safety and wellbeing
- to foster a positive attitude to health, safety and wellbeing as an integral part of University activities;
- to promote co-operation between the University and its employees in all matters concerning health, safety and welfare at work;
- to receive the Executive Group's termly report to UEB;
- to receive from Heads of College and the Registrar and Secretary their annual health and safety plans and reports on the implementation of these plan and monitoring of compliance.
- to receive reports from the expert advisory groups on matters within each group's expertise;
- to receive reports from the Health and Safety Unit, Estates Office and other relevant bodies on compliance with policy;
- to receive reports from the relevant statutory authorities outside the University;
- to receive reports from Trades Union Safety Representatives;
- to act as the forum for consultation between the University and safety representatives:
  - before the introduction of any University measures that may substantially affect the health and safety and welfare of their members, including changes to patterns of work;
  - relating to the appointment of health and safety professionals;
  - relating to the planning of health and safety training that may affect their members.

### Terms of Reference for Advisory Groups to JSAC

- to advise JSAC on the management of health and safety risk in the area of expertise identified by JSAC;
- to formulate specific University Health and Safety Policies and programmes of implementation, identifying standards to be achieved in order to comply with legislation and good practice;
- to keep under review the implementation of health and safety policies to ensure that they remain relevant and up-to-date;
- to monitor, as required by JSAC the performance of Colleges and Corporate Services in achieving acceptable standards of health and safety management.

## **Conduct of Business of the Advisory Groups**

Each Advisory Group is required to:

- meet at least twice a year and more frequently if necessary;
- produce a plan of action identifying priorities from within the terms of reference and indicating a realistic time scale for achieving those objectives - the plan should be reviewed annually;
- make an annual report to JSAC in the autumn term detailing the meetings held, a summary of the business dealt with, policies drafted and reviewed, monitoring activities and progress in achieving the plan of action.

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Published 22 March 2010  
Updated 23 March 2011