

Duties and responsibilities of Heads of School

Abstracts from Part 6 of the University Health and Safety Policy

The following is a list of selected abstracts from [Part 6 - Biological Laboratories](#) of the University Health and Safety Policy. It is provided as a summary list of the duties and responsibilities of Heads of Schools specifically included within Part 6. The list should be read in conjunction with the full text of Part 6. Where the duties or responsibilities are duplicated in different sections of the full text, only the first occurrence is included in the following list. Some minor editing has been done in some places to either give context to the paragraph or omit sections of text.

Section 3. Administrative procedures for achieving the safe use of biological materials

Section 3.1 General

It is the duty of all Heads of School to ensure that all aspects of the Court's Health and Safety Policy are complied with within their area of responsibility.

Each Head of School must take appropriate measures to ensure that all relevant persons are made aware of any hazards associated with the biological materials encountered during the course of their work and of the requirements to adopt working procedures designed to keep the risks to their health, and to the health of other persons who might be affected thereby, as low as reasonably achievable.

In addition, each Head of School must ensure the University Health and Safety Policy on safety in biological laboratories is supplemented by local School rules (see 5.5) relating to specific activities of the School, so that, when read in conjunction with this Part of the Policy, the documents form an effective means of securing the safe use of biological materials, as well as potentially hazardous equipment and hazardous processes.

Section 3.2 Advisory appointments - GMBSOs and BSAs

Each Head of School is required to appoint a local GM Biological Safety Officer (and deputy) to cover those areas where genetic modification work is undertaken. For those areas where biological work is undertaken but this does not include genetically modified organisms, the Head of School may choose whether or not they wish to appoint a Biological Safety Adviser (BSA). If not then the School Safety Adviser's role is assumed to include biological safety aspects.

Section 3.3 GM/Biological Safety Committee

Each Head of School must appoint a local School Genetic Modification Safety Committee (GMSC) to cover each area where genetic modification work is carried out in the University. The Head of School may choose to extend the committee's remit to advise on and consider other aspects of biological safety.

If not then the School (Area) Health and Safety Committee's remit is assumed to include biological safety matters.

Section 3.4 Risk Assessment

Each Head of School is responsible for ensuring risk assessments are carried out, communicated to relevant workers and regularly reviewed.

Section 4. Requirements for the different types of biological work

Section 4.1 General

Each Head of School is responsible for ensuring that work with biological materials is undertaken in the University only in facilities that are suitable for the purpose and using appropriate working practices

Section 4.2 Work with micro-organisms

Each Head of School must ensure an up-to-date inventory is maintained of micro-organisms on their premises. A copy of this information is to be provided to the University Biological Safety Adviser who should be advised of any amendments as they occur.

Each Head of School must ensure all relevant licences from SEERAD or DEFRA are obtained for work with animal or plant pathogens.

Each Head of School must ensure the University Biological Safety Adviser is informed of holdings on their premises of any micro-organism or material controlled under anti-terrorism legislation, or in advance of any intentions to acquire such micro-organisms or materials.

Section 4.4 Work with animals and plants

Details of the policy and procedures for health surveillance for animal facilities workers is available on the Health and Safety Department website. Heads of Schools and individual workers must refer to and follow this policy.

Section 4.5 Genetic modification work

Each Head of School must ensure the University Biological Safety Adviser is informed in advance of any intention to use premises for GM work that are not already notified.

Section 5. Safe systems of work

Section 5.3 Containment

Each Head of School is responsible for ensuring that work with biological materials is undertaken in the University only in facilities that are suitable for the purpose and using appropriate working practices.

Section 5.4 Facilities

Each Head of School has a responsibility to ensure that the level of containment required for a particular facility is correctly identified to those involved in the design and/or refurbishment of containment facilities, including

the relevant Estates and Buildings Project Manager and the University Biological Safety Adviser. The Head of School should also ensure the requirements of the School and workers who will use the facility are made clear and taken into account in the design process.

Section 5.6 Good housekeeping

The Head of School should allocate day to day responsibility for housekeeping in shared or multi-user facilities to a named member of staff to ensure satisfactory standards are maintained.

Section 5.7 Signs

Each Head of School is responsible for ensuring laboratories or other facilities where biohazardous micro-organisms or materials are present are labelled at the point of entry with appropriate signs.

Section 5.8 Fumigation

Each Head of School is responsible for ensuring appropriate systems are in place to provide safe and suitable procedures for fumigation in biological laboratories and associated facilities. In conjunction they must ensure adequate and appropriate instruction, training and supervision is provided for workers undertaking fumigation procedures. They should also ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to monitor and review working practices.

Section 5.9 Liquid nitrogen

Each Head of School is responsible for ensuring appropriate systems are in place to provide safe and suitable procedures for use of liquid nitrogen in biological laboratories and associated facilities. In addition, they must ensure adequate and appropriate instruction, training and supervision is provided for workers using liquid nitrogen. They should also ensure arrangements are in place to monitor and review working practices.

Section 6. Equipment

Section 6.1 General

Each Head of School is responsible for ensuring appropriate systems are in place to provide safe and suitable equipment for use in biological laboratories and associated facilities. In addition, they must ensure adequate and appropriate instruction, training and supervision is provided for workers using the equipment. They should also ensure arrangements are in place to monitor and review arrangements and working practices.

Section 6.3 Autoclaves

Each Head of School must ensure all autoclaves and other pressure vessels (such as air receivers, boilers, calorifiers, pressure cookers and other gas pressure vessels such as gas cylinders) owned by Schools are notified to the University's Engineering Insurance Surveyor, who will inspect each item at the statutorily required interval. Notification of such items should be made through the Health and Safety Department Office. Notification of newly acquired equipment is required before it is brought into use, to ensure compliance with the Pressure Systems Regulations.

Section 7. Disinfection and waste disposal

Section 7.1 General

Each Head of School must ensure there is a clear documented disinfection policy indicating suitable concentrations, contact times and applications for all disinfection requirements within the School/Division.

Section 7.2 Chemical Disinfectants

Each Head of School is responsible for the management of waste arising in areas under their control. They must ensure all biological wastes produced within the School/Division are disposed of in accordance with the Code of Practice by incorporating the requirements into clear documented local rules and procedures.

Each Head of School must ensure adequate instruction, equipment, training and supervision is provided to enable all workers to observe the duty of care.

Section 8. Transport of Biological Materials

Section 8.1 General

Each Head of School must ensure that all persons undertaking any role in the transport chain are properly trained and have a detailed understanding of the relevant Regulations to ensure they are able to undertake their responsibilities to the required standards. The level of training should be commensurate with those responsibilities.

Section 9. Training and Supervision

Section 9.1 General

As part of the induction procedures when first arriving, all persons working in the University should be made aware of the University Health and Safety Policy and of any other local health and safety policies made at School level and below. All persons studying or working in biological laboratories must receive information, training and supervision appropriate for the work undertaken, so that risks to the health and safety of all persons involved are controlled. Each Head of School is responsible for ensuring appropriate systems are in place to provide adequate and appropriate induction, training and supervision for workers in biological laboratories. They should also ensure that suitable arrangements in place to monitor and review the levels of supervision and training received in practice.

Section 9.3 Single/Lone Working and Out of Hours Working

Each Head of School should ensure any work is prohibited which entails a risk of serious personal injury or fire by persons working alone in the evenings or at weekends, irrespective of the status and experience of the worker.

Section 10. Accidents and Incidents

Section 10.1 General

Each Head of School is responsible for ensuring the health and safety of all persons on their premises and must make appropriate arrangements to minimise the likelihood of accidents, incidents or instances of occupational ill health occurring.

Needlestick and sharps injuries are particularly serious and each Head of School must ensure all workers handling needles and sharps receive instruction and training on safe procedures.

Section 10.4 Emergency Plans

Each Head of School is required to ensure arrangements are made to deal with emergencies and other untoward events that may arise in areas where biological work is carried out. All workers must be made aware of what action they need to take in the event of an emergency and those with specific roles must receive training in order for them to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

Section 11. Occupational Health

Section 11.1 General

Each Head of School is required to ensure all workers are aware of the services provided by the Occupational Health Unit.

Each Head of School is responsible for ensuring the requirement for any health surveillance be considered and determined as part of the risk assessment process.

Section 11.2 Immunisation

Each Head of School is responsible for ensuring the requirement for any immunisations be considered and determined as part of the risk assessment process.

Section 12. Access to Biological Laboratories by non-laboratory personnel

Section 12.1 General

Each Head of School is responsible for ensuring the health and safety of all persons on their premises and must have appropriate systems in place to control access to biological laboratories. They should also ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to monitor and review access controls and how they work in practice.

Section 13. Monitoring, Inspection, Audit and Review

Section 13.1 General

Each Head of School has a responsibility to ensure all arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of workers and others who may be affected by

work activities are suitable and effective, and are appropriate for the particular work activities carried out.

Section 13.3 Inspection and Audit

Each Head of School is responsible for ensuring School personnel carry out regular and systematic local health and safety inspections and audits to scrutinise health and safety standards and the effectiveness of the health and safety management systems in place.

Section 13.4 Review

Each Head of School is responsible for ensuring regular reviews are undertaken of the health and safety arrangements (local policies, procedures etc) in the areas for which they are responsible to confirm they are appropriate and are working effectively. Where it is identified that any improvements to arrangements should be made then these must be implemented. Serious consideration should also be given to any other changes that could result in improved or better standards of health and safety management and standards.