



UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Foreword by the Principal

It is often said that health and safety is a matter of common sense, but in an organisation as large and complex as our University, responsibilities, structures and processes designed to prevent injury and ill health need to be in place and be well understood.

The University of Edinburgh has a record of good health and safety performance since the Health and Safety at Work Act was introduced in the mid-1970s. The University fully acknowledges its responsibilities as an employer, and has mature policies and systems in place to ensure the effective management and control of the wide range of risks which are inevitably present in an organisation such as ours.

We also have a proven commitment to continuous improvement in all areas of health and safety performance, with the emphasis on the prevention of accidents and ill health, rather than reactive measures.

Every member of our community, be they staff, student or visitor, has the right to be in a safe and healthy environment within the University, and each individual has an important contribution to make towards that goal. To complement the formal systems the University has put in place, each member of our community also has to take personal responsibility for their own and others' safety and health – we need to help look after ourselves and our colleagues.

The University Health and Safety Policy, and its supporting documents, are the gateway to all the essential guidance and advice which you will need to help you achieve that.

Professor Peter Mathieson



University Health and Safety Policy

The University Health and Safety Policy is issued upon the authority of the University Court. It is published in two documents. This document, **The University Health and Safety Policy**, is supported by a **Framework document (Organisation and Arrangements)** which details the University's organisation and arrangements for implementing and monitoring the Policy, and the arrangements Heads of School (and equivalent) need to adopt to meet their responsibilities defined by legislation and the University Health and Safety Policy.

The University Health and Safety Policy has been formulated with due consideration to the University's responsibilities as an employer, enshrined in the Health and Safety at Work Act, and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.

Advice and guidance on specific topics can be accessed through the Health and Safety Department website, and the individual Unit websites. **Appendix II** of the **Framework document (Organisation and Arrangements)** contains an **A – Z Index** of topics which allows ready access to guidance on specific topics.

Hard copy printouts can be supplied by the Health and Safety Department to individuals who do not have access to the Health and Safety website, on request.

Promoting robust health and safety management within the University of Edinburgh should be seen very much as a partnership between all stakeholders. A key aspect of this partnership is the role of the Estates and Buildings Department in securing efficient and effective health and safety arrangements.

University Health and Safety Policy and arrangements documentation

The following details the hierarchical structure of the University Health and Safety Policy documentation and philosophy adopted in securing an appropriate health and safety management system.

Tier 1 - Health and Safety Policy document, with supporting Framework document (Organisation and Arrangements); School Health and Safety Policies

Tier 2 - Codes of Practice published by the Health and Safety Department

Tier 3 - Guidance documents published by the Health and Safety Department; guidance published at College/ School level

Where Schools are large and particularly where they cover more than one site, it may be necessary for documents to be published by local management units below School level, to ensure effective communication of health and safety information.



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH Health & Safety Department

The University has embraced the health and safety management system described by the document “Successful Health and Safety Management” (HSG 65) published by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The main elements of such a system include:-

- Publishing a Policy which includes a clear statement of commitment and accountability by university senior management.
- Organising an efficient and effective framework to ensure schools have robust arrangements in place to deliver on the requirements of the Policy.
- Ensuring both the University centrally and individual schools have a systematic and well defined approach to planning and implementing which includes the use of risk assessment techniques.
- Agreeing standards which are developed which are used at both School and central University level to measure performance.
- Ensuring Schools, Support Units and the corporate University have arrangements in place which allow the review of performance, not only after accidents, incidents and cases of occupational ill health, but after health and safety inspections and audit reports.
- Maintaining high standards of health, safety and risk management within Schools by implementing a robust and appropriate auditing system.



Health and Safety Policy Statement

It is the University Court's Policy, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- i) to provide and maintain plant and equipment and systems of work that are safe and without risks to health;
- ii) to make arrangements for ensuring safety and absence of risks to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances;
- iii) to provide such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure the health and safety at work of employees, students and visitors;
- iv) to maintain any place of work under the University's control in a condition that is safe and without risks to health and to provide and maintain means of access to and egress from it that are safe and without such risks;
- v) to provide and maintain a working environment for employees and students that is safe and without risks to health and is adequate as regards facilities and arrangements for their welfare at work;
- vi) to provide such protective equipment as is required by risk assessment for the health and safety at work of employees and, where appropriate, students;
- vii) to encourage staff to set high standards of health and safety by personal example, in order that students leaving the University should take with them a mind-set which accepts good health and safety practice as normal;
- viii) to monitor the effectiveness of health and safety provisions within the University, in consultation with the appointed Trade Union Safety Representatives or other employee representatives;
- ix) to keep the University Health and Safety Policy under regular review and to duly publish any amendments.

For and on behalf of the University Court.

Vice Principal Corporate Services



Summary of Organisation and General Arrangements

The organisation and general arrangements which support the University Health and Safety Policy are detailed in the Framework document, which is available at:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/health-safety/policy-cop/policy>

The following is a brief summary of these arrangements - more detail on each section can be found in the Framework document. Note that where the term “Head of School” is used, this is taken to cover individual members of staff who have been formally appointed to the Head of School role, or to the equivalent role in the Support Groups, and to Heads of other management units, such as Research Institutes, who have been formally allocated the equivalent role. Likewise, the term “School Safety Adviser” is taken to cover individuals who have been appointed to this role by their Head of School (or equivalent), and includes all such College or School (or equivalent) Health and Safety Managers, Officers and Advisers.

The University Court

The University Court has a responsibility in terms of the Health and Safety at Work Act for the health and safety of the staff and students of the University and of any members of the general public having access to University premises, and in particular assumes responsibility for:

- keeping under review the University Health and Safety Policy;
- allocating resources for health and safety measures;
- maintaining the organisation for the successful implementation of, and monitoring of compliance with, the University Health and Safety Policy;
- identifying and allocating the health and safety roles and responsibilities of individual members of the University community;
- encouraging a culture of health and safety awareness and continuous improvement

Responsibilities of Senior Management

In accordance with the requirements of the (former) Health and Safety Commission, and guidance from the Institute of Directors, UCEA and the Universities Safety and Health Association (USHA), the University has appointed a member of its senior management team, who attends meetings of the University Court, as the institution’s “Health and Safety Champion”.

This member of the Senior Management Team has a particular interest in, and responsibility for, overseeing the University’s health and safety management policy and arrangements, and as such convenes the University Health and Safety Committee.



This role is currently fulfilled by the Director of Corporate Services.

Competent advice on health and safety

Provision of competent advice to the University community, in terms of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, is made via the roles of Director and Deputy Director of Health and Safety, and the other professional staff of the corporate Health and Safety Department, together with the University's cohort of professionally qualified Health and Safety Managers/Officers/Advisers at College, School and equivalent level. They are supported by our raft of trained and experienced part-time School Safety Advisers at School level and below.

Individual Responsibility

It is a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act, for everyone engaged in University activities to exercise personal responsibility and care in the prevention of injury and ill health to themselves and to others who may be affected by acts and omissions at work. All those who supervise work, particularly those who supervise work in laboratories, workshops, practical classrooms and fieldwork, at whatever level, have a responsibility to ensure that they do not endanger the health and safety of students, technical, academic, cleaning staff, and others, including visitors.

No person shall intentionally interfere with, or misuse anything provided by the University in the interests of health, safety or welfare. Individuals are required to comply with any procedures or arrangements formulated under the authority of this Policy.

University Health and Safety Committee

The University Court has appointed a University Health and Safety Committee which provides a forum for consultation with members representing Trade Unions recognised by the University, other employee and student representatives. This Committee is responsible for advising on all matters concerning health and safety in the University and contributes to the development of policy and monitors performance in all areas of safety and health within the University. The Committee will send forward to the University Court, via the Risk and Audit Committee, recommendations for such action as are thought necessary to ensure that all reasonable steps are being taken to promote the health and safety of employees, students and others entering the University's estate.

The executive officer of the University Health and Safety Committee is the Director of Health and Safety.



University Radiation Protection Committee

The University Court has appointed a University Radiation Protection Committee which is responsible for the health and safety of all persons in the University who may be exposed to hazards arising from the use of ionising radiations, ultra-violet radiation and laser and microwave radiations. This Committee will report to the University Health and Safety Committee on all matters relating to safe transport, use, storage and disposal of materials producing ionising radiation and the use of all equipment which generates X-rays, ultra-violet, laser and microwave radiations.

The Committee oversees compliance with relevant Statutory Provisions and Approved Codes of Practice relating to these radiations. The executive officer of the Radiation Protection Committee is the University Radiation Protection Adviser.

The assessment of risks to health and safety

Risk assessment is a major cornerstone of health and safety management. There is a statutory requirement for “suitable and sufficient” assessment of the identifiable risks to health and safety to be carried out so that Safe Systems of Work and Safe Operating Procedures containing appropriate control measures can be formulated.

The Head of School is ultimately responsible for ensuring that risk assessments are being competently completed, that they relate to actual working practices and that they are reviewed as necessary, at least annually.

However on a day to day basis, risk assessment is the responsibility of the immediate supervisor of the work in question (e.g. Principal Investigator or Research Group Leader). The details of the particular risk assessment will often be compiled by other employees or students concerned in the work however the supervisor must always approve the risk assessment and system of work before the work commences.

Monitoring implementation of the Health and Safety Policy

School Safety Advisers, and local Health and Safety Committees, play key roles in monitoring the effective implementation of the University Health and Safety Policy, at School (or equivalent) level and below.

Monitoring includes ensuring that School self-inspections are taking place regularly, to verify that the hazards and resultant risks of particular activities carried out within a School are being adequately recognised and controlled. Monitoring also makes sure that any deficiencies in health and safety performance are identified and that remedial action is recommended and pursued.



Auditing compliance with the Health and Safety Policy

Auditing the policies, systems and arrangements put in place by the University to achieve and sustain high standards of health and safety performance verifies that management procedures and operational practices are successful in meeting appropriate performance standards.

The University has developed and evolved a comprehensive programme of management, compliance and topic auditing and review, in partnership with external risk management professionals, which has provided a strong platform to move forward in the pursuit of continuous improvement in health and safety performance.

In addition, each Head of School is required to report, at least annually, to the Director of Corporate Services, on aspects of the implementation of the Health and Safety Policy within their own area(s) of responsibility. This is done by completing the Annual School Health and Safety Report questionnaire, which is circulated by the Director of Corporate Services.

The University of Edinburgh Emergency Procedures

- 1. FIRE - If you discover a fire**, operate the nearest fire alarm call point or, if no alarm is provided, shout "FIRE".
- 2. If you hear the fire alarm**, leave the building by the nearest available escape route and go to your assembly area. Lifts must not be used in the event of fire, unless designated as a fire evacuation lift.
- 3. In the event of a fire or other serious incident** requiring the attendance of the **Fire and Rescue Service**:
 - Dial the University Emergency Number 2222 from extensions on the 650/651 exchange. (For all other telephones, dial 651 3999)
 - State your name, location and telephone number. Supply the University Security Service with any details of the location and the nature of the emergency which they may request.
 - Wait for confirmation that your message has been understood.
 - The University Security Service will call the Fire and Rescue Service, as appropriate. If, after ten minutes, the Fire and Rescue Service has not arrived, repeat the emergency call on 2222. If possible, arrange for someone to be at the main entrance to the building, to show the Fire and Rescue Service the way to the incident.
- 4. INJURY OR ILL HEALTH** - If you are not qualified in first aid yourself, send for the nearest available First Aider, who will take charge of the situation. If no qualified First Aiders are available, ensure that an ambulance is called: see 5. below. If you



suspect that a casualty has been poisoned, alert Accident and Emergency, dial (9) (0131) 536 1000, so that A&E staff can get information from the Poisons Bureau.

5. SERIOUS Injury or Ill Health - In the event of a **serious injury or ill health** requiring the attendance of the **Ambulance Service**:

- Dial (9)999 and ask for the Ambulance Service
- State your name, location and telephone number. The Ambulance Service operator may ask you to describe the casualty's condition, first aid measures applied etc., and will assess the seriousness of the event – follow their instructions
- Follow up with a second call to the University Security Service on 2222, if practicable. If possible, arrange for someone to be at the main entrance to the building, to show the Emergency Services the way to the incident.

6. Ensure that the **University Health and Safety Department** is informed as soon as practicable. In the case of serious incidents, a report should be made promptly by telephone. In due course, a report of all fires, accidents and other incidents must be sent to the Health and Safety Department by means of the [University Accident and Incident reporting system](#).

Health and Safety Department

Mission Statement

The corporate Health and Safety Department's fundamental purpose is to help ensure that the health, safety and welfare of members of staff, students and visitors at work/study within the University is not adversely affected by our activities or processes. The Health and Safety Department's mission is therefore to assist and advise the University Court, and all members of the University community, in ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all employees and students whilst at work and study, and the safety of authorised visitors and members of the public entering the University's estate.

In order to achieve this, the Health and Safety Department provides appropriate and effective support to facilitate the University's attainment of its core objectives in teaching and research, and hence the University's strategic goals, whilst promoting the highest quality of health and safety practice and continuous improvement across the University's wide spectrum of activities, so meeting all its legal and moral obligations in this regard.

The Health and Safety Department contributes to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of the working population in general and in line with the University of Edinburgh's Corporate Social Responsibility Agenda.



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH Health & Safety Department

We endeavour to support and protect both the individual member of the University community, and the body corporate, with regard to the application of health and safety law and practice.

Suzanne Thompson
Director of Health and Safety

Further details of the specific areas of expertise are provided in the Framework document and contact details are below:

Telephone and email contact details;

- Health and Safety Department Office 51-4255, health.safety@ed.ac.uk
- Biosafety Unit 51-4245, biosafety@ed.ac.uk
- Fire Safety Unit 50-8189, fire@ed.ac.uk
- Occupational Health Unit 50-8190, occupational.health@ed.ac.uk, fax 51-9149
- Occupational Hygiene Unit 51-4261, occupational.hygiene@ed.ac.uk
- Radiation Protection Unit 50-2818, radiation@ed.ac.uk
- Training and Audit Unit 51-4259, safety.training@ed.ac.uk

Document version

Version number	Summary of change	Date and by whom
V1.0	New version as approved by the University Court	22.06.2015 Retrospectively added 17/11/2022 C Schmid
V2.0	New foreword by new Principal	01/03/2018 Retrospectively added 17/11/2022 C Schmid
V2.1	Director of Health and Safety updated	01/07/2018 Retrospectively added 17/11/2022 C Schmid
V2.2	Minor contact details updated	12/11/2019 Retrospectively added 17/11/2022 C Schmid
V3.0	Updated format, new Signature for Director of Corporate Services Group, updated emergency procedures and reporting to Audit and Risk Committee from CMG	11/01/2022 Retrospectively added 17/11/2022 C Schmid
V3.1	New format and versioning control added	17/11/2022 C Schmid



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If you require this document in an alternative format please contact The Health and Safety Department on health.safety@ed.ac.uk or call (0131) 651 4255