



Astron University

ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

2010

Submitted to the Council by the University
Executive, on reference from the Health
and Safety Committee

Executive Summary

The Health and Safety Committee (HSC) is the principal consultative, advisory and co-ordinating body for health and safety for the University, chaired initially in 2010 by the then Chief Operating Officer and, subsequently (from 1st February), by the Director of Staff and Student Services, and reporting, through them, to the University Executive. The Committee has extended its membership in the course of the year to include areas that were not previously represented. During the reporting period a number of working groups were set up to undertake important work on behalf of the HSC.

The following provides an example of the scope of the issues dealt with by the Committee during 2010:

- Discussed, monitored, and advised on, accident/incident reports from Schools and Departments;
- Oversaw the formulation of 'local' School and Support Department Health and Safety Policies and Plans;
- Formulated, and recommended to the University Executive, guidance on Health and Safety Responsibilities for Managers and Supervisors at Aston;
- Formulated and approved the University Fire Safety Policy;
- Drove forward, on behalf of the Executive, the Fire Safety Awareness Training for staff and students;
- Progressed the Fire Warden Scheme in the University;
- Oversaw at each meeting progress in completing actions arising from the MIIT Report into an incident at Shustoke;
- Approved, and monitored actions arising from, Health and Safety Audit reports; and
- Received and monitored School and Support Department Safety Committee/Group Minutes.

The above developments, together with the operation of the recently-revised institutional Health and Safety Policy and accident and reporting procedure, have combined in 2010 to help increase staff awareness of general health and safety, as well as management effort in reducing or eliminating hazards under their control. It is intended that this positive embedding of culture and systems across the University should continue still further during 2011, aided by the fulfilment of objectives in Appendix 3, as endorsed by the Executive and the Council.

For 2011 and subsequent years, the objective of particular importance to the University will be the delivery of a transformational change in further embedding a health and safety culture across the institution. The strategy for change will include the setting of targets for the reduction of staff accidents (with particular reference to those categories of highest incidence), together with a number of other key components detailed at Appendix 3.

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Introduction

This report summarises the Health and Safety Committee's activities, performance and progress for the period 1st January 2010 to 31st December 2010 inclusive.

1.0 Committee's activities/involvement over the year

1.1 University Health and Safety Policy

During the year the University Health and Safety Policy was amended to reflect various organisational changes within Aston University. These comprised the appointment of Director of Staff and Student Services who chairs the Health and Safety Committee (HSC), and the inclusion of the Director of Capital Development to undertake the role of ensuring that buildings, grounds and amenities within the University comply with health and safety and fire safety legislation.

The HSC also agreed that the number of meetings be reduced from six to five; that the introduction of new legislation¹ relevant to the University would be monitored by including it on the agenda for each HSC meeting; and that, when required, the University's Health and Safety Management system be reviewed and updated to ensure compliance.

1.1.1 Health and Safety Training Policy

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) clearly recognises the need to ensure employees are competent to fulfil their roles in controlling risk. In their document [INDG345, available at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg345.pdf>] the HSE goes on to specify that by providing health and safety information and training, employers help to:

- ensure that employees are not injured or made ill by the work they do;
- develop a positive health and safety culture, where safe and healthy working becomes second nature to everyone;
- find out how they could manage health and safety better;
- meet their legal duty to protect the health and safety of their employees.
- contribute towards making their employees competent in health and safety;
- help their business avoid the distress that accidents and ill health cause;
- help them avoid the financial costs of accidents and occupational ill health.

[Source: HSE, INDG345]

The University recognised, in 2008, the need to improve upon its provision of health and safety training for staff and, during 2009, the Safety Office drafted a Health and Safety Training Policy which was approved by the Health and Safety Committee. The aim of the Policy was to provide advice to Schools and Support Departments on the type of health and safety training that should be provided to staff and postgraduate students to discharge the University's duty of care.

¹The University maintains an awareness of Health and Safety legislative developments by subscribing to IHS, an internet-based health and safety information service which provides comprehensive health, safety and environmental information.

The Policy further required Executive Deans and Heads of Department to create a training plan and/or matrix for their staff, and to arrange the provision of training identified within the matrix.

It was anticipated that this would lead to an increase in the demand for safety-related courses delivered by the Safety Office. However, to date, there has been no such increase in demand. The Executive, through the HSC Chair and supported by the Safety Office, will be reviewing later in 2011 the provision of health and safety training across the University.

The Policy document itself is undergoing a review, to be considered by the HSC in April 2011.

1.1.2 Health and Safety Policy and Plans

As a result of the revision of the University Health and Safety Policy, Schools and Support Departments were asked to develop their own Health and Safety Policies and Annual Safety Plans; and to submit these to the Health and Safety Committee via the Safety Office for verification. To assist in the development - particularly for Schools and Support Departments which did not already have a Policy or Plan - templates were developed by the Safety Office. With a few exceptions, each School and most Support Departments submitted their Policies and Plans by the end of 2010.

The submitted documents have been assessed by the Safety Office on behalf of the HSC and feedback will be provided to individual Schools and Support Departments as required. In a number of instances, some further work is required to ensure compliance with standards outlined in legislative guidance, and, accordingly, the Safety Office is, in the current session 2010/11, advising the relevant areas with a view to ensuring that all 'local' Policies and Plans contain provisions appropriate to their operational needs. The statistics below identify the findings from the initial review:

Item	No.
Total number of Schools and Support Departments represented at HSC:	17
Total number of H&S Policies Received:	14
Total number of H&S Annual Plans Received:	12
H&S Policies meeting minimum standards:	5
H&S Policies requiring further development:	9

H&S Annual Plans meeting minimum requirements:	5
H&S Annual Plans requiring further development:	7

The University Health and Safety Policy has also undergone an inaugural annual review for sign-off by Council in March 2011, and this is presented at Appendix 4 to this Report.

1.1.3 Emergency Management Planning

- (1) The University has, since June 2009, been operating an institutional Emergency Management Plan (EMP).

The EMP, which deals principally with the University's response to the initial stages of an emergency, was formulated in accordance with a Good Practice Guide, 'Planning for and Managing Emergencies' - published for universities by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), in conjunction with the Association of University Chief Security Officers.

Early in session 2010/11, a third training session was held for the Executive and other senior academic and administrative officers in the University's procedures for handling emergencies. This session, like the two conducted during the 2009/10 session, focused on a 'mock' emergency incident, designed to enhance management awareness and to test responses, as well as identifying in the process suggestions for improving procedures associated with the EMP. The weekly rota whereby each of these colleagues act, in turn, as a 'duty' Emergency Incident Manager (EIM), has now been operating successfully for over a year. The EIM is contacted by Aston University Security either in the event of an incident arising outside normal working hours or when the person with routine management responsibility for the area of activity concerned is not readily available. A summary of the incidents which required attention is given below:

Date:	EIM on duty at time of incident:	Incident:
Sunday, 10 th January 2010	Dr Trevor Oliver	Student-related incident on University Campus
Friday, 5 th March 2010	Mrs Liz Furey	Placement student, taken ill in Dhaka, Bangladesh
Sunday, 28 th November 2010	Ms Sheila O' Neal	Total power failure across the whole of the University Campus
Sunday, 19 th December 2010	Mr Gareth Evans	Advice from Director of Campus Services on treatment of heavy snowfall on the University Campus, in readiness for following working week.

As a consequence of the EMP training, certain process improvements have been suggested, and an action-plan for addressing these is currently being drawn up in consultation with the external consultant who delivered the training.

- (2) The HSC also established a Working Group to consider and report on the provision of psychological, emotional and social support for members of, and visitors to, the University who might be affected by a major incident at Aston. The Group, which met on two occasions in 2010, has recently completed its work by producing draft guidance for consideration by the HSC and subsequent incorporation within the University's EMP. Additionally, and pursuant to this guidance, Schools and relevant Support Departments are now being requested to nominate representatives who will act as 'local' contacts in the event of an emergency.

1.1.4 Occupational Health Provision

In November 2009 the University entered into a contract with MOHS Workplace Health for the provision of occupational health services. The contract includes the following services:

- Medical assessments for new starters
- Advice on fitness to work
- Reviewing fitness of employees
- Managing rehabilitation following return to work
- Advising on the management and alleviation of stress
- Food handler medicals
- Highlight issues before intervention is necessary
- Liaison with employees' G.P. and other authorities

Aston has developed a good relationship with MOHS and the above processes are working well.

What is necessary is for the services available to employees via MOHS to be made more widely known by means of improved communication, for example through the staff intranet. This will be taken forward under the auspices of the Human Resources Directorate.

1.1.5 Installation of Risk Assessment Software

Following on from 2009, the feasibility of purchasing of risk assessment software was revisited, with a view to coming to a definitive decision whether to recommend the system for full adoption by the University. The Schools of Life and Health Sciences and Engineering and Applied Science trialled the AsessNET proprietary risk assessment software to determine the usefulness of the system within those Schools and, potentially, across other areas of the University.

The rationale for the system was that it would, amongst other things, formalise the risk assessment methodology across the Schools, and reduce a duplication of effort as completed risk assessments could be accessed by other users of the system. Also it was perceived that areas using it could evidence that they were following health and safety standards if compliance issues ever arose.

Despite the advantages, one of the problems was that the tool would not replace specific higher-hazard risk assessments. One of the problems with the COSHH assessment module was the time taken to enter the Manufacturer Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), some of which are pre-loaded, but may not be particularly relevant to a School. One of the remaining issues was cost and whether it should be funded centrally. LHS representatives intimated that the School was amenable to funding the software as the cost could be driven down by reducing the number of licenced users. To date there have been no submissions or expressions of interest made to the Safety Office from other Schools or Support Departments.

After much discussion, it is felt that the advantages of the system do not appear to outweigh the costs/disadvantages, and, consequently, the University has decided not to take forward the technology, at an institutional level, at this time. Should Schools or Support Departments wish, however, to fund the system themselves, then advice should be sought from ISA (Information Systems Aston) on its implementation.

1.1.6 Health and Safety Training

A summary of other health and safety training booked through the Centre for Staff and Graduate Development in 2010 is provided in the table below:

Course Title	2009		2010	
	Number of Courses Held	Total Attended	Number of Courses Held	Total Attended
Basic First Aid	3	6	2	20
Conducting Risk Assessments	2	13	3	23
Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)	1	4	1	5
Display Screen Equipment	2	30	2	12
Fire Safety Awareness	2	608	4	363
Handling Aggressive Situations	n/a	n/a	1	5
Health and Safety Awareness	4	41	2	17
Manual Handling	1	6	2	21
IOSH Working Safely	1	10	1	7

Internal safety courses are scheduled based upon demand and the resources available to the Safety Office.

Developing health and safety competence amongst Aston University staff is a continual process, and thus training will continue to be developed and provided to raise employees' health and safety awareness. In this connection, particular regard will be paid to the need for the University to comply with any legal requirements (as they affect different staff-categories or types of work) and to the possibilities for embracing technological developments in interactive training provision.

1.1.7 Contractor Safety Policy

There has been substantial building work across the University involving contractors. It is recognised that their appointment depends upon a satisfactory health and safety pre-qualification process, and, consequently, there has been a review and update of the Control of Contractors Procedure, together with training for relevant managers to further improve the University's management of contractors.

1.1.8 Radiological Safety

The annual meeting of the Radiological Safety Sub Committee (RSS-C) was held in December 2010, chaired by Mr E Rafiqi, the Radiation Protection Adviser (RPA) from the RRPPS, the University's external advisers for radiological matters.

The scope of the meeting was to receive the revised RSS-C Constitution and Terms of Reference, reports on the site inspections of radionuclide areas and the MRI and X-ray facilities and a review of dosages to radiation workers for the period.

The Constitution and Terms of Reference of the RSS-C were amended to incorporate the revised University Health and Safety Committee Structure, as well as the inclusion of the roles of Magnetic Resonance Safety Officers and Local Magnetic Resonance Assistants.

The Radiation Safety Policy will, later in the current session 2010/11, also be revised accordingly to reflect the changes in the RSS-C constitution, and to include, amongst other things, the change in ownership of the lasers in the Aston Day Hospital.

1.1.9 Health and Safety Targets and Objectives 2010

The Health and Safety Committee, with the Head of Health and Safety produced a number of key goals for 2010 which are detailed below together with progress to date:

Objective	Progress
Health and Safety Training Policy for the University	A Training Policy was drafted and approved by the HSC.
To review the topics available and course content to ensure that it meets the needs of the University	The Safety Office offers a range of training courses and continues to update content to reflect legal requirements and the needs of the University.
To develop a University-wide Fire Safety Policy	Completed
To review and revise the Health and Safety Audit Group (HSAG) protocols to ensure that audits are fair, thorough, efficient and effective.	Work is continuing in the realignment of the auditing methodology to recognised standards.
To review and revise the Health and Safety Policy	Completed
To provide guidance and support to Schools and Departments in the formulation of Safety Policies and Plans	

To review and revise the Radiological local rules for 'open source' radiation areas and for the MRI	Completed
A review of the Display Screen Equipment Policy	The review is nearing completion and will be rolled out via the HSC in April 2011.

Suggested objectives for the new calendar year 2011 are set out, for endorsement by the Executive and Council, at Appendix 3 to this Report.

2.0 Health and Safety Audits

2.1 Health and Safety Audit Group (HSAG)

During the year health and safety audits were undertaken to review issues associated with the most significant risks to the School /Support Department and the health and safety management systems in place to manage those risks. The audits consisted of interviews with School and Support Department staff, inspections of accommodation and documentation review. To ensure that progress in implementing the recommendations was being made, regular reports, where appropriate, were received and reviewed by the HSC.

2.1.1 Internal Audits

The Audit Group (HSAG), chaired by Dr Andrew Sutherland, undertook audits of the Centre for Learning Innovation and Professional Practice (CLIPP) and Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS) and the Library and Information Service (LIS). The points below are a summary analysis of the systems and procedures at the time of the interview; the full reports can be obtained by contacting the Safety Office.

2.1.2 CLIPP and IDS

An audit of CLIPP and IDS was undertaken in December 2010. Despite CLIPP being a relatively new entity, and the combined areas having undergone some restructuring, the HSAG found the health and safety group to be proactive in nature.

In total sixteen recommendations were made to improve the health and safety within the area being audited. Most of these recommendations were generally limited to examination of the physical conditions within the area so that an assessment could be made of basic legal compliance. This is perhaps a reflection of the embryonic stage of the health and safety management system. Key findings were:

- That CLIPP/IDS should be represented on the University HSC to ensure it remains informed and able to contribute and benefit from H&S discussion
- To incorporate IDS within the CLIPP H&S Group, thus pooling their combined expertise
- That risk assessment training be undertaken and should include IDS staff
- That H&S should be adhered to in all programmes including foundation degrees, eg. induction and reporting
- Display screen assessment should be undertaken for new and existing staff

- IDS should be included on the training registry to ensure that the training needs for staff are both identified and implemented.

2.1.3 LIS

The audit of LIS was undertaken in February 2010. In total the audit found that LIS had a well-defined structure for addressing health and safety concerns. Also that health and safety was very much embedded in the culture of LIS. Of the seven recommendations reported by the audit group two were prioritised as urgent, requiring immediate attention and the remaining five to be completed in six months.

Specifically, the high priority issues were the removal and isolation of books that had been contaminated with 'red rot', together with the need for a full risk assessment to be undertaken, and issues related to fire safety. Following the audit, the books were relocated into an appropriately signed and protected 'isolation zone', whilst an action plan was developed by LIS in conjunction with the Fire Safety Adviser, and is currently being implemented, to address fire safety issues.

The remaining recommendations related to:

- Continual updating of the Continuity Plan;
- Formalisation of the 'safety walk-about' process;
- Review of manual handling risk assessments from archive storage to Library, and vice-versa;
- Adherence to University accident reporting procedures; and
- Review of the Portable Appliance Testing regime.

2.1.4 External Audit of Estates

The Director of Capital Development commissioned an external consultant (Gardiner and Theobald) to undertake an audit of the health and safety systems and management arrangements within the Estates and Capital Developments Department during August 2010, all in accordance with Health and Safety Guidance Note HSG65.

The main conclusions of the audit were that the health and safety management systems required updating, to include an revised departmental health and safety policy, with clearer overall strategy and health and safety structure, identification of specific roles and responsibilities based on legislation relative to the department, and improved procedures for ongoing monitoring, audit and review, whilst recognising that the department had some good practices and documentation in place at an operational level.

The Director of Capital Development arranged for the Head of Health and Safety to be seconded on a part-time basis, to lead the development of the high-level strategy and policies, and an associated project plan. The findings and consequential actions are in the process of being finalised, and will be embedded during the Summer of 2011.

2.1.5 External Audit of Radiation facilities

The RRPPS², the University's external advisers for radiological matters, conducted annual surveys for both ionising and non-ionising radiation facilities. A brief summary of its findings are given below:

'Open Source' Radionuclide Areas: Generally, the laboratory conditions were found to be in a suitable condition and the record-keeping systems very well maintained.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging: A Quality Assurance survey has been undertaken and a preliminary report confirmed that the scanner is performing within acceptable limits. There was, however, an issue regarding a potential pressure build-up in the 'Magnet Room'. This has now been resolved by reinstating an oxygen alarm monitor and associated air extraction system.

Lasers: The new Laser Protection Advisor (LPA) visited a number of new and existing laser systems/facilities. The LPA was impressed with both the facilities and security of the areas visited. The LPA will return, on a date to be arranged later in 2011, for the purpose of undertaking a formal full survey of all laser systems/facilities.

X-ray Equipment: The biennial surveys, originally to have been undertaken in October/November 2010, were conducted early in 2011 and confirmed that all arrangements are satisfactory.

2.1.6 Internal Surveys of 'Open Source' Radiation Areas

The Safety Office conducted an annual audit of all areas. In general, all areas remain satisfactory. It was also noted that Room L62A, which had previously been reported as being below an acceptable standard, was much improved at the time of the visit.

3.0 Visits by Enforcement Agencies

3.1 West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS)

The WMFS continued to undertake Site Risk Surveys (SRSs) of the campus. This enables the fire service to plan for the circumstances that it may face when attending a fire incident on site. Thorough SRSs enable senior fire service personnel to draw up plans to minimise the risk to their personnel. The University's cooperation is essential: this includes providing up-to-date information on hazardous substances and materials used and stored on campus.

The WMFS has also undertaken a number of routine Enforcement Inspections under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRFSO) during the last 12 months. These inspections have included the Main Building & Wings and the Chemical Engineering Building. As a result of inspections a number of deficiencies have been highlighted. Both the Estates and Capital Developments Department and the Safety Office are working together with WMFS on developing action plans to address those issues highlighted. WMFS have committed to undertake inspections of the remaining campus buildings during 2011, and confirmation of the Fire Service's schedule is currently awaited.

² RRPPS is the Radiation Protection Service of University Hospital Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust

3.2 Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

During 2010, enforcement action was taken against the University by the HSE in relation to a reportable incident that had occurred when a contractor drilled into an asbestos-containing material while fitting CCTV cameras at the University's Shustoke Outdoor Recreation Centre on 21st July 2009.

The University and the contractor carrying out the work were prosecuted simultaneously over the incident. At a hearing, heard by Birmingham Magistrates' Court on 3rd December 2010, the University pleaded guilty, and was ordered pay a total sum of £6,015 in connection with the two breaches for which it had been charged - relating to Regulation 5(1) of the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999 and Regulation 4(9)(c) of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006.

Whilst acknowledging to the Court that events with which the case was concerned had revealed an oversight, the University confirmed that it had since addressed issues arising from the incident and from Aston's own associated investigation (under the auspices of a Major Incident Investigation Team). It also publicly thanked the HSE for its assistance, and for having acknowledged that the University is a responsible organisation which takes health and safety very seriously.

4.0 Fire Safety

4.1 Fire Safety Policy

A University-wide Fire Safety Policy has been developed, reflecting the need formally to manage fire safety arrangements across campus. The Policy has been endorsed by the Health and Safety Committee during 2010 and identifies persons with specific responsibilities for managing fire safety under areas of their direct control.

The profile of fire safety awareness at Aston has increased over the last twelve months, with the continuation of mandatory fire safety awareness training for all staff borne out of the legal requirement placed upon Aston as an employer, and with the review of fire risk assessments.

4.1.2 Fire Safety Training Sessions

By the end of 2010 over 80% of all University staff had attended mandatory training sessions since its inception in 2008.

The dates for two further sessions, to take place during the Spring of 2011, have recently been announced, and arrangements are being made, in conjunction with the Centre for Staff and Graduate Development, to enable part-time and sessional staff to participate in the training by viewing it online.

4.1.3 Fire Risk Assessments

Following a number of campus building Fire Risk Assessments, undertaken during 2009, the time arose for many of these to be formally reviewed. This involved the appointment of external Fire Safety Specialists to revisit campus buildings and to update the Fire Risk Assessments.

As a result of these reviews, reports were provided, in each case comprising an action plan which was shared with relevant building occupiers and managers. Heads of Support Departments and the Executive Deans then developed plans to deal effectively with fire safety matters highlighted during the Assessments. The University's Fire Safety Adviser collated the responses, to ensure that the University had acted appropriately.

4.1.4 Fire Warden Scheme

In the latter part of 2009, a Fire Warden Scheme was piloted within the Chemical Engineering Building. The aim of the scheme was to reduce emergency evacuation time, and provide assistance to the Security Team.

The pilot scheme proved a success and permission was provided by the Executive to roll out the scheme across the whole campus, prioritised on a risk profile basis. Since then, the scheme has been rolled out within Conference Aston (both the Aston Business School Building and Lakeside Conference Centre). The scheme is now nearing completion within the Day Hospital (incorporating Optegra Birmingham Limited). The Vision Science building will be next due to its potential to be occupied by members of the public in a non-ambulant state.

4.1.5 Fire Drills

It is a legal requirement to test the ability of occupants and duty-holders to respond to fire emergency situations by holding pre-arranged fire drills. During the year, 23 such practice drills were undertaken across the Campus and in residential buildings. Following each drill, a report was issued to the Executive Deans(s) and/or Head(s) of Support Department whose occupants were affected by the drill, highlighting both successes and areas for improvement. One new development in this area, during the latter part of 2010, involved the planned obstruction of principal escape routes. During a practice drill, and within a safe environment, this enabled occupants to become familiar with little-used exits, which could become 'life-savers' should more established routes become unsafe in the course of a serious fire.

4.1.6 Safe Refuges and Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP)

The Fire Safety Adviser has been working very closely with the Disability and Additional Needs Unit (DANU) and the Estates and Capital Developments Department to provide safe refuges for disabled people during emergency evacuation. At the beginning of the new term, DANU provided a list of students who require assistance during an emergency evacuation, and those individuals attended a meeting where a PEEP was produced.

The Estates and Capital Developments Department is preparing a five-year rolling plan to review all campus buildings and install fire-protected refuge points, with fully compliant British Standard refuge communications devices where appropriate.

During 2010 a significant investment was made to purchase a specialist mechanical evacuation device to assist with the evacuation of people who cannot navigate stairs. This device allows those who cannot transfer from a manual or powered wheelchair to safely descend the stairs. Two members of the Safety Office have attained a 'train the trainer' qualification to allow on campus training of 'Evacuation Assistants' including members of the Security Team. Further volunteers are being sought, with a view to having a small team identified and trained later in the current session 2010/11.

4.1.7 Deliberate Fires

There have been six incidents during 2010, details as follows:

No.	Date/Time	Location	Circumstances
1	8 th November 2009, 01:30	Dalton Tower 8 th floor flat A	Persons unknown set fire to an automatic fire detector head, situated in Dalton Tower 8A kitchen causing destruction to the detector head and damage to the ceiling around it.
2	14 th November 2009, 01:55	Lawrence Tower Ground Floor rear stairs	An unknown person set fire to an automatic fire detector head situated in Lawrence Tower Ground floor rear escape stairs causing destruction to the detector head and damage to the ceiling around it.
3	29 th January 2010, 02:25	Lawrence Tower Ground Floor rear stairs	An unknown person set fire to an automatic fire detector head situated in Lawrence Tower Ground floor rear escape stairs causing destruction to the detector head and damage to the ceiling around it.
4	10 th May 2010, 02:29	Dalton Tower 4 th floor 'A' wing Kitchen	An unidentified person set a fire using newspapers and magazines in the middle of the kitchen table; fortunately Security Officers were able to extinguish the fire without the need of Fire Service intervention.
5	26 th May 2010, 17:00	Students' Guild fire exit stairs	An external visitor set fire to posters an open notice board in an escape route; fortunately the posters burnt out before surrounding combustible material could catch light. The person was eventually identified as a student from a nearby University who later received a banning order from the University campus.
6	2 nd November 2010, 04:52	Stafford Tower Ground floor lift lobby	A person, later identified as an Aston University student living off campus, was caught on CCTV entering the lift on the eighth floor of Stafford Tower. This student was then seen attempting to set fire to the lift buttons and lift window. When the lift arrived at the Ground floor the student could be clearly seen setting fire to a waste bin within the lift lobby. His intent to set a fire was so intense that he loitered for at least one minute to ensure the fire caught hold; potentially trapping 360 students whilst they slept.

No.	Date/Time	Location	Circumstances
			<p>Security reacted quickly and summoned the Fire Service who attended with four fire appliances and extinguished the fire.</p> <p>Following extensive investigations by Security, Residential Services and the Safety Office, the culprit was identified which later led to his arrest and prosecution by West Midlands Police.</p>

4.1.8 Conclusions/Recommendations

These attacks have highlighted the University's vulnerability to deliberate fires and the need to implement additional control measures to reduce the risk. Whilst the will of those wishing to commit such offences is not easily thwarted, limiting the readiness of combustible materials and ignition sources can be better managed. Relatively simple controls include:

- Elimination of combustible materials on escape routes e.g. notice boards and waste paper bins;
- Better control of ignition sources;
- Better control of access and egress during daylight hours and the evening.

Additionally, and bearing in mind that all six of the incidents occurred either in student residential accommodation or at the Aston Guild, the University, in conjunction with the Guild, will be seeking further to enhance, and to incorporate in the training of 'Aunties' (student volunteers who assist with the 'Aston Welcome' programme of induction for new students), awareness-raising amongst Aston students with respect to alcohol concern, as well as reinforcing the University's 'zero-tolerance' approach to misuse of drugs on Campus.

4.1.9 Fire Safety Objectives for 2010/2011

- Fire Alarm Dilapidation Report

A Campus-wide fire alarm dilapidation report will be completed, which will identify where remedial action is required to bring fire detection systems up to current standards.

- Implementation of the Fire Warden scheme

It is the intention to implement the Fire Warden scheme in all academic and associated buildings.

- Continued liaison with West Midlands Fire Authority on Site Risk Surveys and Building Enforcement Inspections.

- Ongoing Fire Risk Assessment reviews.
- The production of Fire Management Plans and Fire Strategy documents for all academic and associated buildings.
- Continued enhancement of the profile of fire safety within the University.

Appendix 1: Accident and Incident Data and Health and Safety Performance Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995

Under RIDDOR, all incidents resulting in death, a defined major injury (eg broken limb) and over three day absences of an employee as a result of injury at work is reportable to the HSE. Incidents involving non - employees (students, visitors and contractors), are only reported to the HSE when the direct cause of the incident required removal to a hospital arising out of a defect in the equipment/fabric of the University or the activity. Thus sports injuries are not reportable, except where the person was taken to hospital as a result of falling off a faulty treadmill, but not one taken to hospital after a collision with a team mate.

Aston's accident statistics for the year 2010 in comparison to the previous five years are detailed below.

Table 2. Injury, Disease and Dangerous Occurrence Statistics

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
All Accidents						
Staff	43	49	41	33	57	62
Students	33	42	25	24	45	36
Others	19	37	22	13	46	26
TOTAL	95	128	88	70	154	124
Reportable Accidents (RIDDOR)						
Staff	4	10	3	3	5	5
Students	0	0	0	0	1	0
Others	0	0	0	0	0	1
Injury Rate per 1000 staff at risk (National HE rate in brackets)	26.33 (36.86)	27.93 (34.85)	26.90 (33.33)	19.30 (30.69)	44.3 (30.7)	42.74 -
Injury Rate per 1000 students at risk (National HE rate in brackets)	0.95 (2.59)	1.87 (2.63)	1.44 (2.75)	0.79 (2.66)	1.2 (2.30)	1.15 -

Regarding the number of accidents, whilst they have decreased slightly on the previous year a simple comparison with the National HE rate is unlikely to be meaningful as it will fail to take into account some key differences between institutions.

The number of accidents whilst useful is not entirely a reliable indication of the size of the risk. For this reason, incidents or near misses are also investigated.

A full breakdown of the main causes of accidents is listed in Table 3. As in the previous year slip, trips and falls and lifting and carrying, and injury from a falling object continued to be the main cause of accidents in 2010.

The fluctuation in the University's Injury Rate can be explained in a number of ways. Most notably, an increased Injury Rate does not necessarily reflect a drop in safety performance, and, conversely, a decreased Injury Rate does not necessarily reflect an increase in safety performance.

A great many things can affect safety performance, not all of which are solely related to safety: for example, consolidation of services and a reduction in headcount can lead to colleagues taking on a greater depth of responsibilities than before, and in some instances can lead to accidents and ill-health; the implementation of safety initiatives, including the review and development of policies and procedures, can also lead to an increase in awareness which artificially increases the number of accidents and incidents reported.

It is recognised that there is a need to offer training specifically with a view to helping decrease accident-rates in certain areas of work (most notably, as evidenced in Table 5, among Catering and Cleaning/domestic staff) at the University, and targets will be set for their reduction accordingly.

Table 3. Summary of accidents reported in 2010

Cause of Injury	Number of Reports				
	Staff	Students	Visitors	Contractors	TOTAL
Contact with moving machinery or material being machined	0	0	0	0	0
Hit by moving, flying or falling object	12	4	1	2	19
Hit by a moving vehicle	0	0	0	0	0
Hit something fixed or stationary	5	1	2	2	10
Injured while handling, lifting or carrying	8	0	1	0	9
Slipped tripped or fell on different level	0	0	0	0	0
Slipped, tripped or fell on the same level	10	1	1	0	12
Fell from a height	0	0	0	0	0
Trapped by something collapsing	0	0	0	0	0
Drowned or asphyxiated	0	0	0	0	0
Exposed to, or in contact with, a harmful substance	2	0	0	0	2
Exposed to fire	0	0	0	0	0
Exposed to an explosion	0	0	0	0	0
Contact with electricity or an electrical discharge	3	0	0	0	3
Injured by an animal	0	0	0	0	0
Physically assaulted by a person	1	0	1	0	2
Sport-related injuries	5	23	9	0	37
Contact with sharps, glass etc	3	1	1	0	5
Contact with hot liquid	0	1	0	0	1
Another kind of accident	13	5	2	1	24
	62	36	19	7	124

Table 4. Summary of accidents by location

Location of Accidents	Number of Reports				
	Staff	Students	Visitors	Contractors	TOTAL
Offices	9	0	0	2	11
Classrooms	2	1	1	0	4
Clinic/Lab/Workshop	1	1	0	0	2
Catering	11	0	0	0	11
Corridors/communal areas	3	1	2	0	6
Lifts	0	0	0	0	0
Stairs	0	0	0	0	0
Residences	2	3	0	1	6
Sport & Recreation	6	28	13	1	48
Outdoors	6	0	1	0	7
Library Building	0	0	0	1	1
Other Areas	22	2	2	2	28
	62	36	19	7	124

Table 5. Accidents According to Employment Type

Type of Employment	Number of Reports			Total University Staff employed	Accident rate %
	Staff	Contractors	TOTAL		
Academic & related	7	0	7	931	0.75
Clerical	20	0	20	399	5.01
Catering	13	0	13	60	21.67
Cleaning/domestic	9	0	9	43	20.93
Grounds/gardening	1	0	1	5	20.00
Maintenance	1	2	3	13	7.69
Portering	3	1	4	11	27.27
Security	6	0	6	26	23.08
Technical	2	1	3	53	3.77
Other staff eg. Nursery, sports etc.,	0	3	3	23	0
	62	7	69		

Table 6. Lost Time Accidents

Reportable 3 Days injuries	5
Total number of days lost:	49

Near Miss Accidents - 13 near miss incident reports were also received by the Safety Office

Reportable Diseases – Nil Reported

The main identifiable causes of seven of the accidents were largely due to undertaking tasks involving lifting and carrying, in particular inappropriate use of equipment or lack of planning, or poorly located storage facilities and wrong footing.

Some of the activities carried out have exposed the University to compensation claims. Health and safety risks associated with the movement of equipment/goods around the building should be properly assessed and control measures implemented. The slip and trip accidents are predominantly a result of debris left on the floor or wet floors and icy pathways.

Over the past year, the number of near miss reports submitted has increased slightly, again in part because of a cultural shift in awareness of the University's accident/incident reporting system and the individual's perception of what is going on around them.

With the number of reports rising, the scope of what is being reported is also broadening from reports of ceiling and window panels falling, and water accumulation in communal areas, to equipment being left unattended causing damage to the fabric of the building.

Increased reporting means that the University has better information to identify ways potentially to prevent future incidents.

Bullying and Harassment

Treatment of bullying and harassment cases is provided for by the University's Policy on Dignity at Work, under the auspices of the Human Resources Directorate. Such cases can be difficult to define because differences of attitudes, expectations and background may mean that what is perceived as bullying and harassment by one person may not seem to be so to another. Claims can also cover a wide spectrum of behaviours and actions, with different consequences for the people concerned. The University attempts to take appropriate action to deal with reported harassment in a manner that takes account of the alleged victim's perception, while having regard, and being proportionate, to the particular circumstances.

Of the complaints received in 2010 which involved infringements of the University's Dignity at Work Policy, only one was felt to warrant disciplinary action against a member of staff and it related more to the use of inappropriate language than to bullying and harassment.

Appendix 2: Fire Statistics

Definitions

The term “fire” in this context is defined as an undesirable event which emits heat, smoke and/or flames, which has the potential to cause damage and may require intervention either mechanical or human.

“Other false alarms” include good intent, accidental, fire alarm system faults, detector fault, cooking process, smell of smoke, cigarette and exhaust fumes, power surge, steam, dust, gasses and aerosols.

“Injury” is any injury requiring medical treatment including first aid and professional medical assistance. A summary of the number of reports received for the period is provided below.

Table7: Summary of Fire Reports received in 2010

Accommodation Buildings	
1. Number of kitchen fires	3
2. Total number of fires (including kitchen fires)	7
Injuries as a result of fire	0
3. Malicious alarms	23
4. Other false alarms	128
Total Number of fire alarm activations (total of 2 to 4 above)	135
Total Number of times Fire Brigade attended	4
Total Number of Study Bedrooms owned or managed by University	2,309
Approximate number of Automatic Fire Detectors, if known	approx 2800

All Other Buildings	
1. Total number of fires	4
Injuries as a result of fire	0
2. Malicious alarms	12
3. Other false alarms	48
Total Activations (total of 1 to 3 above)	52
Total Number of times Fire Brigade attended	3

Table 3: Cause of Fires

Number	Cause of Fire
3	Burnt Food
3	Suspected Arson
1	Electrical appliance overheating

Table 8: Cause of Fire Alarm Activation

Cause of Activation												
Building	Aerosol Spray	Arson	Cooking	Electrical Equipment	*Malicious MCP	Other	Smoke Generating Device	Smoking	Steam	System Fault	Unknown	Total
Day Hospital	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Bishop Ryder	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	11
Boiler House	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Campus (On Site)	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3
CEAC	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Dalton Tower	2	2	0	0	13	1	1	2	1	0	0	22
GEM House	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
KEH Dentist	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
The Lake area	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Lakeside (RES)	0	1	1	0	1	2	0	0	2	0	1	8
Lawrence Tower	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	6
Library	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	1	1	2	16
Main Building	1	0	0	0	8	6	0	0	2	4	0	21
Nelson Building	1	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	2	10
Solvent Stores	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Stafford Tower	0	1	7	0	3	1	0	1	12	1	0	26
Student Guild	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Vauxhall House	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	13
Vision Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
ASV 1	1	0	15	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	21
Total	6	6	47	2	31	30	1	4	25	9	9	170

*MCP = Manual Call Point

**The fire alarm system in Lakeside (RES) is of an older style and is more susceptible to being triggered by steam and aerosols. During recent years fire alarm systems have been improved in a drive to reduce false alarms, these types of alarm systems have been installed in all other student residences.

Malicious Fire Activations Dalton Tower

As in previous years, the number of malicious activations within university accommodation is highest in Dalton Tower; some of these are in part, a result of visitors or people 'tailgating' authorised occupants entering the building, intentionally activating the fire alarms.

The Safety Office has been working closely with Residential Services and Security to implement improvements to prevent/ minimise unwanted fire alarm calls. The improvements are as follows:

- 1) Activation of the swipe entry system to prevent non authorised access.
- 2) Installation of CCTV cameras in the lifts.
- 3) Fire Training to all new students during Freshers' week, carried out by West Midlands Fire Service – to raise awareness
- 4) On going Freshers' training by West Midlands Fire Service to students in their accommodation, with emphasis on cooking safely and living in student accommodation.
- 5) Increasing fines for malicious actions.

This trend will now cease as Dalton Tower is now closed for demolition and the occupants moved to ASV1 which has an improved standard of fire alarm system which will not allow for malicious break glass activations to effect the occupants instead the operation of a said manual break glass only sends a silent alarm to the 24hour manned security control centre, for Security to go and investigate.

Cooking in all residential properties seems to also be an issue but once again the Safety Office working in conjunction with the University Residential Services Department and West Midlands Fire Service are striving to reduce the number of unwanted fire alarm calls by training occupants in the following good practices

- 1) Keep all kitchen doors closed when cooking
- 2) Cooking must never be left unattended
- 3) Fines from damage caused whilst cooking have been increased.

This training is now delivered in flyers around the buildings, training given by West Midlands Fire Service during Fresher's week, and information sent to home address during application period.

Appendix 3: Council and Executive Health and Safety Objectives for 2011

No.	Objective	Target Date
1.	Deliver a transformational change in further embedding a Health and Safety culture across the University during 2011 and beyond.	December 2011
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Shift emphasis from administration, reporting and audit to developing culture. b. Initiate a high-visibility safety campaign. c. Improve signage in high-risk areas. d. Communicate minimum Health and Safety awareness requirements to all staff, and identify innovative ways of checking understanding and information gaps. e. Re-vamp staff safety awareness induction. f. Set targets for the reduction of staff accidents, and continue to benchmark against those 'best-in-class'. g. Train staff using case studies, prioritising those in areas of highest incidence. h. Increase awareness of strategies in an innovative way. 	
2.	Introduce a comprehensive documented Health & Safety Management System.	December 2012
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify a suitable system. b. Develop an outline framework. c. Agree method of consultation with relevant staff and senior management groups. d. Develop system. e. Arrange launch events to include training in use the system. f. Monitor, audit and review the system. 	
3.	Update the University's Health and Safety Policy.	December 2011
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review the existing policy, such that it should become a statement of intent, accompanied by relevant detailed procedure. b. Identify areas requiring update. c. Apply updates. d. Sign off by Council 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. Development and refinement of School and Support Department Policies and Plans, where required. 	July 2011
4.	Revise the University's existing internal auditing system.	June 2011
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify and appoint a new Health and Safety Audit Group (HSAG) Chair. b. Evaluate core membership of the HSAG and identify associate members. c. Foster agreement from core HSAG members on revised audit framework. d. Revise HSAG Terms of Reference and auditing protocols. 	

No.	Objective	Target Date
	Identify, develop and conduct training of core HSAG members and associate members.	
	e. Develop updated programme of auditing of Schools and Departments within the institution.	
5.	Provision of Health and Safety Related Training to all staff and post graduate students.	December 2011
	a. Implement a system enabling the recording of training undertaken by staff and post graduate students.	
	b. Identify training needs.	
	c. Develop training programme, including provision specifically to help targeted reduction of accident-rates in certain employment-types.	
	d. Record training.	
	e. Monitor, audit and review.	
6.	Submit an application for a Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Annual Health and Safety Award.	February 2012
	a. Research application criteria.	
	b. Develop and submit an application to the appropriate award category eg Bronze, Silver or Gold.	
7.	Introduce and embed new safety organisational arrangements.	December 2011
	a. Develop a common role description, and appoint in writing to, the role of 'Health and Safety Champion' (HSC) within each School and Support Department.	
	b. Provide training to HSC's appropriate to their needs.	
	c. Develop learning and networking arrangements for HSC's.	
8.	Conduct a review of the University's risk assessment and risk management arrangements.	July 2011
	a. Develop a common approach to risk assessment within the institution.	
	b. Develop and implement a suitable risk assessment register or database across the institution.	
	c. Monitor, audit and review.	
9.	Conduct a review of the University's Emergency Management Plan (EMP) and Business Continuity Management (BCM) arrangements.	July 2011
	a. Review existing policy.	
	b. Review EMP training.	
	c. Develop checklists for use in a major incident.	
	d. Monitor, audit and review.	

Appendix 4: Annual Review of Effectiveness of the University Health and Safety Policy

Introduction

A reconstituted University Health and Safety Policy was approved by the Council at its meeting on 10th December 2009. It was placed on the Safety Office webpages at the end of February 2010, following further, minor updates to reflect the responsibilities of the Director of Capital Development, and those of the Director of Staff and Student Services. Records show that, between the period of 16th March 2010 and 9th March 2011, the policy has been downloaded a total of 303 times. It can be accessed at <http://www1.aston.ac.uk/staff/safety>

This reworking of the Policy is the first major revision since 2002, and included a number of fundamental amendments to reflect governance, operational and legislative changes during the intervening years.

Effectiveness

The statement of intent is a high-level statement, outlining the University's commitment to health and safety. A total of 14 bullet points detail how the University wishes to manage health and safety.

The aims relate to the University's long-term goals of moving towards a more integrated health and safety management system, and, as such, some good progress has been made during the last 12 months although further action is required in certain respects to get to optimum compliance.

The 'organisation section' of the Policy highlights the responsibilities of groups within the University and remains up-to-date. The area which is least effective is in relation to the 'responsibilities'. This is borne out through recent internal safety audits undertaken by the Health and Safety Audit Group (HSAG). Audits have found that some Schools and Support Departments have not always:

- established robust health and safety management arrangements;
- developed legislative-compliant Health and Safety Policies;
- developed Annual Health and Safety Plans;
- developed training matrices and delivery of training;
- identified hazardous activities and development of risk assessments;
- discussed work affecting the building or engineering services with the Estates and Capital Development Department.

HSAG is working with key staff in relevant Schools and Support Departments, with a view to ensuring that any necessary remedial actions are carried out.

2011 Revisions

This will include:

- updates to reflect more recent changes in the management structure of the University;
- updates to reflect changes to the Occupational Health Provision;
- the addition of a comprehensive 'arrangements' section.