Aston University

University Health and Safety Policy

Document History:

Version	Date	Approved by	Revision
1.0	December 2009	University Council	Major revision since 2002 version.
1.1	February 2010	Vice-Chancellor	To reflect responsibilities of Director of Capital Developments and Director of Staff and Student Services.
1.2	March 2012	University Council	First annual review since major revision. - Updated details of post holders to reflect recent structural changes. - Updated to reflect the disbandment of the Genetic Modification Safety Sub-Committee and formation of the Biological Safety Sub-Committee. - Added details to 'Arrangements' section.
2.0	Apr 2012	University Council	Major Revision after 2009 version

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University Health and Safety Policy

1. Background and Rationale

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require all organisations employing five or more people to have a written Health and Safety Policy statement which outlines how risks are assessed and managed and how the organisation protects from harm those who could be affected by its activities.

In addition to meeting its legal obligations, the primary objective of the University's people strategy – Aston People 2020 – is to deliver a high performance culture. Aston University recognises that a safe and healthy environment in which to work and study is essential for nurturing excellence, supporting wellbeing and engaging staff and students with the culture and values of the University.

Accordingly, the University is committed to achieving progressive improvement in health and safety performance leading to the achievement of the highest standards for the health and safety of its staff, students, stakeholders, partners, members of the public and others involved and affected by its activities.

The appendices to this policy identify the Health and Safety Committee structure and key leadership roles in the institution, outlining the organisational framework in place to achieve a safe and healthy environment.

2. Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- to make Aston a sector leading University where the wellbeing, health and safety of staff, students and visitors are viewed as a key management function and are embedded in routine management practice;
- to ensure that all our staff, students and visitors are equipped with the information, instruction, training, supervision and equipment they need;
- to raise the awareness and engagement of staff and students in their own wellbeing, health and safety.

To achieve these aims, we will focus on working in partnership with staff, students and visitors, targeting attitudes and behaviours as well as continuing to develop our general educational and publicity initiatives and improving their accessibility.

3. Health and Safety Policy

The University is committed to providing a safe place to work and study.

It is our policy to plan for, and safeguard, the health, safety and welfare of everyone who works at or visits the University and who is likely to be affected by our operations. We will do all we reasonably can to:

- make them aware of potential hazards, safe working practices and the arrangements for emergencies such as fire and first aid;
- protect them from risks at work through effective risk assessment and the implementation of appropriate preventive or protective measures;

- provide our staff, students and visitors where appropriate, with personal protective equipment, together with information and guidance in its use, whether required by regulation, code of practice or operational considerations;
- ensure that our accommodation, equipment, facilities, materials, substances, transport and working practices are safe and without undue risk to health;
- help our staff and students to meet their duty of care by involving them, and encouraging their co-operation, in the management of their own health and safety, through appropriate information, instruction and training;
- consult our staff and students, Trades Unions and Safety Representatives on matters affecting their health, safety, and welfare at work;
- provide competent support to managers to continuously improve and maintain a high standard of health and safety management in their areas of responsibility

4. Implementation and Communication

This policy will be implemented by Executive team members, managers and supervisors with the support and guidance of the Health and Safety Unit and appropriate specialists. Members of the Executive are accountable to the Vice-Chancellor for ensuring that the policy is properly applied in their area of control. This policy will be communicated to all staff, students and contractors.

5. Development, Monitoring and Review

To ensure that the policy is being implemented effectively, monitoring is vital. Monitoring will be carried out by reviewing management reports, accident investigations and risk assessments and by undertaking audits. The policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains relevant to the University's mission.

APPENDIX 1

The University Health and Safety Committee Structure

1. **The University Council**
   The University Council has ultimate responsibility for health and safety in the University. The Council will also appoint an independent member of Council to act as health and safety 'champion'. It has delegated responsibility for health and safety management to the University Executive Team.

2. **University Executive Team**
   The University Executive Team led by the Vice-Chancellor and advised by the Health and Safety Committee, implements health, safety, welfare and fire safety legislation and best practice.

3. **Health and Safety Committee (HSC)**
   The HSC, which is chaired by the Chief Operating Officer, acts in a consultative and advisory capacity on matters of occupational health and safety to the University, its membership is representative of Schools and departments and includes a representative of Council. The HSC will benchmark best practice and facilitate the sharing of this throughout the University.

4. **Health and Safety Audit Group (HSAG)**
   The HSAG is chaired by a senior member of academic staff and consists of members of the Health and Safety Unit and representatives from a range of Schools and Departments. Persons with relevant expertise are co-opted into the group as and when required.

   The HSAG audits School and departmental health and safety policies, plans and procedures, management and communication and their operation. Audits are for the purposes of both validation (reviewing whether Schools and departments have effective health and safety management systems) and compliance (reviewing whether Schools and departments are following their own policies and procedures).

   The HSAG will also play a key role in identifying and promoting best practice.

5. **Radiological Safety Sub-Committee (RSS-C)**
   The RSS-C is a sub-committee of the HSC which is chaired by an external Radiological Protection Adviser and advises the University on matters of radiological safety.

6. **Biological Safety Sub-Committee (BSS-C)**
   The BSS-C is a sub-committee of the HSC which is chaired by the Biological Safety Officer who is a senior member of academic staff and advises the University on matters of biological safety.

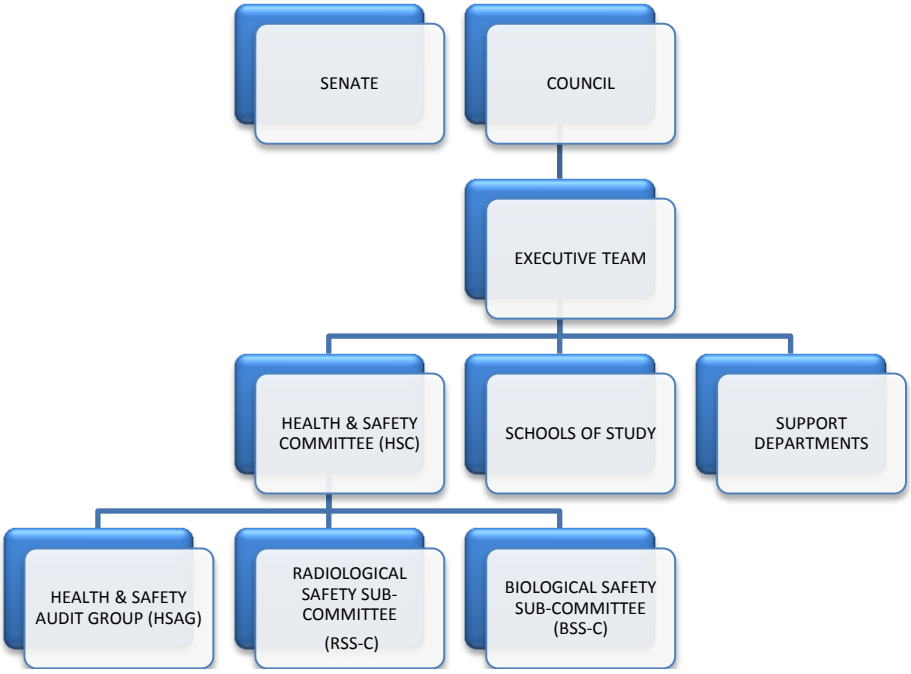
   The membership and constitutions of the above Sub-Committees are available from the Health & Safety Unit as well as from the intranet.

7. **School/Departmental Safety Sub-Committees**
   Schools and Departments will have health and safety structures appropriate to their needs. This could include sub-committees which deal specifically with health and safety issues and which report through to the Executive Dean or Head of Department. However, health and safety should arise naturally from discussions at, for example, Management Meetings; it should not be considered and dealt with only

by subordinate committees.

Details of the health and safety committee structure are set out in individual School and Departmental Health and Safety Policies. Copies are available from School and Department administrative offices.

Health and Safety Committee Structure



APPENDIX 2

Roles and Responsibilities for Health and Safety

1. **Vice-Chancellor**
   The Vice-Chancellor is responsible to the University Council for the overall implementation of the University's Health and Safety Policy. This includes allocating resources for the effective implementation of the policy and ensuring that managers, staff and students are aware of their responsibilities.

   The Vice-Chancellor is also responsible for monitoring health and safety performance on behalf of the University Council and for authorising appropriate corrective action to ensure compliance with the Health and Safety Policy.

2. **Chief Operating Officer**
   The Chief Operating Officer is responsible for the effective management of health, safety and fire safety policies and procedures to comply with legislation and best practice. These responsibilities are discharged with the assistance of the University Executive Team by ensuring that managers and supervisors carry out their duties in accordance with health, safety and fire safety legislation and University safety policies. The Chief Operating Officer is assisted in carrying out these responsibilities by the following officers:

3. **Associate Director of Human Resources**
   The Associate Director of Human Resources, acting on behalf of the Chief Operating Officer, holds the position of Deputy Chair of the Health and Safety Committee and is also responsible for the Health and Safety Unit.

4. **Head of Health and Safety**
   The Head of Health and Safety is responsible for the management of the Health and Safety Unit and is accountable for working in collaboration with the University's Schools and Departments to achieve University health and safety goals. The Assistant Safety Adviser, Fire Safety Adviser and Site Radiation Officer make up the Health and Safety Unit and are responsible for providing competent and independent advice, information, training and monitoring services to all the University's managers and staff (and others as appropriate).

   The Health and Safety Unit are also responsible for identifying and promoting best practice in health and safety throughout the University.

   Members of the Health and Safety Unit, acting on behalf of the Chief Operating Officer are authorised to take appropriate immediate action to prevent serious harm to individuals or the University.

5. **Executive Director of Capital Developments**
   The Executive Director of Capital Developments, with the advice and support of the Health and Safety Unit where appropriate, is responsible for ensuring that the buildings, grounds and amenities within the University comply with health, safety and fire safety legislation, and for managing health, safety and fire safety arrangements in 'communal areas' (eg reception areas) not assigned to Schools or Departments (especially in respect of fire precautions and emergency evacuation arrangements). This includes ensuring that suitable and sufficient fire risk assessments are carried out in those areas. The Executive Director of Capital Developments is also

responsible for managing several key service teams including: Cleaning, Portering, Post & Transport, Grounds and Gardens and for selection and management of contractors to carry out work on buildings or grounds, including approval of safe systems of work.

6. **Students' Guild Chief Executive**
   The Students' Guild Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that reasonably practical steps are taken to ensure the safety of those engaged in student sports and social activities both on and off campus as well as those who may be affected by the University's acts or omissions in relation to those events. Responsibility can be fulfilled through the assistance of Students' Guild staff and student Council Executive Officers.

7. **Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development**
   The Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development is responsible for providing the University's Occupational Health services to employees.

8. **Director of the Hub, Counselling & Disability Support**
   The Director of the Hub, Counselling & Disability Support has joint responsibility with the Manager of Residential Services and the Director of Registry for the development and implementation of a policy on child protection in relation to students under the age of 18, as well as operational responsibility for health and safety in DANU, The Hub and Counselling Services.

9. **Manager of Residential Services**
   The Manager of Residential Services has joint responsibility with the Director of the Hub, Counselling & Disability Support and the Director of Registry for the development and implementation of a policy on child protection in relation to students under the age of 18, as well as operational responsibility for health and safety in the Chaplaincy.

   The Manager of Residential Services is also has delegated responsibility (in conjunction with Derwent FM) from the trustees of Aston Student Village for health and safety in the student residences.

10. **Director of Registry**
    The Director of Registry has joint responsibility with the Director of the Hub, Counselling & Disability Support and the Manager of Residential Services for the development and implementation of a policy on child protection in relation to students under the age of 18, as well as operational responsibility for health and safety in Registry.

11. **External Occupational Health Advisers**
    The External Occupational Health Advisers are responsible for advising the University on medical matters affecting employees and students.

12. **Director of Sport, Security and Nursery Services**
    The Director of Sport, Security and Nursery Services is responsible for managing the Nursery, Security and Sport & Recreation teams. These teams are pivotal in providing safe facilities for childcare and sport, for providing guidance to students on precautions for personal security, and for implementing security systems to protect staff, students and visitors from theft, assault and other criminal or anti-social activity.

They are also responsible for development and implementation of a policy on child protection, in relation to users of nursery and sports facilities.

13. Director of UK Recruitment & Outreach

The Director of UK Recruitment & Outreach is responsible for development and implementation of a policy for child protection in relation to visits to schools and colleges by representatives of the University and visits to the campus by children.

14. Executive Team Members, Executive Deans and Heads of Departments

Executive Team Members, Executive Deans and Heads of Department not specifically mentioned above are responsible for ensuring that this policy is fully implemented in all areas under their direct control and for all matters relating to health and safety within their areas. Where appropriate, they are responsible for the appointment of School and Department Safety Advisers. They have specific responsibilities for ensuring that:

- general arrangements are in place to manage health and safety on a day-to-day basis;
- information on health and safety is prepared and distributed to all those concerned, and that it is understood and followed by all appropriate employees, students and visitors;
- risk assessments are carried out and safe operating procedures developed.
- accidents and near misses are properly investigated and that appropriate action is taken to prevent recurrences;
- training needs are identified and appropriate training is carried out;
- School/Departmental Health and Safety Policies are prepared and Health and Safety Plans are submitted to the HSC for consideration on an annual basis each October;
- Adequate arrangements are in place for the safety of staff and students undertaking fieldwork;
- Any works being planned to the building or engineering services are discussed with Estates & Capital Developments at the earliest opportunity, and prior to any instructions being confirmed.

15. School/Department Safety Advisers

Where Schools and Support Departments have appointed a Safety Adviser, this individual is responsible for undertaking specific safety related duties on a day to day basis on behalf of the Executive Dean or Head of Department. Details of specific duties, responsibilities and training requirements are set out in School or Departmental Health and Safety Policies.

16. Trade Unions Safety Representatives

Trade Unions Safety Representatives (and other elected employee safety representatives) have statutory consultation and inspection rights with regard to matters that affect the health, safety and fire safety of the employees they represent, and are included in the membership of the HSC. They should also be invited to take part in School/Departmental safety inspections and safety committees, and be involved in risk management arrangements where reasonably practicable. All employees of the University should have access to the significant findings of fire risk assessments of their workplace which are held by the Health and Safety Unit.

17. External Advisers*

Where appropriate, the University will appoint External Advisers.

On matters relating to ionising radiation and radiological safety, the Adviser required by statutory legislation and is referred to as the Radiation Protection Adviser (RPA).

On matters relating to non-ionising radiations in the specific fields of laser, MRI and Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) safety, the Adviser is referred to as the Laser Protection Adviser (LPA), RPA-MRI and RPA-NMR respectively.

These appointments are made by the Chief Operating Officer on behalf of the University; they liaise with the University through the Site Radiation Officer and, where appropriate, the Head of Health and Safety.

18. Site Radiation Officer (SRO)*

The SRO is responsible, on a day-to-day basis, for overseeing compliance with the legislation relating to radioactive substances and ionising and non-ionising radiations. This includes liaison between the RPA, the University, Executive Deans, Radiation Protection Supervisors (RPSs) and Laser Protection Supervisors (LPSs) on all aspects of radiation work and radiological safety.

The SRO is also responsible for liaising with relevant statutory bodies and officials on behalf of the University.

19. Radiation Protection Supervisors (RPS)*

The RPS supervises work activities in the area(s) specified in the Local Rules, and assists in ensuring compliance with the arrangements set out both in the Local Rules and other University guidance on radiological safety.

20. Laser Protection Supervisor (LPS)*

The LPS supervises work activities in the area(s) specified in the Local Rules, and assists in ensuring compliance with the arrangements set out both in the Local Rules and other University guidance on radiological safety.

21. Magnetic Resonance Safety Officer (MRSO)*

The MRSO supervises work activities in the area, or areas, specified in the Local Rules, and assists in ensuring compliance with the arrangements set out both in the Local Rules and other University guidance on radiological safety.

22. Biological Safety Officer (BSO)*

The BSO is responsible for advising the University on matters relating to biological safety (for example, work involving Genetic Modification, pathogens and micro-organisms)

**Full descriptions of the duties of the External Advisers, RPA, SRO, RPS, LPS, MRSO and BSO are available on the Health and safety website.*

23. Managers and Supervisors

Managers and Supervisors of staff and students (or others) are often delegated responsibilities for the health, safety and fire safety of persons and areas over which they have control. Whilst duties can be devolved to them and by them to others, the responsibility for ensuring that those duties are carried out competently and with adequate resources remains with the relevant senior manager.

24. Academic Supervisors

Responsibility for supervision of teaching and research activities follows the chain of managerial responsibility through the appropriate senior manager, to Academic Supervisors.

There may be instances where demonstrators and technical employees also undertake guidance and interim supervision. In all cases, the Academic Supervisor should ensure that the risk assessment determines the level of supervision required, including that provided by demonstrators and technical employees. Accidents and near misses must also be properly investigated and appropriate action taken to prevent recurrences.

Further details are set out in individual School Health and Safety Policy Documents.

25. Research Supervisors

The health and safety management of research projects is the responsibility of the Research Supervisor. Supervisors must ensure that:

- postgraduates are trained to understand School Health and Safety policies and procedures.
- postgraduate projects are risk assessed. The research project assessment must be completed identifying any hazardous activities that require further actions.
- necessary precautions are agreed with the postgraduate and committed in writing.
- significant alterations in agreed procedures must not be introduced without the supervisor's knowledge.
- accidents and near misses are properly investigated and that appropriate action is taken to prevent recurrences;

26. All Staff and Students

All staff have a responsibility for cooperating with their employing School or Department and the University on all matters of health and safety. This includes following any verbal or written guidance, participating in risk assessment procedures, undergoing appropriate training, and ensuring that other people in the workplace are not adversely affected by their work activities. Staff should ensure that members of the public who are visiting their work area are made aware of any appropriate health and safety requirements, and that adequate procedures are in place to ensure their visitors' safety during building evacuation, or other reasonably foreseeable emergency that may arise.

Staff can also assist managers by bringing to their attention any matters of health, safety and welfare that arise during their activities. It is the responsibility of the University to ensure that staff are made aware both of these individual responsibilities and of the reporting and control procedures through which they can report matters of health, safety and welfare.

Any member of staff responsible for hiring or engaging contactors or temporary labour must ensure they have received and understood a health and safety induction appropriate to their work.

All students must abide by all verbal and written advice relating to health and safety matters. They should not misuse or interfere with anything provided in the interests of health and safety. Students are encouraged to bring to the attention of their

School or Department any matters of health, safety and welfare that may arise during their activities at the University. Mechanisms for doing this will be specified within student handbooks. Students in residence on campus have specific responsibilities in accordance with their accommodation license agreement.

27. Postgraduate Research Students

All postgraduate students should be adequately trained to be able to participate in the risk assessment process, and to understand the policies, procedures and committee structures of the School or Department.

Postgraduate students should be made aware that their work will be scrutinised to insure that relevant hazards have been identified and any risks are minimised.

Postgraduate dissertations should include descriptions of relevant risk management practices.

28. Placement Students

Guidelines for the placement of HE students are detailed in the 1997 report *'Health and Safety Guidance for the Placement of HE Students*'. [Source: ASET]

29. Visitors and Contractors

In the interest of health and safety, all visitors and contractors must comply with appropriate local rules and any other instructions given to them whilst on University premises.