

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY



This document sets out the University's Policy governing health and safety.

Version	8.1
Executive Sponsor	Richard Billingham
Officer Responsible for Policy/ Procedures	Director of Health, Safety and Business Continuity
Consultation Process	Executive Director of HR and OD
Date of Approval and Committee and/or Executive Officer	Executive Operations Group Executive Council
Effective Date	13 April 2021

1. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

1.1 Purpose of the Policy

This Policy sets out the Aston University framework for implementing high standards of Occupational Health and Safety, this policy demonstrates the commitment Aston University places on the health, safety and wellbeing of staff, students and visitors. This is an endorsed commitment by the University's leadership team to delivering their health and safety responsibilities.

1.2 What is covered by the Policy

All University work activities undertaken by staff, students, contractors or visitors are covered by this policy. This will either be on campus or on field trips in the UK or overseas.

1.3 Who is covered by the Policy

All staff, students, contractors or visitors who work, study or use any part of the Campus buildings and grounds are covered by this policy.

1.4 Breach of this Policy

The University is required under the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (The Act), to produce a statement of policy with respect to the health and safety of everyone who uses our premises or may be affected by our undertakings both on and off-campus. However, this is only a starting point, and the University will continually strive to achieve the highest practical standard rather than rely on the legal minimum. The University also expects managers at all levels to actively pursue increasingly higher standards of health and safety management which is proportional to the risk associated with the activity.

1.5 Policy Ownership

The Executive has approved this Policy, the Executive Director of HR and of is the Executive sponsor and the Director of Health, Safety and Business Continuity is responsible for the Policy. Any questions about this Policy or any concerns that the Policy is not being followed should be referred in a first instance to the Director of Health, Safety and Business Continuity.

2. STATEMENT OF INTENT

In addition to meeting its legal obligations, 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.

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

Aston University recognises its responsibilities as 'the Employer' as specified in the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and in all subsequent legislation and directives that impact on the activities of the University.

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 or studies at,

or visits the University and who is likely to be affected by our operations. We will do everything that is reasonably practicable to:

- Ensure that our buildings, equipment, facilities, materials, 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 cooperation, in the management of their own health and safety, through appropriate information, instruction and training;
- Consult our staff, students, trades unions and safety representatives on matters affecting their health, safety, and welfare at the University;
- Provide support to managers to continuously improve and maintain a high standard of health and safety management in their areas of responsibility
- Provide a framework for setting health and safety performance objectives and measuring their effectiveness;
- Reduce risks to the lowest extent reasonably practicable by eliminating hazards and reduce health and safety risks, and;
- Make a positive commitment to meet the legal requirements of relevant health and safety legislation.

The University will fulfil its duties by:

- Providing adequate resources for the implementation of this policy;
- Supporting a culture where raising concerns can be done without fear of reprisals;
- Fostering and supporting a positive health and safety culture where the health, safety and wellbeing of staff, students and visitors are viewed as a key management function;
- Ensuring that our staff, students and visitors are equipped with the necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to carry out their responsibilities;
- Making the University a sector leading institution in terms of health, safety and wellbeing by transforming the culture to a point where health and safety is embedded in routine management practice and into our core business objectives;
- Providing and maintaining safe and healthy working conditions and maintaining safe plant and equipment;
- Ensuring suitable arrangements are in place for the safe handling, use, storage and transportation of materials;
- Providing suitable and sufficient assessment of the health and safety risks to staff, students and visitors and where required ensure that safe working instructions are available at the point of use;
- Working to prevent work-related accidents, incidents, near misses and cases of work related ill health;
- Helping staff to contribute positively to their own health and safety at work, and
- Reviewing and revising this policy as necessary

This policy will be implemented by the University Executive team, managers and supervisors with the support and guidance of the HSU and appropriate specialists. Members of the Executive team 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.

Monitoring of the policy is vital to ensure it is being effectively implemented. This will be achieved by reviewing management reports, active and reactive monitoring of health and safety performance, risk assessments, and by undertaking audits.

The policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains relevant to the University's mission. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy complements this policy and provides information on future plans.

The University insists on compliance with safe working methods. Any member of the University who ignores safety rules may face an investigation leading to disciplinary action, up to and including exclusion.

As Vice Chancellor I recognise that I carry the accountability for the health and safety of all persons affected by the activities of the University.

I would encourage you to adopt at all times a positive attitude towards health and safety requirements and to promote a healthy and safe working environment for ourselves, our students and others affected by the work of Aston University.



Professor Alec Cameron
Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive
March 2021



Dame Yve Buckland, DBE
Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council
March 2021

3. ORGANISING FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

The University has established clear lines of responsibility in order to implement this policy. College, Schools and Support Areas are required to make arrangements for dealing with the risks encountered within their areas of responsibility and for promoting a positive attitude to health, safety and wellbeing.

4. KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This section of the policy identifies the individuals who are responsible for delivering the policy commitments.

4.1 The University Council

The University Council, under the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, is responsible for issuing a written statement covering the general policy with respect to Health and Safety at work of employees, students and others affected by the undertakings of the University.

The University Council shall ensure that they receive sufficient information on the status of University health and safety management systems to assure themselves that all statutory requirements are being met. To this end they will commission an annual health and safety report to be undertaken by the Director of Health, Safety and Business Continuity.

While statutory compliance will be accepted as a baseline standard, the University Council will ensure that the University is constantly moving towards best possible health and safety practice.

4.2 The Vice-Chancellor:

As the executive lead for the University the Vice Chancellor is ultimately responsible and accountable for health and safety across the University. Strategic and tactical responsibility for health and safety has been delegated to the Executive Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development.

The Vice Chancellor will;

- Demonstrate leadership and commitment for fostering an environment in which health, safety and related issues are seen as essential and an integral part of the University's activities;
- Ensure that the University has a Health and Safety policy and that appropriate structures, systems and procedures are in place to secure effective implementation of the policy and for providing assurance to the University Council on these matters;
- Allocate appropriate resources for the effective implementation of the policy, and advise the University Council of any additional resources required to comply with statutory requirements;
- Make adequate arrangements for Health and Safety and ensuring that managers, staff and students are aware of their responsibilities;
- Monitor health and safety performance on behalf of the University Council and authorise appropriate corrective action to ensure compliance with this Health and Safety Policy.

4.3 The Executive Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development:

The Executive Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development is responsible to the Vice Chancellor on a delegated basis for the general oversight and development of health and safety policy and for ensuring co-ordination of such policies and practice across the University.

They have responsibility for ensuring that the arrangements to manage health and safety in accordance with University policy are effective.

The Executive Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development has line management responsibility for the Director of Health, Safety and Business Continuity in order to oversee health and safety compliance and performance. They are;

Chair the Health, Safety and Environment Executive Committee;

- The responsible person in respect of compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005;
- Responsible for ensuring there are sufficient suitably qualified persons to provide competent health and safety assistance;
- Acting as a role model and leading by example to help develop a positive culture by promoting the University's values – professional and ambitious, innovative and collaborative, ethical and inclusive;
- Takes the executive lead for health and safety and sets health and safety objectives and monitors performance against these objectives;
- Is responsible for oversight of the health and safety risk register and associated health and safety improvement plans.

4.4 Deputy Vice Chancellors, Pro-Vice Chancellors, Executive Deans, Directors of Professional Services

- 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;
- Are responsible for the appointment of a Senior Responsible Person to take the management lead on health and safety matters;
- Are responsible for the appointment of local Health and Safety Coordinators/Safety Advisers;
- Are responsible for the provision and maintenance of a working environment for their employees that is safe, without risks to health, and adequate as regards facilities and arrangements for their welfare at work;
- Are responsible for ensuring that high risk activities such as; handling radioactive materials, use of hazardous substances, lasers and international travel are appropriately resourced and effective control measures are in place;
- Ensure that adequate resources and arrangements are in place to manage health and safety on a day-to-day basis;
- Ensure Information on health and safety is prepared and distributed to all those concerned and that it is understood and followed by all appropriate staff, students and visitors;
- Ensure that risk assessments are carried out and safe operating procedures developed;
- Accidents, incidents and near misses are properly investigated and appropriate action is taken to prevent recurrence.

4.5 The Director of Health, Safety and Business Continuity:

The Director of Health, Safety and Business Continuity has a central co-ordinating role in relation to health and safety matters and acts as advisor to the University on health and safety strategy and the requirements and interpretation of relevant legislation.

The Director of Health, Safety and Business Continuity has a vital role in the development of the University's health and safety policy and plan, and the development of a health and safety management system.

The Director of Health, Safety and Business Continuity will;

- Ensure the effectiveness of health and safety management structures through regular auditing of these systems;
- Present, through the University Health, Safety and Environment Executive Committee, to the University Council regular reports on the status of the University Health and Safety Management systems and procedures;
- Be responsible for the management of the Health and Safety unit and is accountable for working in collaboration with College, Schools and Support Areas to achieve University health and safety goals;
- be responsible for development, maintenance and embedding of the Health and Safety Management system, identification of trends in reactive monitoring and providing health and safety training for all staff;
- Be responsible for monitoring health and safety management performance, compliance with all relevant legislation, and health and safety improvement plans;
- Is also responsible for liaising with relevant statutory bodies and officials on behalf of the University.

4.6 Health and Safety Senior Responsible Person

Health and Safety Senior Responsible Persons (SRP) are members of staff who are appointed by the Executive Dean or Director, and approved by the Health and Safety Unit to oversee local tactical and operational health and safety arrangements.

Summary of main duties and responsibilities of SRP in all Colleges and Departments;

- To take the lead on local health and safety matters and promote the importance of improvements in safety behaviour;
- Assign sufficient resources (competent staff, time allocation and budget) to ensure health and safety standards are maintained;
- Directly line manage the health and safety coordinator in relation to their health and safety responsibilities.

Further details can be found in the role description for Health and Safety Senior Responsible Person.

4.7 Heads of Support Areas, Managers and Supervisors:

If not specifically mentioned above, Heads, managers and Supervisors 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. They have specific responsibilities for ensuring that;

- 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 staff, students and visitors;
- Risk assessments are carried out and safe operating procedures developed;
- Accidents, incidents and near misses are properly investigated and appropriate action is taken to prevent recurrences;
- Suitable health and safety induction is provided for all staff;
- Training needs are identified and appropriate training is undertaken;
- Adequate arrangements are in place for the safety of staff and students for all activities undertaken.

4.8 Health and Safety Coordinators

Senior managers are supported by staff who have responsibility for undertaking specific safety related duties on a day-to-day basis as directed by the Executive Deans and Directors in addition to their normal work activities. Health and Safety Coordinators will:

- Provide advice to the Executive Dean, Director or their nominated Senior Responsible Person (SRP) on local health and safety matters;
- To proactively communicate and consult with staff and students on all aspects of workplace health, safety and welfare;
- To lead regular review of safety management systems and monitor implementation of College, School/Department area health and safety improvement plans and to respond to internal audits from HSU or from external agencies;
- Attend training provided to enable them to undertake their duties.

Further details can be found in the role description for Health and Safety Coordinators.

4.9 Trade Unions Safety Representatives and Representatives of Employee Safety

Both trade union and non-trade union safety reps have statutory consultation and inspection rights with regard to matters that affect the health and safety of the staff they represent. They are included in the membership of the University Health, Safety and Environment Consultative Forum. They are also invited to take part in College and Support Area safety inspections and local health and safety committees, and be involved in risk management arrangements.

4.10 Staff

Are responsible for ensuring that they conduct their activities in accordance with this policy. They must cooperate with their line manager and Executive Dean/Director so that health and safety responsibilities can be discharged. Staff must comply with all health and safety instructions. They should not misuse or interfere with anything provided in the interests of health and safety

Staff are responsible for their own health and safety and others who may be affected by their actions, staff are encouraged to report any incidents, defects or safety concerns to with their line manager.

4.11 Academic Supervisors

Have a particular responsibility for the supervision of students and have a duty to ensure their health and safety in line with the role of Supervisors/Managers.

4.12 Students and Postgraduate Research Students

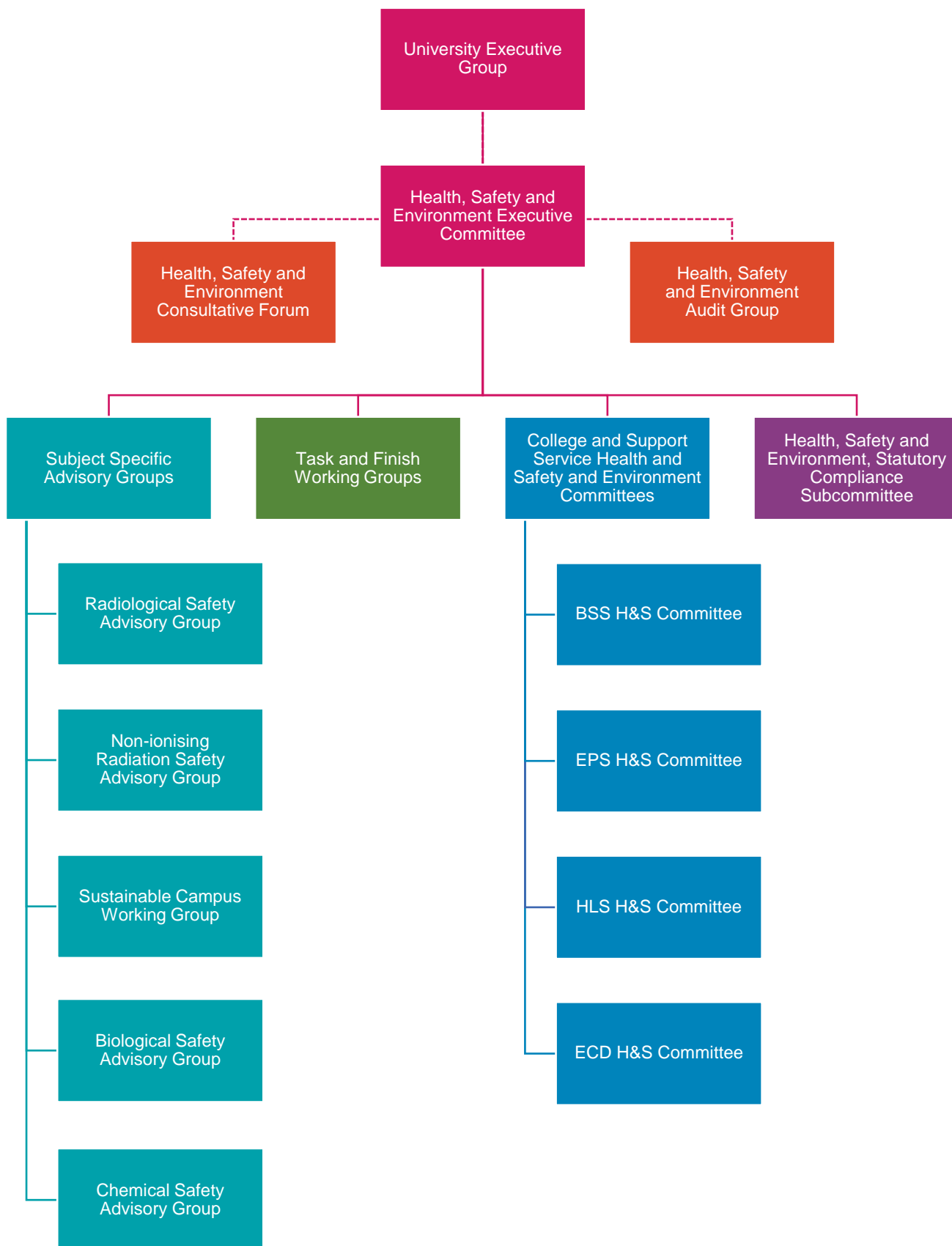
Must comply with all health and safety instructions. They should not misuse or interfere with anything provided in the interests of health and safety, and are encouraged to bring to the attention of their College, School or Support Area any matters of health, safety and welfare that may arise during their activities at the University through liaising with their Academic Supervisor.

4.13 Visitors and Contractors

Must comply with University health and safety rules, and, where appropriate, follow any local rules whilst on University premises.

Contractors must have received a health and safety induction before commencement of work on the Campus. Any member of staff responsible for hiring or engaging contractors or temporary labour must ensure that they are competent before authorising work and must liaise with Estates and Capital Developments before any work commences.

4.14 Health and Safety Committee Structure



5. THE UNIVERSITY HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

This section of the policy outlines consultation and communication structures for health and safety throughout the University

5.1 The University Council

Has ultimate responsibility for health and safety in the University, and has delegated actions to ensure good health and safety management to the University Executive team.

5.2 University Executive Team

Led by the Vice-Chancellor and advised by the Health, Safety and Environment Executive Committee, ensures compliance with health and safety legislation and best practice. The Executive Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development takes the health and safety lead on behalf of the University Executive Team.

5.3 Health, Safety and Environment Executive Committee

The Health, Safety and Environment Executive Committee sets H&S Strategy and approves policy & procedure to ensure that suitable health and safety arrangements are in place across the University.

The committee undertakes monitoring of health and safety performance data, reviews trends and has oversight to H&S compliance in order to provide assurance to University Executive and Council.

5.4 Health, Safety and Environment Consultative Forum

The Health, Safety and Environment Consultative Forum provides an opportunity for Health and Safety Coordinators, Trade Union Health and Safety Representatives and the Student Union to discuss operational health and safety matters.

The forum also acts as the legal consultation with employees on health and safety matters as required by the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 and Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996.

5.5 Health, Safety and Environment Audit Group

Consists of members of the Health & Safety Unit and representatives from a range of Colleges and Support Areas. Persons with relevant expertise are co-opted into the group as and when required.

The group audits College, School and Support Area health and safety policies, plans and procedures, management and communication and their operation. Audits are for the purposes of both validation (reviewing whether College, Schools and Support Areas have effective health and safety management systems) and compliance (reviewing whether College, Schools and Support Areas are following their own policies and procedures), and also plays a key role in identifying and promoting best practice across the University.

5.6 Subject Specific Advisory Groups

The University undertakes some high risk activities which require higher levels of risk controls to ensure the safety of staff, students and visitors. To ensure that the highest standards of control are applied to these activities a number of subject specific advisory groups have been established to provide technical assistance. The groups include;

- Radiological Safety Advisory Group
- Non-Ionising Radiation Safety Advisory Group
- Sustainable Campus Working Group
- Biological Safety Advisory Group
- Chemical Safety Advisory Group

Each group is chaired by a subject safety advisor who provides expert advice regarding high risk activities, leads the development and approval of risk management guidance and monitors operational health and safety issues within their group.

5.7 College and Professional Services Health, Safety and Environment Committees

Colleges and Support Areas will have health and safety structures appropriate to their needs. This should include local committees which deal specifically with health and safety issues and which report through to the Executive Dean /Director or their Senior Responsible Person. Smaller departments should have health and safety as a standing agenda item in management and team meetings.

5.8 Health, Safety and Environment Statutory Compliance Subcommittee

The Health, Safety and Environment Statutory Compliance Subcommittee give oversight to statutory compliance across the University for;

- Asbestos
- Water systems (L8 compliance)
- Lifting equipment and lifts
- Local exhaust ventilation
- Pressure vessels
- Environmental matters
- Fire safety

The Health, Safety and Environment Statutory Compliance Subcommittee Implement policy & procedure relating to the identified compliance areas, monitor compliance issues and monitor performance data. The Health, Safety and Environment Statutory Compliance Subcommittee provide assurance to University Executive and Council by way of regular reports.

6. ARRANGEMENTS FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

This Policy is supported by the University's Health and Safety intranet pages, which contains Safety Management Standards. These standards sets out the University's expectations in relation to the management of hazards, accompanied by guidance for managers.

The University Health and Safety Management System follows the Health and Safety Executive model: Plan, Do, Check, Act. A range of Safety Management Standards have been written for health and safety topics pertinent to the work of the University and compliance is monitored by the Health and Safety Unit. This topic based system is available on the Health and Safety Unit intranet and forms the arrangements section of this Health and Safety Policy.

Table 1 – List of Safety Management Standards

Accident and Incident Reporting	Lone Working
Building Maintenance	Manual Handling
Contractor Safety	New and Expectant Mothers
Display Screen Equipment	Noise
Driving at Work	Personal Protective Equipment
Electricity	Pressure Vessels
Events and Activities on Campus	Radiation
Fieldwork and Overseas Visits	Risk Assessment
Fire and Evacuation	Safety Signs
First Aid	Stress
Hazardous Substances	Vibration
Home Working	Violence
Inspections	Work at Height
Lifting Operations	Work Equipment

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further guidance on Health and Safety Measures can be obtained from the Health and Safety Unit by emailing safety@aston.ac.uk or telephoning the Health and Safety Help Desk on (0121 204) ext 4976.



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