

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

University Health & Safety Executive Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the University Health and Safety Executive Committee
held on 14 June 2012

Present: Mr K Sloan (Chair for item 18(d)/11-12 onwards), Professor S Croft, Ms J Horsburgh, Mrs L McCarthy, Mr N Sanders (Chair for items 14/11-12 to 18(c)/11-12), Professor M Shipman, Mr R Wilson

Apologies: Mr C Sury, Mr D Wallis

In Attendance: Professor A Easton (for item 18/11-12), Mr N Hawthorne, Dr I MacKirdy

14/11-12 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2012 be approved as accurate.

15/11-12 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

REPORTED:

No conflicts of interest were raised.

16/11-12 Progress of Business

REPORTED:

That the Council at its meeting on 16 May 2012 approved:

(a) the changes to the constitution of the University Health and Safety Committee (minute 06(a)/11-12 refers)

(b) the Annual Health and Safety Report for 2011 (minute 12(d)/11-12 refers)

17/11-12 Electronic Cigarettes (minute 12(f)/11-12 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Director of Health and Safety on the proposed wording of the revision to the Smoking Policy extending its application to electronic cigarettes (paper UHSEC 14/11-12)

RECOMMENDED: (to the Council)

That the Smoking Policy be revised to extend the restrictions on the use of cigarettes to apply to electronic cigarettes as set out in UHSEC.14/11-12.

18/11-12 University Genetic Modification and Biosafety Committee

CONSIDERED:

A report from Neil Hawthorne (University Biosafety Advisor) of the meeting of the University Genetic Modification and Biosafety Committee (GMBSC) held on 24 May 2012 (paper UHSEC 16/11-12).

- (a) Notification to the Health and Safety Executive of Changes to University Biosafety Arrangements (minute 05(b)/11-12 refers)

REPORTED: (by Professor A Easton)

That the Health and Safety Executive Notifications Officer had been informed in writing of all relevant changes to biosafety arrangements at the University.

- (b) Regional Biosafety Group

REPORTED: (by Professor A Easton)

That the GMBSC's remit for oversight of all biosafety issues and associated methodologies had been showcased to other universities and research institutes and noted to combine the best practices of other institutions.

- (c) Project Assessment Update

REPORTED: (by Professor A Easton)

That the GMBSC had approved four projects since its last meeting.

- (d) New Project Proposals

REPORTED: (by Professor A Easton)

- (i) That the GMBSC considered three biosafety projects, approving the risk assessment for one while concluding that two assessments of medium hazard did not contain sufficient detail.

- (ii) That there was a need for training of researchers on the pertinent information necessary for biological risk assessment.

(e) New Containment Facilities

REPORTED: (by Professor A Easton)

- (i) That the GMBSC had considered and approved a low hazard containment laboratory within the School of Engineering.
- (ii) That the GMBSC had considered the design of the proposed Plant Sciences building with representatives of the project team, identified 'medium' hazards related to human health or to the environment where exposure needed to be minimised, and highlighted the need and route for consultation with enforcement agencies.

(f) Workshop on the Management of Hazardous Substances and Equipment

REPORTED: (by Professor A Easton)

That technical staff had found the recent workshop on the management of hazardous substances and equipment pertinent and valuable.

(g) University Health, Safety and Wellbeing website

REPORTED: (by Professor A Easton)

- (i) That the GMBSC had approved the biological waste arrangements.
- (ii) That the GMBSC had considered and resolved that in order to address the personal safety of staff, access to the Biological Safety webpages should be restricted primarily to staff and postgraduate research students in the six science departments.

RESOLVED:

That the revision to the Special Arrangements to the Biological Safety Policy, as set out in the extract from GMBSC.18/11-12, be approved as recommended by the GMBSC.

(h) Review of Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA) Notified Plant Projects

REPORTED: (by Professor A Easton)

- (i) That the GMBSC considered a report on notified plant projects that are subject to Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) licences and inspection and approval by FERA.
- (ii) That the GMBSC resolved that communications with FERA must involve the Biosafety Advisor since oversight of these licences lay with the Committee.

- (iii) That the GMBSC supported the establishment of a database of licensed projects and requested further reports on arrangements, risks and control measures.

19/11-12 Security Incident at Gibbet Hill

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That security at the Gibbet Hill Campus had been reviewed and a greater level of assurance had been achieved while ensuring that the campus remained open for access following an incident involving an intruder.

20/11-12 University Health and Safety Committee

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Director of Health and Safety of the meeting of the University Health and Safety Committee (UHSC) held on 17 May 2012 (paper UHSEC 15/11-12).

(a) Presentation by the Commercial Group

REPORTED (By Dr I MacKirdy)

- (i) That the presentation by the Director of the Commercial Group and Head of Accommodation about how significant improvements in culture and in health and safety performance had been achieved had been well-received by the UHSC.
- (ii) That the UHSC had resolved that this positive presentation be made more widely available to Heads of Departments.

(by Mr N Sanders)

- (iii) That the message from the presentation by the Commercial group was that the management of health and safety involved managing people.

(by Mrs L McCarthy)

- (iv) That sharing information and best practice was important but solely making the presentation available would not have the desired effect.

(by Professor M Shipman)

- (v) That Heads of Academic Departments would welcome advice on how to fulfil their responsibilities for health and safety.

(by the Registrar)

- (vi) That the presentation was a good example demonstrating the successful application of external business practices to the University environment and the identification of similar triggers for other groups would be important.

- (vii) That recognising and celebrating health and safety successes was important and would be developed further.

(b) Effectiveness of the University Health and Safety Committee (minute 12(g)/11-12 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Director of Health and Safety on the effectiveness of the University Health and Safety Committee (paper UHSEC 15/11-12).

REPORTED: (by Dr I MacKirdy)

- (i) That the UHSC had considered its effectiveness and identified the need for greater interaction by members.

(by Mr N Sanders)

- (ii) That the UHSC was a valuable forum for the exchange of ideas.
- (iii) That there should be concern with the high level of non-attendance at meetings.

(by the Registrar)

- (iv) That it was recognised that formal committee structures were not appropriate for all forums and it would be valid to consider alternatives.

(c) Incidents

CONSIDERED:

A report from Mrs C. Beament, Health and Safety Advisor, on incident and reporting requirements, May 2012 (paper UHSC.15/11-12)

REPORTED: (by Dr I MacKirdy)

That the 12-monthly rolling incidents reported under RIDDOR continued to show a downwards trend but the over seven day events had not decreased in the past year.

(d) Equality and Diversity Committee

REPORTED: (by Dr I MacKirdy)

That information about the work of the Equality and Diversity Committee had been provided since the work of the two Committees impacted on the wellbeing of staff and students.

21/11-12 Review of Health and Safety

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Director of Health and Safety on the progress of the review of health and safety (paper UHSEC 17/11-12).

REPORTED: (by Dr I MacKirdy)

- (a) That the reviews were helping to establish more embedded processes and discipline in capturing current status and examples of good practice, setting action plans and highlighting measures by which progress against action plans could be monitored.
 - (b) That new guidance would be placed on the web during the summer and the remaining parts of Safety In the University, SITU, withdrawn.
 - (c) That the impact on people who suffer serious ill health or injury, manslaughter charges or other enforcement action, and the cost of retrospectively upgrading facilities were the main impacts of poor health and safety performance.
- (by Mr N Sanders)
- (d) That risk management needed to focus on opportunities and positive aspects as well as negative impact potential.

22/11-12 Internal Audit Report

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Director of Health and Safety on the recent Internal Audit report on Health and Safety (paper UHSEC 18/11-12).

REPORTED: (by Dr I MacKirdy)

- (a) That the issues highlighted included guidance for Heads of Departments, identification of emerging risk, assessment of research involving high hazard, providing departments with direct access to information so that they can take ownership for improving performance , and the effectiveness of governance checks.

(by Professor M Shipman)

(b) That Heads of Academic Departments would welcome advice on the risk assessment of research bids prior to the application for funding.

(by Mr N Sanders)

(c) That the forward plan for the Health and Safety Department was demanding.

(by the Registrar)

(d) That it was important to consider benchmarking with other organisations, not just other universities.

(e) That none of the nine recommendations was deemed a high risk or above.

RESOLVED:

That the management responses given in the Internal Audit Report of Health and Safety were appropriate and the Director of Health and Safety bring forward a paper to the next meeting of the Committee outlining progress achieved and further areas of discussion.

23/11-12 Review of Committee Structure

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That a review by the Council of the Committee structure was underway and any observations would be welcomed.

24/11-12 Dates of future meetings

REPORTED

That the Committee would be informed of future dates once the calendar for 2012/13 had been confirmed.