

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

University Health & Safety Executive Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the University Health and Safety Executive Committee held on
Tuesday 10 November 2009.

- Present: Mr J Baldwin (Registrar and Chair), Mr N Sanders, Professor A Easton, Professor M Whitby (Pro-Vice Chancellor), Mr A Twiss, Mr R Wilson, Mrs S Foy.
- Apologies: Mr P Stephenson (Director of Human Resources and Commercial), Mrs Y Salter Wright
- In Attendance: Julie Brannon (Health and Safety Advisor), Richard Walton (Chair of the Chemistry Department's H&S Committee) and Claire Beament (Health and Safety Advisor), Dr I MacKirdy, (Secretary and Director of Health and Safety), Mrs J Rawlinson (Assistant Secretary)

The Registrar welcomed Mrs J Rawlinson and Mr A Twiss to their first meeting.

- 01/09-10 An update on the incident at Warwick Horticultural Research International (WHRI) (minute 21(a)/08-09 refers)
REPORTED: (by the Director of Health and Safety)
That the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) had taken a statement from the University during the summer and were now considering the case against the supplier of the harvester.
- 02/09-10 Stress Management Policy (minute 24/08-09 refers)
REPORTED: (by the Director of Health and Safety)
(a) That Council had considered and approved at its meeting held in July 2009 the University Policy on the Management of Stress and Work-related Stressors (paper UHSEC 18/08-09 (revised 2),)as recommended by the Senate at its meeting held on 1 July 2009.
(b) That Policy on the Management of Stress and Work-related Stressors had been published on the University website.
- 03/09-10 Fire Service Improvement Notices (minute 27(d) and (e) refers)
REPORTED: (by the Director of Health and Safety)

- (a) That Estates had completed key works and have scheduled further works to timescales agreed with the Fire Service.
- (b) That both improvement notices will remain outstanding until the remaining works are completed in 2010.

04/09-10 The Universities and Colleges Employers Association publication on 'Health and Safety Guidance for the Placement of Higher Education Students' (minute 28(b)/08-09 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That UCEA had published the guidance regarding the placement of higher education students and a public launch would be held on 24 November 2009 with presentations by the University's Academic Registrar and Director of Health and Safety.
- (b) That a Working Group of the Learning Placement Co-ordinators' Meeting was identifying how to incorporate the UCEA guidance into University guidance for implementation in the 2010/11 academic year.

05/09-10 The Universities and Colleges Employers Association response to Government on the use of 'fit notes' instead of 'sick notes' (minute 28(c)/08-09 refers)

RECEIVED:

The UCEA response to the Government's proposed changes to the use of sick notes (paper UHSEC 01/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Health and Safety)

- (a) That the Government's proposals might raise the expectations of staff, and staff may need to be informed that the University is not bound by the suggestions made by GPs.
- (b) That it was expected that the Government would introduce the new legislation with effect from April 2010, acknowledging that the final wording of the legislation has not yet been published.

06/09-10 Health and Safety Developments in Departments in the Faculty of Science

RECEIVED:

A report and presentation from Julie Brannon, Health & Safety Advisor, and Richard Walton, Chair of the Chemistry Department's Health & Safety Committee, on work being undertaken with Departments in the Faculty of Science and in particular with the Department of Chemistry (Paper UHSEC 02/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Health and Safety)

- (a) That as part of the Strategic Health and Safety Plan agreed in March 2009, Julie Brannon had been engaged as a Health and Safety Advisor to carry out a programme of health and safety inspections and training for the laboratory based Departments in the Faculty of Science and the Medical School, it being acknowledged that Julie's structured approach to inspections, her interface with academics, and the simple guidance sheets produced had helped researchers recognise and deal with potential hazards.
- (b) That a response had been sent to the Deputy Registrar on insurance matters highlighting a flow chart and a permit to work system, noting that a traffic light system had also been developed to identify risk levels which would be considered further at the Chemistry Health & Safety meeting.

(by the Chair of the Chemistry Health & Safety Committee)

- (c) That the Health and Safety Advisor had been invited by the Head of the Department of Chemistry to give a presentation to a meeting of academic staff; noting that:
 - (i) that staff had been positive and encouraging about the process and developments;
 - (ii) that it had been agreed that the issues and objectives would be progressed by the Department's Health and Safety Committee.
- (d) That making the Health & Safety information readily available, including display cards, guidance notes, local laboratory rules and safety talks for both undergraduate and post graduates as part of the induction process was valuable.
- (e) That self inspections were being considered at the next departmental Health & Safety meeting.
- (f) That conversations with the SAP team were taking place about e:procurement and that an electronic system for managing chemicals would result in financial savings, as well as fulfilling safety requirements.

(by the Chair of the University Health and Safety Committee)

- (g) That positive developments such as highlighted in the Department of Chemistry should be encouraged across the wider University with consideration being given to the use of annual competition including financial incentives on the same lines as in place for research work.

(by Mr N Sanders)

- (h) That in the future, ad-hoc, unannounced inspections should be undertaken to ensure that good practice is maintained.

(by the Registrar)

- (i) That the work by the Health and Safety Advisor and the Department of Chemistry demonstrated excellent practice but as discussed by the Committee, there might need to be both a balanced approach whereby not only incentives but also examples of potential liability were used to promote best practice.

RESOLVED:

That Julie Brannon, Richard Walton, and Iain MacKirdy be invited to attend the next Faculty of Science and Faculty of Medicine lunches to be held in the Spring Term 2010 in order to share experiences and to promote best practice with academic colleagues.

07/09-10 Report from the University Health and Safety Committee

CONSIDERED:

The report of the meeting of the University Health and Safety Committee held on the 22 October 2009 (Paper UHSEC 03/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Chair of the University Health and Safety Committee)

- (a) That overall Health & Safety figures were encouraging and that the number of Reportings of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) had decreased, but the University should not become complacent and should continue to target a further reduction over the next 12 months.
- (b) That the student representative on the Committee had made sensible recommendations about how to communicate with the students and that the University should work with the Students' Union to embed good practice and better communication of health and safety messages to students.

(by Mrs C Beament)

- (c) That there had been 5 incidents that have been reported under (RIDDOR) during October 2009.
- (d) That figures had been collected on RIDDORs since 1999 and the trend over this time was generally static, noting that given the increase in size of the University since that time, these figures were generally positive.
- (e) That most RIDDORs were reported quickly after the incident and members of the University community generally understood the

importance of reporting such incidents, with managers appearing more comfortable about being involved in any associated investigations.

REPORTED: (by the Director of Health and Safety)

- (f) That a review of occupational health processes and measures would be conducted once the Senior Occupational Health Advisor had started.

RECEIVED:

An update from the Director of Health and Safety on progress since May 2009 (paper UHSC 05/09-10 refers) including progress made on the recruitment of key staff for the Health and Safety team.

REPORTED: (by the Director of Health and Safety)

- (a) That the Senior Occupational Health Adviser would commence on 1 December 2009.
- (b) That the first round of interviews had been undertaken for the health and safety posts and that the formal selection panel would take place on 25th November 2009.
- (c) That views would be sought from the Communications Department to optimise communications on health and safety matters to staff and students.
- (d) That it should be noted that the Commercial Group and the Estates Department have monthly briefing systems which cascade health and safety information to all staff in those departments.
- (e) That a review of occupational health processes and measures would be conducted once the Senior Occupational Health Adviser had started.

08/09-10

Review of Stress

RECEIVED:

A paper from the Director of Health and Safety on the Results of Pulse 2009 survey of work-related stressors (Paper UHSEC 04/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Health and Safety)

- (a) That analysis of the results had taken place and that areas of concern had been highlighted to relevant Heads of Department and that they had been encouraged to encapsulate their actions for dealing with stressors into their Pulse Action plans.

- (b) That the Health and Safety Executive had accepted the methodology of using the Pulse survey to monitor work-related stressors.

(by the Registrar)

- (c) That the management of stress in the work-place was a key area for the University and that work was progressing but those departments identified as having high stressor scores should continue to be engaged.

09/09-10 Review of Requirements and Provision of First Aiders

RECEIVED:

A paper providing a briefing on amendments to the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations from Claire Beament, Health & Safety Advisor (Paper UHSEC 05/09-10).

RESOLVED:

That proposals would be drafted by the Health and Safety Department for consideration at the meeting of the Committee to be held in February 2010.

10/09-10 UHSEC – Terms of Reference and Membership and How It Discharges Its Role

RECEIVED:

A paper from the Director of Health and Safety offering suggestions for the operation of the Committee and its interaction with the wider University (Paper UHSEC 06/09-10).

REPORTED: (by Mr N Sanders)

- (a) That, whilst the paper was useful in setting out how the Committee may engage in its role, further consideration should be given to:
 - (i) How the University establishes priorities for the Health and Safety Department and for others;
 - (ii) How did the University effectively monitors progress against such priorities;
 - (iii) Establishing a flexible, blame-free, questioning, and learning health and safety culture;
 - (iv) External benchmarking of the University's systems and what the University could learn from other organisations;
 - (v) Generic hazards across the University;
 - (vi) Ensuring that there is no slippage on progress once achieved.

(by the Chair of the University Health and Safety Committee)

- (b) That the University should strive to create a culture where all members of the University community take responsibility for health and safety.

(by Andrew Easton)

- (c) That positive health and safety culture requires leadership, expression of interest, and demonstration of appropriate responses. This needs to be kept separate from collecting information. Information should be gathered, analysed and then implemented on a wider scale, and not just for specific individual events.

(by the Director of Estates)

- (d) That the University should have performance indicators to provide clarity about how the University compares to other institutions.

(by Mrs Foy)

- (e) That information should be disseminated to local Area Health and Safety Committees.

(by Director of Health and Safety)

- (f) That a forum should be created for Chairs of local Health and Safety Committees to encourage dialogue, share best practice and develop consistency in practices across the University.

(by the Registrar)

- (g) That if the University followed a similar approach to what it has achieved with the Responsible Drinking campaign with the Students Union, health and safety could be sector leading at this University.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Director of Health and Safety should progress actions as he sees fit in line with the proposals in the paper.
- (b) That the Director of Health and Safety should submit a paper on achieving an effective health and safety culture to be considered at the next meeting.

11/09-10

Date of Next Meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the UHSEC would be held on 1 March 2010 at 2.00 pm in CMR 1.2