

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

University Health & Safety Executive Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the University Health and Safety Executive Committee held on
Monday 1 March 2010.

Present: Mr J Baldwin (Registrar and Chair), Mr N Sanders, Professor A Easton, Professor M Whitby (Pro-Vice Chancellor), Mr R Wilson, Ms Y Salter Wright, Ms S Foy, Mr A Twiss

Apologies: Mr P Stephenson (Director of Human Resources and Commercial).

In Attendance: Julie Brannon (Health and Safety Advisor), Claire Beament (Health and Safety Advisor), Jane Poole, Senior Occupational Health Advisor, Dr I MacKirdy, (Secretary and Director of Health and Safety), Mrs J Rawlinson (Assistant Secretary)

The Registrar welcomed Ms J Poole, Senior Occupational Health Advisor, Ms J Brannon, Health and Safety Advisor and Ms C Beament, Health and Safety Advisor.

12/09-10 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2009 be approved.

13/09-10 Update on the introduction of GP Fit Notes (minute UHSEC 07/09-10 refers)

RECEIVED:

UCEA Update 10:022 on 'Reform of the Medical Statement – Government Response to Consultation' (paper UHSEC 07/09-10 refers).

REPORTED:

(by the Assistant Secretary)

(a) That the Human Resources Team were working with the Occupational Health and Safety team to ensure the University was in a position to deal with 'fit notes' when they are introduced in April 2010, noting that this work included amending the University Sickness Absence Policy, raising the matter at the next meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee, drafting and issuing guidelines including the excellent guidance from the Department of Work and Pensions to brief Human Resources colleagues, managers and employees.

(by Director of Health and Safety)

(b) That this was a significant culture change measure that the Government had introduced in response to Dame Carol Black's review of the health of Britain's working age population that emphasised that work was good for people's health.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee endorse the principle that staff who were 'fit for work taking account of the GP's advice' remain in work wherever possible.

14/09-10 Update on the Attendance of Health and Safety representatives at Faculty lunches (minute 06-09/10 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That Ms J Brannon (Health and Safety Advisor), Dr R Walton (Chair of the Chemistry Department's Health & Safety Committee), and Dr I MacKirdy, (Director of Health and Safety) would be invited to attend the next Faculty of Science and Faculty of Medicine lunches to be held in the Summer Term 2010.

15/09-10 Review of Requirements and Provision of First Aiders (minute 09-09-10 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Director of Health and Safety)

That these proposals were still under review.

16/09-10 Fire Service Improvement Notices (minute 03/09-10 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Director of Health and Safety)

That the further works agreed with the Fire Service had been scheduled for summer 2010.

17/09-10 University Health and Safety Committee

CONSIDERED:

The report of the meeting of the University Health and Safety Committee held on the 4 February 2010 (Paper UHSEC 08/09-10 refers).

REPORTED:

(by the Prof M Whitby, Chair of University Health and Safety Committee)

- (a) That the Committee had considered the Annual Health and Safety Report 2009 and received an update on the progress being made relating to joint inspections, together with a presentation about the new approach to the provision of Occupational Health.

(by the Director of Health and Safety)

- (b) That the University Health and Safety Committee had noted that slips and trips outside buildings and lifting and handling were significant causes of serious injuries and had resolved that its joint inspections should be extended to include footpaths and access routes around the building being inspected.

- (c) That unannounced inspections by Health & Safety Advisors were being established.

(by Ms C Beament, Health and Safety Advisor)

- (d) That when inspections were undertaken, key questions were asked of departments to ensure that the wider implications associated with health and safety issues were discussed.

18/09-10 Annual Health and Safety Report for 2009

CONSIDERED:

A report and presentation from the Director of Health and Safety on health and safety performance during 2009 (UHSEC 09/09-10 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Director of Health and Safety)

- (a) That progress had been achieved over the last year, including in particular: the Health and Safety team were finding a willingness to improve across the University; there was progress in targeted departments; the end of year review had emphasised certain areas of focus namely slips and trips and lifting and handling for the year ahead; and that there was a better understanding about the health and safety performance within the University.
- (b) That consideration was being given to using a wider range of performance indicators relevant to the University's Health and Safety strategy as the basis for the University's Key Performance Indicator on health and safety performance rather than having only the RIDDOR statistics as was currently the case.
- (c) That performance on control and supervision of key risks, and RIDDOR performance indicators remained weaker than necessary though moving in the right direction, acknowledging that progress had been made on indicators such as progress on strategic objectives; staff perceptions about

stressors; planning; governance and leadership; accident reporting and investigation; corrective action; and the attitude of enforcement agencies.

- (d) That whilst progress had been made there were still areas of concern and that the Health and Safety team were working with departments on the priority risks.
- (e) That SITU no longer met the needs of the University and the replacement for this would be more user friendly, available on the website and available for those without computer access.

(by Professor M Whitby, the Chair of the University Health and Safety Committee)

- (f) That the University Health and Safety Committee had discussed an initial target of 5 RIDDORs per 1000 staff as this had been demonstrated to be achievable in the past, but that there were concerns that promotion of this target might encourage under reporting.

(by Ms S Foy, Unison Trade Union)

- (g) That staff without access to computers needed ready access to health and safety information, including how to report accidents or near misses.

(by Mr N Sanders)

- (h) That he supported the identification and targeting of areas in the University where the most significant improvements could be made, including slips and trips and manual handling.

(by the Registrar)

- (i) That though pressures might intensify due to tighter financial constraints, heads of department and other managers must be clear that health and safety and other legal obligations remained a priority requirement.

(by the Director of Estates)

- (j) That Estates would continue to address essential works that are necessary to reduce health and safety risks at the University.

RECOMMENDED: (to the Senate and Council)

That the Annual Health and Safety Report for 2009 be approved.

19/09-10 Achieving an Effective Health and safety culture (Paper UHSEC 10/09-10 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A report and presentation from the Director of Health and Safety on achieving an effective health and safety culture (paper UHSEC 10/09-10 refers).

REPORTED:

(by the Director of Health and Safety)

- (a) That culture change was about changing attitudes and behaviours and had to involve everyone, encouraging discussion and questioning of values and beliefs, focusing on safe and unsafe behaviours, positively reinforcing safe behaviours and encouraging people to think about the potential consequences of unsafe behaviours, and in being aware that individual behaviour would affect the behaviour of others.

(by Professor A Easton, Head of the Department of Biological Sciences)

- (b) That culture change was difficult but would be achieved by ensuring that examples used in the presentation were relevant to the audience, as opposed to citing major incidents that did not occur frequently.

(by Mr N Sanders)

- (c) That this approach was welcome and that a clear roll out strategy should be implemented which should focus on the whole University while being piloted actively in specific departments.

(by Ms S Foy, Trade Union representative)

- (d) That all staff and managers needed to be engaged in the new culture to ensure that departments did not under report incidents, and that managers and staff were identified and required to attend the presentations.

(by Ms J Brannon, Health and Safety Advisor)

- (e) That she had had a key role in implementing a cultural change programme in a previous organisation and key requirements for success included getting people involved, encouraging dialogue and shared experiences, highlighting impact on others, developing training programmes, and encouraging people to challenge others in their behaviour.

RESOLVED:

- i) The Committee endorse the proposals while recognising that culture change would take time.
- ii) That the Director of Health and Safety proceed to plan and implement the proposals outlined in paper UHSEC 10/09-10 noting the importance of using examples that were appropriate to each audience and the other comments made by members of the Committee in this regard.

- iii) That the Committee receive a progress report on achieving an effective health and safety culture at each of its meetings.

20/09-10 Update on Occupational Health

RECEIVED:

A presentation from Jane Poole, Senior Occupational Health Advisor, on new ideas about the provision of Occupational Health.

REPORTED:

(by Ms J Poole)

- (a) That the new approach to Occupational Health would be considerably different to the previous approach in that it would be more proactive, more involved with departments, more educative and informative for staff and managers, less focussed on individual specifics, more collaborative, with faster access and turn-round, and greater provision of management information.

(by Ms S Foy, Trade Union representative)

- (b) That clarity on the role of Occupational Health was required as staff were unclear of what was involved and the potential consequences of a referral to Occupational Health.

(by the Head of Governance Support Services)

- (c) That the new approach by Occupational Health would allow staff and managers to be engaged in any agreed resolution, and a gradual re-introduction into the workplace where appropriate would be helpful and positive for all.

(by the Registrar)

- (d) That the new Occupational Health approach fitted with the introduction of the 'fit notes' and the development of the new health and safety culture and that success would require the removal of current perceived barriers and negative perceptions.

21/09-10 Fire Safety Policy

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Director of Health and Safety on the proposed revision of the Fire safety Policy (Paper UHSEC 11/09-10 refers).

REPORTED:

(by the Director of Health and Safety)

- (a) That the current policy no longer reflected current University practice and that the revised version would provide clear and more structured guidance and would be developed through consultation across the University.

(by Mr N Sanders)

- (b) That the proposed approach appeared to be sensible, and that the Committee should take the opportunity to consider if fire precautions throughout the University were in good order.

(by the Head of Governance Support Services)

- (c) That the Operational Risk Management Group continued to consider and had begun to address the wider risks and precautions such as financial, insurance, emergency responsiveness, and business continuity issues associated with fire.

RESOLVED:

That the Director of Health and Safety submit a report on fire safety for the consideration of the Committee at its next meeting.

RECOMMENDED: (to the Senate and the Council)

That the existing Fire Control Policy be withdrawn with immediate effect and that the Interim Fire Safety Policy be approved, with a view to further development work being undertaken on the Interim Policy following wider consultation and feedback from across the University.

22/09-10

Update on Accidents and Reportable Incidents, November 2009 to date

RECEIVED:

A report from Ms C Beament Health and Safety Advisor on the more serious incidents that had occurred since the last meeting of the Committee (Paper UHSEC 12/09-10 refers).

REPORTED:

(by Mrs C Beament, Health and Safety Adviser)

- (a) That in 2010 there had been 2 RIDDORs both in January and 2 serious non-work related incidents.

23/09-10 Sentencing Guidelines on Corporate Manslaughter

RECEIVED:

A paper on the Definitive Guideline from the Sentencing Guidelines Council on 'Corporate Manslaughter & Health and Safety Offences Causing Death' (Paper UHSEC 13/09-10 refers).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That the guidelines demonstrated the importance of an effective health and safety culture.

24/09-10 UCEA Health and Safety Annual Report for 2009

RECEIVED:

UCEA's Annual Report for the Higher Education sector (Paper UHSEC 14/09-10 refers).

REPORTED:

(by the Director of Health and Safety)

(a) That data indicated that injuries due to slips, trips and falls continued to be of concern across all sectors including the higher education sector, and that the Health & Safety Executive were instigating a new campaign to tackle this issue.

(b) That HEFCE were funding a project on Creating Success through Wellbeing in HE which was now in its second phase focusing on delivering sustainable high performance through an engaged resilient workforce and that the Health and Safety Department would maintain a watching brief on this project and good practice arising from it

(by Mr N Sanders)

(c) That should a target for the RIDDOR rate be set above the average for the sector, it would not be indicative of a world class University in line with the University strategy.

(by the Registrar)

(d) That the RIDDOR figures include catering, security and accommodation functions that have higher level figures, and that it is appropriate to benchmark with like universities, since other universities contract out such services.

25/09-10 Date of Next Meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the UHSEC would be held on 17 June at 11.00 am in
CMR 1.1.