

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the University Health and Safety Executive Committee held on  
Tuesday, 4 November, 2014

Present: Ms J Horsburgh (Chair), Mr J Breckon, Dr J Ferrie, Mrs P Glover,  
Professor T Jones and Mrs L McCarthy,

Apologies: Miss R Compton-Davis, Professor L Green, Ms G McGrattan

In Attendance: Dr I MacKirdy (Secretary), Mrs C Farren (Assistant Secretary), Mr  
Chris Carrington, Dr Andrew Easton and Mr J Phillips.

Note: *Restricted business (denoted by an asterisk {\*}) is confidential to members and  
attendees of the University Health and Safety Executive Committee.*

NOTE: The Chair welcomed Mr John Ferrie as an independent member as appointed by  
the Council and Mr James Breckon, newly appointed Director of Estates.

1/14-15 Conflicts of Interest

CONSIDERED:

That, should any members or attendees of the University Health and Safety  
Executive Committee have any conflicts of interest relating to agenda items for  
the meeting, they should be declared in accordance with the CUC Guide for  
Members of Higher Education Governing Bodies in the UK.

RESOLVED:

That no conflicts of interest be recorded.

2/14-15 Minutes

CONSIDERED:

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2014.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the University Health and Safety Executive  
Committee held on 12 June 2014 be approved.

3/14-15 Retirement of the Director of Health and Safety

REPORTED: (By Dr I MacKirdy)

That he would be leaving the University at the end of January 2015 and that  
recruitment for his replacement was in progress.

RESOLVED:

That the thanks of the Committee be extended to Dr I MacKirdy with best wishes for his retirement.

4/14-15 Matters Arising from the Minutes

REPORTED: (By Dr I MacKirdy)

That minute 32/13-14, which referred to a need to revise the process for authorising and issuing temporary dispensation to park close to the workplace, had been satisfactorily concluded through clarification of local arrangements.

5/14-15 Terms of Reference and Membership 2014/15

RECEIVED:

The Terms of Reference and membership for academic year 2014/15 (UHSEC.01/14-15).

REPORTED:

(a) That the Terms of Reference be adopted.

(By Dr J Ferrie)

(b) That the Committee should revisit the Terms of Reference and Membership as it was not considered that it formed a true executive committee, with a particular need to revisit accountabilities and function.

RESOLVED:

That the role and structure of the Committee be reviewed and revised with a proposal to be forthcoming through the University governance process.

6/14-15 Annual Health and Safety Report 2013/14 and Forward Plan

RECEIVED:

The Annual Health and Safety Report 2013/14 and Forward Plan for 2014/15 as submitted to the Steering Committee, the Council and the Senate (UHSEC.12/13-14 Revised).

REPORTED: (By Dr I MacKirdy)

(a) That changes within the University and in the way in which the University operates continually demands a review of health and safety risks and compliance.

(b) That organisational changes within the Estates Office and Campus and Commercial Services Group have resulted in the development of formal structures for the management of health and safety issues.

- (c) That the Health and Safety Department had refined its analysis and reporting procedures to align with Estates, CCSG, Science and Medical Faculty, Arts and Social Sciences and Administration to enable operational issues and implementation of health and safety policy and arrangements to be addressed at 'faculty' level.
- (d) That formal programmes for both audit and inspection had been developed which will provide the Executive and Heads of Department with information relating to levels of compliance and prioritised recommendations health and safety improvements.
- (e) That further clarity was needed to explain what is expected of Heads of Department and how to achieve necessary health and safety standards.
- (f) That risk profiling and identification of areas with significant hazards was required.
- (g) That fifty one health and safety inspections had been carried out during the period June 2013 to May 2014 across CCSG and the Science Faculty to raise safety awareness and to target areas for improvement.
- (h) That a collaborative project involving the Food H&S Officer and managers from CCSG and the Students' Union HAD BEEN instigated to address food allergen incidents and prepare for compliance with Food Information Regulations coming into force in December 2014.
- (i) That 75% of fire risk assessments had been completed and 21% of fire floor drawings had been produced and digitised.
- (j) That serious incidents continue at a relatively low rate while there has been a continued reduction in fires and fire alarm activations.
- (k) That the scale of capital build and refurbishment over the next 3 years had been identified as an emergent risk due to the higher rate of serious incidents incurred in the construction industry and the associated active enforcement of compliance by the HSE.

RESOLVED:

That in line with minute 5/14-15, a further discussion was required in relation to the role of the UHSEC.

7/14-15 Summary of Progress against the Strategic Health and Safety Forward Plan

RECEIVED:

A report from the Director of Health and Safety summarising progress against the Strategic Health and Safety Forward Plan (UHSEC.02/14-15).

REPORTED: (By Dr I MacKirdy)

- (a) That significant progress had been made on the Health and Safety Strategy for 2013 to 2015 as set out in the report.

- (b) That there had been several incidents caused by principal contractors and their sub-contractors which had provided significant learning opportunities for all concerned.
- (c) That a full programme of residential accommodation fire drills for the 2014/15 academic year had been completed and that the programme had been supported by the Estates Department, Security Services, and the Residential Life Team, with the occupant response being very good with only a small minority of residents requiring redress by the Residential Life Team.
- (d) That fire drills had been conducted in 75% of academic buildings in the year up to May 2014, it being noted that a full programme of drills was not carried out due the development work on campus and the roll out of the evacuation tag system for Gibbet Hill.
- (e) That the remaining drills would be completed as local matters are resolved and that fire drills would be conducted at Wellesbourne before Christmas 2014.

8/14-15 Health and Safety Inspection Summary and Forward Programme

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Senior Health and Safety Advisor about progress on inspections (UHSEC.03/14-15).

REPORTED: (By Mrs C Farren)

- (a) That in addition to professional advice and guidance to Departments, the Health and Safety Department has an ongoing inspection programme which focuses on high hazard areas across the University.
- (b) That the report captured the findings of the 2014 inspections conducted across relevant Departments of the Science Faculty, CCSG and Estates.
- (c) That a number of common findings had been observed (as stated in the report, item 3a) across areas that had been inspected in the Science Faculty, noting concern about the low response rate from departments inspected to the recommendations issued.
- (d) That food outlets across campus were making good progress towards meeting the objectives established for meeting compliance with impending food allergen legislation.
- (e) That compactor management had noticeably improved following actions having been taken post incident investigation.
- (f) That auditing formal close out on inspections was currently difficult to demonstrate as Departments were not consistently providing management response feedback.
- (g) That machinery and workshop areas would be the focus areas for inspection in 2015.

- (h) That the review of on campus accommodation should improve the placing of children (under 18's) into appropriate accommodation when booking onto events and stopping on campus overnight.
- (i) That the skills and capabilities of technical support staff across the Science Faculty may require review to support the management of health and safety, particularly those that have diversified away from their traditional roots.

(by Dr I MacKirdy)

- (j) That health and safety standards were noticeably higher in research spaces where there was greater ownership by the PI.

(by Mr J Breckon)

- (k) That in order to raise health and safety standards there could be a need and benefit in examining the competency requirements of those with responsibilities and to clarify ownership of specific risks.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That letters be sent to Heads of Department from the Deputy Registrar as Chair, together with Professor Tim Jones, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Science, Engineering and Medicine) to remind them of the need to highlight the importance of health and safety inspection reports and to seek their support in ensuring the prompt resolution of actions.
- (b) That there would be a benefit for the Executive and Heads of Department in developing a health and safety responsibility framework to highlight responsibility within each department for the management of key risks.
- (c) That a health and safety competency framework would need to be reviewed to ensure that those with responsibility for the management of key risks are appropriately competent and have access to professional support.

9/14-15 New Build and Refurbishment Projects

RECEIVED:

A presentation by the Deputy Director of Estates advising the Committee on the programme of new build projects given that this has been recognised as a significant health and safety risk.

REPORTED: (by Mr C Carrington)

- (a) That over the next 5 years over one third of the campus would be impacted by construction work of some kind which would impact on staff and students.
- (b) That construction traffic would have a major impact, as will the presence of up to 1000 contractors on site at the peak time in the programme, which represents a 20% increase in the current work force.
- (c) That the most challenging period would be August 2016, when there would be three major projects running concurrently and in close proximity to one another.

- (d) That there would be an impact on road transport and many pedestrian and cycle routes would need to be altered.
- (e) That a communications plan would be developed as part of 'Keep Campus Moving'.
- (f) That there are significant reputational risks associated with the programme and a need to ensure that the student experience is not unduly affected.
- (g) That health and safety risks include noise, dust, mud, vehicle/pedestrian interface, waste management and the control of contractors with the need to ensure the sites remain secure to prevent trespassers accessing the construction sites.
- (h) That site management information would need to be clearly displayed at each site, so that individuals know who to contact (Site Manager) for issues.
- (i) That this Committee be appraised of any ongoing issues of strategic significance.

(by Dr I MacKirdy)

- (j) That in addition to the new build activity there was also an ongoing major refurbishment programme.
- (k) That the scale and number of interfaces presented a very complex communications challenge.
- (l) That it was important that poor practice was challenged.

(by Mr J Breckon)

- (m) That pre-selection of the right principal contractor was a vital step in the process for the management of health and safety on site.
- (n) That a contractors' forum would be established to help communication with and between the main contractors with the main focus for the University then becoming the management of security and traffic, pedestrian and cycle routes around projects and associated impact.
- (o) That in his opinion the health and safety and culture within the University in terms of management of construction was not commensurate with his experience in industry and there was room for improvement, which he was addressing through the improvement of Estates processes.
- (p) That the institution should encourage the reporting of incidents and near-misses by its contractors, project teams and staff generally.
- (q) That he would be instigating improved reporting of incidents by Estates staff, followed up by investigations so that lessons learnt can be shared at all levels.
- (r) That he considered the resource for health and safety within Estates to help shape change was insufficient and that he would be reviewing this with the Director of Health and Safety.

(by the Chair)

- (s) That when issues were escalated to Senior Managers in the University, matters were considered to be handled appropriately.
- (t) That an Estates organisation chart detailing key health and safety roles and responsibilities would be useful.
- (u) That an extraordinary meeting should be held to discuss further clarity around assurance of health and safety.
- (v) That all Estates staff had the power to stop work if thought to be unsafe and this would be supported at a senior level.

(by Dr J Ferrie)

- (w) That health and safety responsibilities and accountability should be clarified institutionally (as previously stated in minute 8/14-15, resolution (b) in relation to establishing a responsibility framework).
- (x) That there needs to be clarity on how delegated responsibility is discharged throughout the organisation.
- (y) That health and safety should be explicit on the institutional risk register.

(by Mrs L McCarthy)

- (z) That Heads of Department did not routinely sit on local health and safety committees and therefore there was opportunity for improvement and clarity on responsibilities within departments.
- (aa) That the lack of a Site Office or information on who to contact in Estates on site did not help the reporting of incidents.

(by Mrs P Glover)

- (bb) That the receipt of management responses from inspections and audits had been noted as being poor.
- (cc) That there was a need to clarify and strengthen the stance of stopping work if unsafe practices were observed.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Estates would provide an overview of the health and safety accountabilities for those managing major projects.
- (b) That an extraordinary meeting be convened to consider health and safety risk in terms of assurance and safety culture.
- (c) That the UHSEC would recommend to the Council that health and safety be elevated as a specific risk on the University Risk Register, given the potential significance and impact of the current work being carried out on campus.

10/14-15 Reported Accidents and Incidents

RECEIVED:

A report from the Senior Health and Safety Advisor on reported accidents and incidents for the period June 2014 to September 2014 (UHSEC.04/14-15).

REPORTED: (By Mrs C Farren)

- (a) That there had been 6 serious incidents since the last committee meeting (noting that not all resulted in injury) and 19 significant incidents.
- (b) That of those reported in the Science Faculty, the majority of incidents were as a result of students not following procedures and/or not being supervised sufficiently in high risk facilities.
- (c) That in the Science Faculty, the short term appointment of students embarking on practical projects continued to pose a challenge, with 3 reported incidents reported this year connected to the Summer Schools.
- (d) That in CCSG, there had been 2 food allergen incidents reported.
- (e) That in Estates, there had been 7 incidents reported connected to work involving contractors.

(By Dr I MacKirdy)

- (f) That the Students' Union were engaged in the food allergen project, but did not feel the need for the University to carry out food allergen inspections on their behalf.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That communication with those who manage summer schools would be carried out to ensure that health and safety requirements were understood.
- (b) That the University's expectations in relation to the Students' Union's management of food allergens should be communicated to them.

11/14-15 Science and Medical Health and Safety Group

RECEIVED:

The report of the first meeting of the Science and Medical Health & Safety Group held on 27 October 2014 (UHSEC.05/14-15).

REPORTED: (By Prof T Jones)

- (a) That a presentation had been provided to the Group which covered accountability and the role of risk assessment in supporting the management of research and facilities.
- (b) That the health and safety inspection reports were found to be useful and that Departments needed to ensure that they adequately closed out on the recommendations made, noting that some utilised their own Committees to deliver on this.



- (c) That the group endorsed the forward programme of inspections by the Health and Safety Department.
- (d) That the group noted the laboratory inspection checklist and guidance, accidents and incidents and discussions of the GMBSC.
- (e) That the group had agreed to meet twice a year and the meeting should be less formal.
- (f) That Heads of Department expressed concerns around responsibility, resources/support and channels of communication and considered a need for more support and greater clarity from the central Health and Safety Department.
- (g) That risks associated with summer schools and interns presented a particular risk due to the challenge of finding sufficient supervisory capacity over the summer period.

(by Dr I MacKirdy)

- (h) That an interim Health and Safety Adviser in the School of Engineering had been agreed to help establish the necessary culture.
- (i) That there is a need for improved discussions to be held in Departments prior to new academics joining the University to ensure that health and safety matters are sufficiently addressed.

(by Mrs C Farren)

- (j) That the Health and Safety team handle a large volume of enquiries from across the institution, many of which can be complex and this currently does not leave a lot of time for proactive work.

RESOLVED:

That the Director of Health and Safety facilitates the development of a common approach for considering the approval of research programme risk assessments for review by the Science and Medical Health and Safety Group.

12/14-15 University Genetic Modification and Biosafety Committee\*

RECEIVED:

A report from the meeting of the University Genetic Modification and Biosafety Committee (GMBSC) held on 25 September 2014 (UHSEC.06/14-15).

\*Chair reminded members that the contents of this paper make reference to material that is confidential and must be treated as 'restricted business'.

REPORTED: (By Dr A Easton)

- (a) That the new interim Biosafety Adviser (Ron Croy) had been enormously helpful and had provided a large amount of support and that the role would benefit from being full time when someone was appointed on an indefinite basis.

- (b) That a number of appointments to the membership of the GMBSC still needed to be made specifically there remained a need for a clinical microbiology specialist to be appointed as a member.
- (c) That four projects were approved and another four were discussed at length by the Committee, each of the latter required further input by the PI to revise or develop additional documentation to support their risk assessment submission.
- (d) That a current project proposed to take place in the CL3 facility was very complex requiring notification to the HSE and involving significant input to ensure that the standard of information sufficiently addresses the risks identified.
- (e) That a consolidated risk assessment for plant projects had been developed and a similar one for GMO's was on the Biosafety Advisor's action plan.
- (f) That the GMBSC was happy with the way in which the projects approved so far had been presented and handled by the Principal Investigators.

(by Dr I MacKirdy)

- (g) That recruitment of a permanent Biosafety Adviser was underway and that given the funding for the interim support was only until December consideration would need to be given to the intervening period.
- (h) Due to the increase in biological research across the Science and Medical Faculty the new role would be 100% (1.0 FTE) Biosafety rather than the 0.2 FTE provided previously.
- (i) That 'High Hazard' facilities receive at least one annual review, and that this would be a key element of the new Biosafety Adviser's role.

(by the Chair)

- (j) That there had been some concern over maintaining containment should there be a power failure following a recent power outage where the Uninterruptable Power Supply (UPS) failed to operate.

(by Dr A Easton)

- (k) That all containment facilities had UPS back-up, which were tested periodically.

13/14-15 University Health and Safety Committee

RECEIVED:

A report from the meeting of the University Health and Safety Committee held on 13 October 2014 (UHSEC.07/14-15).

REPORTED: (by Prof T Jones)

- (a) That leaflets on pedestrian and cycling safety had been distributed and were on display and bike lights were made available at the start of term to raise safety awareness in this area.

- (b) That members shared examples of good practice going on in their respective Faculties including development of e-learning packages, early engagement connected to research involving human tissue and improvement management of statutory inspection and testing.

14/14-15 Dates of Future Meetings

REPORTED:

That the forthcoming meetings of the Committee for the 2014/15 academic year were as follows:

|                          |                   |                          |
|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Wednesday, 4 March, 2015 | 10.00am – 11.30pm | CMR1.2, University House |
| Thursday, 11 June 2015   | 10.30am – 12.30pm | CMR1.2, University House |